

Professional Ski Instructors of America



Alpine Certification Standards

2014

National Standards: Level One, Level Two, Level Three

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American ski instruction demands versatility. The PSIA-AASI membership is expected to teach guests in a wide variety of skiing environments, facilitating learning outcomes that range from hard snow to powder, and genres including recreation, race, big mountain and freestyle. The objective of the Standards document is to identify common threads fundamental to great skiing and teaching, regardless of the specific outcome intended. The fundamental mechanics apply to a variety of technical and tactical situations through the three assessment zones of beginner, intermediate and advanced students.

The Alpine Technical Manual and Core Concepts Manual outline three Skier Zones and the Standards align assessment parameters for the three levels of certification.

- Beginner/novice Level Guests = Level One Certification
- Beginner - Intermediate Level Guests = Level Two Certification
- Beginner - Advanced Level Guests = Level Three Certification

The 2014 Alpine Standards provide the assessment criteria for creating the skiing, teaching and professional knowledge outcomes necessary for an instructor to successfully complete a certification. The Standards document complements and is meant to be utilized in harmony with the following publications/documents.

- The Alpine Technical Manual - Content evaluated in skiing and technical situations.
- The Core Concepts Manual - Content evaluated in teaching situations.
- Skier Level Descriptions - Specific performance characteristics that create context for the skiing and learning outcomes in each skier zone.
- Divisional Exam Guidelines

Skiing assessment requires well defined tasks and measurable outcomes. Teaching and professional knowledge assessment requires creating an evaluation environment that simulates learning outcomes and student - instructor interactions. Throughout each skier zone, the fundamentals are WHAT is being observed and assessed.

When creating skiing tasks, the Duration, Intensity, Rate, and Timing (DIRT) will vary based on the intended outcome of each task. Skiing tasks or demonstration outcomes are relevant to the specific level of certification and are performed at the speeds and degree of accuracy outlined in the standards document.

Teaching situations are relevant to the level of guest (Skier Zone) outlined by the level of certification. Teaching situations need to allow enough time and/or frequency for demonstration of all measurable requirements.

Throughout the assessment process, divisions will utilize a variety of tasks, situations and scenarios based on conditions and resort amenities, to evaluate candidate competency as outlined in the National Standards.

Effective use of the National Standards combined with the other educational resources creates an efficient environment for consistent evaluation.

Category A: SKIING

Fundamentals

The fundamental mechanics of SKIING, outlined below, remain consistent through all levels of Certification. The performance criteria for these fundamentals will vary based on the application to common beginner, intermediate, and advanced zone outcomes.

Skiing Fundamentals

- Control the relationship of the Center of Mass to the base of support to direct pressure along the length of the skis.
- Control pressure from ski to ski and direct pressure toward the outside ski.
- Control edge angles through a combination of inclination and angulation.
- Control the skis rotation (turning, pivoting, steering) with leg rotation, separate from the upper body.
- Regulate the magnitude of pressure created through ski/snow interaction.

The differentiating applications of fundamentals are defined by the following categories: environment, accuracy, and speed.

Environment: The appropriate terrain and snow conditions for level of assessment, relative to the skill development needs for students.

Accuracy: The degree of competence and constancy in application of fundamentals relative to desired ski performance.

Speed: The ability to ski in control at speeds necessary to achieve desired ski performance for the task or demonstration.

Category A: Skiing
Specific Requirements

| Skiing | | Specific Requirements | | |
|--|---------------------|---|---|---|
| Categories | | Requirements at Level of Certification | | |
| | | Level I | Level II | Level III |
| | | Students in Beginner Zone All Green / Groomed Blue | Students through Intermediate Zone All Blue / Groomed Black | Students through Advanced Zone All Terrain/ All Conditions |
| Environment: Terrain and Conditions | | Green terrain including mild un-groomed conditions and moderate blue terrain. | Green terrain, all blue terrain including bumps and off-piste, and moderate groomed black terrain. | Green, Blue, Black (double black where available) terrain in most conditions. |
| Speed | | Demonstrate at speeds appropriate for beginner zone skiers. Ski in control using a “rounded” turn shape at intermediate zone speeds. | Demonstrate at speeds appropriate through intermediate zone skiers. Ski in control using a consistent, round turn shape at advanced zone speeds. | Demonstrate at speeds appropriate through advanced zone skiers. Maintain control at expert speeds accurately blending the skills to accomplish the required tasks while adjusting turn shape in all conditions and situations. |
| Accuracy | Consistency | Fundamentals are apparent in all tasks, and all phases of a basic turn (wedge and parallel), with some inconsistencies from one phase to another. | Fundamentals are consistently present through all tasks and all phases of a parallel turn, and through a series of rhythmic and controlled turns. | Fundamentals are refined in all tasks and blended through all turn phases and from turn to turn producing dynamic, rhythmic turns in all conditions and situations. |
| | Adaptability | Ability to vary rate or timing of one fundamental at a time. Demonstrated in common beginner zone tasks and turns. | Ability to vary rate and timing of multiple fundamentals, to adapt ski performance outcomes as defined by the task or situation. | Ability to vary rate and timing, and blend all fundamentals on demand, with regard to tactical considerations for any defined ski performance outcome. |

