

Join the Alpentel Volunteer Ski Patrol

What is the Alpentel Volunteer Ski Patrol?

As an affiliate of the National Ski Patrol, Pacific Northwest Division, the Alpentel Volunteer Ski Patrol is a 501(c)3 charitable organization whose mission is to provide education and emergency services to the skiing public.

We are one of a family of four volunteer ski patrols at the Summit at Snoqualmie ski areas.

We have three types of members:

- Alpine (or “Hill”) Patrol – are members trained in first aid and in the use of toboggans to transport people off the hill. We accept skiers and snowboarders as Hill Patrol Candidates.
- Aid Room Patrol – are members trained in first aid but not certified to run a toboggan. First Aid Patrollers may perform any patrol duty on the hill with the exception of running a toboggan. This is an option for health care professionals who have daily hands on patient care whose skiing ability or physical conditioning would prevent them from running a toboggan, or whose interest is primarily in providing first aid care.
- Medical Associates (or “Doc”) Patrol – are physicians who volunteer with the ski patrol to provide additional medical care as needed. For information on the Doctor Patrol please contact Dr. Ed Pavlin at pavlin@uw.edu. Note that some of our Docs are also certified to run a toboggan.

What are we looking for?

The Alpentel Volunteer Ski Patrol is looking for individuals interested in supporting our mission to serve the skiing public. We expect all our patrollers to demonstrate outstanding first aid skills and inter-personal skills when interacting with the skiing public and ski area employees (lift crews, ski school instructors, etc.). In addition, we expect our Hill patrollers to demonstrate the ability to ski/board and safely handle a toboggan on all Alpentel terrain under all conditions.

What would be expected of me as a member of the Alpentel Volunteer Ski Patrol?

You should understand that being a member of the ski patrol requires a significant time commitment to acquire and maintain the first aid, toboggan handling and other ancillary (chair evacuation, avalanche, etc.) skills, and support our day to day coverage responsibilities to the skiing public. We think it is very worthwhile and rewarding, but please consider if your family and work situations and schedule will allow you to fully participate. We want you to be a member for a long time.

We are currently responsible for providing patrol coverage on Friday Night, Saturday Day, and Sunday Day shifts. Your commitment, the number of shifts you must attend, varies dependent upon when Alpental opens and closes, but is typically 16-18. Typically, this means averaging one day a weekend during the January-March time period.

Having acquired the necessary credentials (discussed below), you will be required annually to complete continuing education requirements including:

- a day long first aid (OEC) refresher (typically in October)
- a day long “On the Hill” (OTH) refresher, covering for example chair evacuation procedure (typically in November)
- a 2-4 hour CPR/AED refresher (typically after one of the OEC or OTH refreshers)
- a 1 hour first aid practical on a selected topic (during one of your regular patrol shifts)
- If a hill patroller, 1-2 hour tobogganing refreshers on the lower and upper mountain (during a couple of your regular patrol shifts)

We would hope that after a year or two you would consider becoming an instructor in one of these disciplines to help with refreshing returning patrollers and training new candidates.

What is the process of joining the Alpental Patrol?

We would like you to come up and visit us, typically in the Spring, to provide you an opportunity to understand what we do on a daily basis, and, if you are considering joining as a Hill Patroller, allow us to evaluate your skiing ability.

Evaluation of skiing ability generally involves demonstrating your comfort skiing the various terrain of our mountain and performing some common maneuvers basic to skiing and running a toboggan, e.g. sideslip, falling leaf, kick turns, short/medium/long radius turns, skiing bumps and “crud”. You do not have to be a fast, “pretty” skier but we are looking for you to be confident and secure.

Assuming that patrolling appears to be something you would want to do, and we feel you have the necessary skiing/boarding skills, the next step is for you to join the National Ski Patrol as a Candidate, and acquire the necessary first aid skills.

All active members of the National Ski Patrol must have credentials in the following:

- Outdoor Emergency Care (OEC) – This is an NSP course, covering topics similar to Emergency Medical Technician courses but tailored to our mountain environment. Note that current EMT’s may challenge this course, but because of where we work and the tools we use, you may find participating in a full OEC class beneficial.
- AED and CPR for the Professional Rescuer – This is an American Heart Association course.

Various OEC classes (and CPR/AED) may be offered in Spring/Summer/Fall time period. We will work with you to get you into a class offered by us or another patrol. You should expect to spend class time on the order of 100-120 class hours with home study of the associated Outdoor Emergency Care Manual and possibly an associated on-line course.

Having gotten your OEC, CPR/AED credentials you're ready to patrol when the snow flies ... well almost. If you're planning on being a Hill patroller, you'll spend about five weekends going through the training for running toboggans starting on the lower mountain and culminating in you demonstrating your ability to take a sled off the top. Then, finally, all new candidates will spend a couple days on the hill and in the first aid room with different "mentors" becoming familiar with patrol procedures, run names, equipment location, etc.

What does it cost?

In addition to a commitment of time, there is also an upfront financial commitment by candidates:

- NSP Membership (\$99)
- OEC Class (\$999)
- OEC Manual (\$99)
- CPR/AED Class (\$99)
- CPR Pocket Mask (\$9)

Assuming all goes well, to begin patrolling you will need:

- Patrol Uniform
 - Red jacket with crosses (\$999-\$999)
 - Black/dark blue pants (\$999-\$999)
 - Helmet (\$999-\$999)
 - Backpack (or fanny pack) with crosses (\$999-\$999)
- Optionally for backcountry skiing
 - Transceiver (\$999-\$999)
 - Shovel (\$999-\$999)
 - Probe (\$999-\$999)

We will typically provide you with some financial help for your uniform and we'll stock your backpack (or fanny pack) with first aid supplies.

What are the benefits?

The real benefit is of course the challenge and reward of helping the skiing public and associating with a group of other dedicated, interesting individuals. Many patrollers find they

develop lifelong friendships with their fellow patrollers which extend beyond their patrolling careers.

Beyond that you'll receive,

- Reduced rate season passes for you and your dependents
- "Pro" deals on equipment and clothing
- Continuing education available in avalanche, mountain survival, senior level skiing/tobogganing and first aid
- Lots of good skiing (along with some rainy days)
- and, yes, we do cut lines, but many times we're on a mission, responding to an accident, marking hazards, participating in training, or going to sit for an hour at the top of a lift, so generally it all evens out.

As your patrol career unfolds, we would encourage you to:

- Become an instructor in one of more of the disciplines.
- Participate in local patrol administration.
- Consider participating in patrol administration at the region or division level.

So, that's the scoop.

We think it's all worth it, intellectually and physically challenging, and lots of fun. If you have any other questions about the patrol, or would like start the process of becoming a member, email the Alpental Candidate Advisor at alpentaladvisor@hotmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you.