

Origins of the National Ski Patrol

The NSP was organized in 1938 and directed by Charles Minot "Minnie" Dole as a committee of the National Ski Association (now the United States Ski Association). Through his efforts as the first National Director of the NSP, the organization spread its services and esprit de corps across the nation. Upon his retirement in 1950, Dole had built the NSP into an organization of 4,000 members serving 300 ski patrols. During World War II, Dole was responsible for the establishment of the famed 10th Mountain Division of the US Army. Applicants for this remarkable military unit, which saw much of its fighting activity in Italy, were screened by the NSP. Many individuals who were responsible for the establishment of numerous ski areas in the United States served in the 10th Mountain Division and have contributed significantly to the sport.

Thanks to this distinguished legacy of altruistic service, the National Ski Patrol was recognized with a Federal Charter by the United States Congress in 1980. This is a coveted endorsement that only a few other American institutions have earned, including the American Red Cross, the YMCA, and the Boy Scouts. The Federal Charter stipulates that the NSP continue to promote safety and health in skiing and other outdoor winter recreational activities.

Types of NSP Memberships

Alpine Patroller - A person who provides emergency care to injured or ill area guests; also may be responsible for a wide variety of area safety activities. (A skiing or snowboarding position).

Nordic Patroller - A person who provides emergency care to injured or ill area guests; also may be responsible for a wide variety of area safety activities (A skiing position).

Auxiliary Patroller - A person who provides emergency care to injured or ill guests, but may not transport guests off the hill/slope; may help lead training and education activities. (Skiing or snowboarding skills helpful but not always mandatory.)

Medical Associate - A volunteer physician who assists with Outdoor Emergency Care training and general medical training of patrollers. Requires medical credentials.

Associate Member - An individual who has a need or desire to take National Ski Patrol courses and be associated with the National Ski Patrol.

Mountain Host - An individual who has a need or desire to take National Ski Patrol courses and be associated with the National Ski Patrol.

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The Role of the National Ski Patrol

The National Ski Patrol (NSP), founded in 1938, has followed its creed of "Service and Safety" since the establishment of skiing as a popular sport in the United States. As snowsports and guest services at areas have evolved over the years, so has the NSP, from a service organization to a modern-day professional education association. Other snowsports such as snowboarding, tubing, and snow-skating introduced new equipment and new terrain, which in turn required developing and teaching new safety and emergency care training methods. Increased access to the backcountry, beyond ski area boundaries, has also meant new training regimens for member of the NSP.

Today the organization is composed of more than 26,000 members serving over 600 patrols. These individuals include alpine, snowboard, and Nordic patrollers who are paid or who volunteer their time throughout the United States and at certain military areas in Europe. The organization's members are engaged in the promotion of safety programs across the outdoor recreation community. NSP members work on behalf of local ski and snowboard areas to improve the overall snowsports experience for outdoor recreationists. The National Ski Patrol has worked closely with other countries in outdoor emergency care education and has assisted in establishing patrol associations in Canada, Korea, New Zealand, Israel, Turkey, Argentina, and Chile as well as the Victorian Rescue Service in Australia.

The National Ski Patrol is a nonprofit organization, deriving its primary financial support from membership dues, donations, user fees, and corporate sponsorships. The national office is located in Lakewood, Colorado, and is staffed with full-time employees to handle administrative duties.

Joining the National Ski Patrol

There's really no such thing as a typical ski patroller. Nevertheless, when you hear the words "ski patroller," you probably think of someone performing a mountain-side rescue of an injured skier. The truth is, it takes all kinds to make this team. Emergency care is an important part of the mission of the National Ski Patrol. We educate. We communicate. We participate!

National Ski Patrol members are people with a strong desire to help others. People who want to learn - and use - emergency care skills, improve their skiing or snowboarding, and help make mountain recreation safer for all. If this sounds like you, read on and find out how you can join this exclusive team.

Find Your Niche

Many ski areas depend on volunteer patrol members to meet their many needs. Other areas employ full-time or part-time paid patrollers, or use a combination of paid and volunteer staff to provide patrol services. We encourage you to contact the patrol directors at the ski and snowboard areas of your choice to get an idea of the specific qualifications and experience they are seeking for their patrollers. Although the national office may not know the patroller needs at a specific area, we can direct you to patrol directors near your location. In any case, the profile of the National Ski Patrol member is that of a person willing to work hard, devote many hours, and continually enhance personal knowledge and skills .

Work Hard, Play Hard

There's nothing more rewarding than putting in a hard day's work-and having a good time doing it. The main objective of being a National Ski Patrol member is to support the area management function of caring for injured skiers and in making mountain recreation safer and more fun. But, there are many other benefits. You'll be a respected part of the industry. You'll perfect your skills. And you'll make friendships that will last a lifetime.

Gain the Advantages of Higher Education

National Ski Patrol education programs offer you the chance to learn about emergency care, search and rescue, avalanche control, lift evacuation, mountaineering, toboggan handling, and other interesting topics! You'll test your knowledge and your skills with personalized support from your area and fellow patrollers. You'll also receive a free subscription to Ski Patrol Magazine, which provides timely information about emergency care techniques, skiing and snowboarding tips, association news, and more. NSP programs are an exciting challenge-in the classroom and on the slopes!