Category B: Teaching

Fundamentals

Fundamental areas of TEACHING application as related to all skier zones.

- Minimize the risk in the learning environment.
- Instructor models Behaviors and Communication skills that build rapport/trust with guests.
- Partner with students in defining goals and clearly communicate the determined lesson plans.
- Uses a logical sequence of activities to engage the group and meet stated goals.
- Tailors the learning environment to a variety of audiences and situations.
- Observe, analyze, and describe student's body movements and/or ski performance as related to the desired outcome.
- Demonstrations accurately support the teaching outcome.
- Utilizes guided practice and feedback appropriately paced for individual needs.

The differentiating applications of TEACHING fundamentals are defined by the following categories: safety, communication, movement analysis, demonstration, and teaching.

Safety: Your Responsibility Code, and all safety concerns particular to the learning environment for each skier zone.

Communication: Provide clear, concise, and respectful instruction and feedback utilizing time effectively to maximize practice.

Movement analysis: Observe ski performance and body movements; Evaluate effectiveness of ski performance and body movements; Prescribe a course of action for improvement.

Demonstration: Provide an accurate visual representation of the description used when teaching a specific movement or action to observe; Illustrate the skiing fundamentals as applied to any defined outcome.

Teaching application: Use focused skiing, drills, and exercise lines to create situations for learning which target specific and well defined elements of ski performance and body movement.

| Teaching | Specific Requirements | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| Categories | Specifics at Level of Certification | | |
| | | | |
| | Level I Students in Beginner Zone All Green/ Groomed Blue | Level II Students through Intermediate Zone Blue to Entry Level Black | Level III Students through Advanced Zone All Terrain/ All Conditions |
| Safety | As Required Through Beginner Zone | As Required Through Intermediate Zone | As Required Through Advanced Zone |
| Communication | <p>Directions are clearly stated as they relate to general beginner zone outcomes.</p> <p>Individualized application may be limited by level of experience.</p> <p>Vocabulary uses simple (non-technical) language.</p> | <p>Lesson objectives are clearly defined.</p> <p>Explanations are appropriate and connect with student's desires, knowledge, and experience.</p> <p>Vocabulary and body language are appropriate to students' ages and interests.</p> | <p>Purpose of lesson is clearly defined, linking outcomes with student interests and describing how the lesson content will improve overall performance.</p> <p>Explanation of content is imaginative, animated, and establishes two-way communication with the students using a well-chosen vocabulary that enriches the lesson.</p> |
| Movement Analysis | <p>Observe and describe the skiing fundamentals (identified in the skiing national standards) as performed in beginner zone tasks and situations.</p> | <p>Observe and describe the skiing fundamentals, (identified in the skiing national standards) as performed in intermediate zone tasks and situations.</p> <p>Evaluate ski performance one skill at a time with reference to turn phase and body movements. Begin to identify basic skill inter-relationships through basic cause & effect discussions.</p> | <p>Observe and Evaluate complex relationships from body mechanics to ski performance through all phases of the turn. Accurately identify skill inter-relationships and prioritize cause and effect relationships.</p> <p>Prescribe a skill and/or movement focus which targets the desired change in ski performance or body movement.</p> |

| Teaching | Specific Requirements | | |
|----------------------|--|---|---|
| Categories | Specifics at Level of Certification | | |
| | <p style="text-align: center;">Level I Students in Beginner Zone</p> <p style="text-align: center;">All Green/ Groomed Blue</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Level II Students through Intermediate Zone</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Blue to Entry Level Black</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Level III Students through Advanced Zone</p> <p style="text-align: center;">All Terrain/ All Conditions</p> |
| Demonstration | <p>Demonstrate the skiing fundamentals relative to the desired action of the skis common for beginner zone tasks and turns.</p> <p>Demonstrate the common movements used to create the desired ski performance outcomes.</p> | <p>Demonstrate the skiing fundamentals relative to the desired action of the skis for intermediate zone tasks and turns.</p> <p>Demonstrate the common movements used to adjust/blend ski performance as requested.</p> | <p>Demonstrate the skiing fundamentals relative to the desired action of the skis for a variety of advanced zone tasks and turns.</p> <p>Demonstrate versatility in adjusting movements and skill blend to affect ski performance as requested.</p> |

| Teaching | | Specific Requirements | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Categories | | Specific at Level of Certification | | |
| | | Level I | Level II | Level III |
| | | Students in Beginner Zone All Green/ Groomed Blue | Students through Intermediate Zone All Blue / Groomed Black | Students through Advanced Zone All Terrain/ All Conditions |
| Teaching Application | Goals | Formulate lesson plan relative to common goals for beginner zone outcomes and ski performance. | Formulate lesson plan relative to the specific goals of each student as they apply to common intermediate zone outcomes and ski performance. | Continuous lesson modification for specific student needs. Adapt the use of techniques and tactics to target specific movements, desired outcomes, and ski performance in a variety of advanced zone applications. |
| | Content | Basic information reflects the skiing fundamentals, and is appropriate to beginner zone progressions, likely from instructor's home area beginner lesson program. | Detailed progression targets the specific skill or fundamental being developed relative to the needs and desires of the individual student. | Progression is modified to address specific student performances. Addresses fundamental body movements and resulting ski performance. |
| | Adaptation | Teaching presentation should address a target group, not necessarily individuals within the group. | Teaching presentation will likely have a group focus, and must also address individual needs within the group. | Teaching presentation will have different focuses for each individual, and will be modified for each student as the lesson progresses. |
| | Practice & Feedback | General guided practice relative to the focus of the group. Feedback is related to the fundamental focus of the group. Wording is simple, practical and positive. | Guided, focused practice allows individualized feedback relative to the common focus of the group. | Guided practice will utilize a variety of tasks to address specific needs with specific feedback for each individual relative to individualized goals and performance. Feedback is detailed and accurate. |

| Teaching | Specific Requirements | | |
|------------------------|--|---|---|
| Categories | Specific at Level of Certification | | |
| | | | |
| | Level I | Level II | Level III |
| | Students in Beginner Zone | Students through Intermediate Zone | Students through Advanced Zone |
| | All Green/ Groomed Blue | All Blue / Groomed Black | All Terrain/ All Conditions |
| Teaching styles | “Command” and “task” styles are well organized and utilized to define content and practice time. | Utilize a blend of “command”, “task”, and “reciprocal” based on elements of the student profile, and the type of task or skill focus. | Comfortably and effectively utilize multiple styles including “guided discovery”, and “problem solving” based on elements of the student profile and the type of task or skill focus. |

Category C: Professional Knowledge

| Fundamentals |
|---|
| <p>The fundamental areas of Professional Knowledge, outlined below, remain consistent through the levels of certification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate clear, concise and consistent language to students, by utilizing the concepts and understanding the terminology found in the PSIA-AASI publications and documents. • Apply PSIA-AASI teaching concepts to create a positive learning partnership involving student makeup and instructor behavior. • Understand and explain the interdependent relationship between the skills and balance relating to the skills concept model. • Understand how different design features influence the performance of skis, boots, and bindings and their effect on skier performance and safety. • Understand how basic physics concepts relate to ski/snow interaction and turn performance. • Understand basic biomechanics concepts and describe how bones, muscles and joints work together relative to the mechanics of skiing. • Knowledge of winter recreation industry pertaining to your home resort and state of the snowsports instruction industry. |

The differentiating applications of PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE are defined by the following categories: terminology, teaching concepts, Skills Concept, equipment, physics of skiing, biomechanics, turn mechanics and industry knowledge.

Terminology: Commonly used terms that ensure clarity of concept and serve as an important foundation for accurately and consistently discussing ski technique and skills.

Teaching Concepts: Instructor behavior that helps students improve and enjoy the sport based on their personal desires, while incorporating safety awareness

Skills Concept: Utilize the skills of Rotational Control, Edge Control, and Pressure Control to identify and evaluate the action of the skis, and recognize the inter-relationship between these skills and balancing.

Equipment: Understand the characteristics of a variety of equipment styles and the ability to describe the benefits and potential limitations while helping students achieve their goals.

Physics of Skiing: Describe the forces created through ski-to-snow interaction and their effect on turning.

Biomechanics: How bones, joints, and muscles work together to create common movements as they pertain to specific ski performance outcomes.

Turn Mechanics: Application of the skills and the movements used to create ski performance specific to the desired outcome and relative to the phases of the turn, and connection between turns.

Industry Knowledge: The individual contribution of each instructor and the role of the school within the resort as the profession provides a positive impact on the industry as a whole

| Professional Knowledge | Specific Requirements | | |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
| Categories | Specifics at Level of Certification | | |
| | Level I Students in Beginner Zone All Green/ Groomed Blue | Level II Students through Intermediate Zone Blue to Entry Level Black | Level III Students through Advanced Zone All Terrain/ All Conditions |
| Terminology | Define the meaning of basic skiing terminology as described in the PSIA-AASI publications and documents. | Relate skiing terminology in simple language. Identify what, why, and how the terms and concepts apply to individual students. | Display an ability to compare and contrast various types of information regarding skiing and ski teaching from a variety of resources. |

| Professional Knowledge | Specific Requirements | | |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|
| Categories | Specifics at Level of Certification | | |
| | Level I Students in Beginner Zone All Green/ Groomed Blue | Level II Students through Intermediate Zone Blue to Entry Level Black | Level III Students through Advanced Zone All Terrain/ All Conditions |
| Teaching Concepts | Can Identify the components of different teaching concepts and models including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Model • Teaching Cycle • Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs | Able to differentiate how the student makeup can influence the application of different phases of the teaching cycle. | Ability to compare how the instructors teaching methods aid students with different learning preferences. Ability to modify activities to aid the students in receiving and processing information. |
| Skills Concept | Identify the skills concept and how each skill affects the action of the ski on the snow. | Explain the interdependent relationship between the skills and balance. Relate common body movements to specific ski performance outcomes. | Evaluate how tactical choices affect skill blends in a variety of conditions. Compare the dual role of balance as both a source for, and a result of, effective and efficient movement. |
| Equipment | Categorize the basic options and benefits of modern ski and boot designs. Identify how a customer’s boots and skis should fit. | Describe changes in equipment needs as students’ progress through the Beginner/Novice zone and Intermediate zones. Compare benefits of different equipment designs based on desired outcome, gender and age. | Explain changing equipment needs and options as skiers move through the Intermediate and Advanced ability zones. Make specific equipment recommendations for the needs of individuals based on intended outcome, performance, application, age, gender and safety. |

| Professional Knowledge | Specific Requirements | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|
| Categories | Specifics at Level of Certification | | |
| | Level I Students in Beginner Zone All Green/ Groomed Blue | Level II Students through Intermediate Zone Blue to Entry Level Black | Level III Students through Advanced Zone All Terrain/ All Conditions |
| Physics of Skiing | Identify how the basic physics concepts and terminology found in the Alpine Technical Manual apply to skiing fundamentals in beginner zone applications. | Explain the forces that are created through ski/snow interaction and their effect on turning relative to intermediate zone applications. | Identify how the physics of skiing and specific body movements combine to affect a student's ability to shape turns, manage speed, and remain in balance on various types of terrain and in a variety of conditions. |
| Biomechanics | Understand how stance and basic body movements relate to the fundamentals of skiing in beginner zone applications. | Understand how stance effects the ability to move, and how efficient movements within the body produce specific outcomes in skiing. | Understand how the body moves simultaneously in all three planes to develop specific outcomes and manage the forces related to skiing. |
| Turn Mechanics | Identify the different phases of a turn and how the skills are applied in each phase of the turn in beginner zone applications. | Identify how body performance can affect each of the skills during each phase of the turn, as well as how the skills evolve from one turn to the next. | Accurately describe how tactics and body performance affect the skills and resulting ski performance in each phase of the turn and from turn to turn. |
| Industry Knowledge | Identify typical needs and challenges guests experience who are new to the sport. Show a basic working understanding of good guest service and how to incorporate this in the lesson plan. Reference specific characteristics of candidate's home resort that impact snow sports education. | Understand the current events affecting the snow sports industry at both the candidate's home resort and within their division. Explain how PSIA certification & education can have a positive impact on resort operation. | Exhibit a broad understanding of the snow sports industry both regionally and nationally. Explain how PSIA certification & education can have a positive impact on resort operations. Describe specific trends in technology, education, marketing and present economy that have an impact on skier participation and retention. |