
Q – What is the Schuss Mountain Ski Patrol?

A – We are part of the National Ski Patrol organization that boasts over 28,000 members dispersed over 650 ski areas nationally. The National organization develops and sets the standard for the training and skills sets that are necessary to be part of this primarily volunteer organization. The standardized training provides adherence to a quality standard for all patrollers nationally. As a side note, the Schuss Mtn. Ski Patrol has twice been recognized as the National Outstanding Ski Patrol in the US, most recently in 2012.

Q – What is the purpose of the Ski Patrol?

A – We are a local non-profit organization that adheres to the creed of Service and Safety to the skiing public. We are primarily volunteers that work on behalf of the local resort to improve the overall experience of the boarders and skiers on our slopes. Our responsibilities take on many forms, ranging from promoting the Skier Safety code on the hill with boarders/skiers to being the primary responders to all accidents and injuries, stabilizing their injury and safely removing the injured boarders/skiers off the slope.

Q – How can I join and what training do I need?

A – The Schuss Mountain Ski Patrol is adding a few new patrollers over the next several years. It starts with showing interest, determining whether patrolling is right for you, participating in a “ski along” with a designated patroller(s) and discussions with Patrol Leadership.

New candidates will first attend OEC (**O**utdoor **E**mergency **C**are) classes (spring or fall typically offered) at one of numerous locations which will 80+ hours of classroom-style training and practical scenarios over a 3 - 4 month period. OEC sessions culminate in a written test, and practical scenarios to demonstrate skills. When winter arrives, we then change our focus to “On the Hill” training that is intended to prepare the candidate for a late-season Hill Test to demonstrate skiing and toboggan handling skills and knowledge. Additionally, candidate will complete a Patroller 101 course that covers multiple aspects of patrolling, including Scene & Risk Management, Rope & Belay Skills, Guest Services and Ski Patrol history/background. After successful results in the OEC and Hill Testing, the candidate is awarded Alpine Patroller status. Further training, skills development and experience will lead to Alpine Senior Patroller Status.

Patrollers will also need to complete an American Red Cross professional rescuer CPR training class. Additionally, Patrollers will also be trained in chair evacuation procedures.

Q – What is the “duty” commitment?

A – Each Schuss patroller is expected to commit to patrol for a minimum of 50% of the weekend days that the resort is open for skiing after December 25th, which typically totals 14 ski days per season (out of 28 days total). There is no pre-assigned shift, so you can pick and choose which days best fit your personal schedule. Each patroller is also expected to perform duty functions on one of the 2 day weekends prior to the Christmas Holiday each year, depending on whether the resort is open for snow sports. Additionally, each patroller is expected to sign up for two Saturday evening duty shifts per season, which can count as a weekend duty shift credit if patroller is signed in by 4pm on the Saturday that they have chosen “night duty”.

Q – What is a “duty shift”?

A – Generally, a weekend day duty shift requires the patroller to sign in by 8:30am and remain on duty until normal closing, at 4:30pm. We also have a six hour Saturday evening shift that counts as a full day duty shift; sign-in is by 4:00pm and ski till 10:00pm (hill closing).

Q – What is the financial commitment?

A – The annual dues, combining National portion and local Schuss portion, currently is \$80 per year. Each patroller is responsible for his/her own transportation, lodging, food, equipment, clothing, and mobile VHF radio. Much of this expense is tax-deductible, as the purpose is to support a National Ski Patrol, a 501 (c)(3) organization.

Q – Why would I join? “What’s in it for me”?

A – The reasons are different for every patroller.

- It’s one way to give back to a sport that we all enjoy and love.
- For most of us, it’s the camaraderie and togetherness with a great (and diverse) group of people, with a family atmosphere – we do have FUN!
- It’s a great way to stay active, get exercise, and stay in shape.
- It’s an annual ski pass for you and your guest (or family member).
- It’s that great feeling that you get when you have helped an injured guest on the slopes, and the appreciation that most guests show for the care they received.

- For many, it is the prestige associated with membership and a great National Volunteer Organization, and the honor of wearing the NSP ski jacket.
- As a bonus the NSP has dozens of ski industry sponsors that provide significant discounts on clothing, ski equipment and accessories.
- For some, it’s “All of the above”?

Q – Tell me more about the benefit related to a family ski pass.

A – Once a candidate successfully completes and passes the OEC skills test, he/she is awarded ‘Patroller’ status and is then eligible for a personal ski pass and a ‘guest pass’ for Schuss Mtn. When skills sets are deemed ready (through an on-hill training) they will be approved to take the Alpine skills test to become an Alpine Patroller. Patroller must also participate in Patroller 101 training that is conducted throughout the season. Most Patrollers then go on to take ‘on-hill’ training in skiing and toboggan handling in order to attain ‘Alpine Patroller’ status which certifies them to run a rescue toboggan and also indicates he/she has met the NSP advanced skiing standards.

Our resort also provides a family ski pass (passes for the spouse and dependent

children) when the individual successfully completes either the Senior Patroller OEC test and/or Alpine Senior Patroller test. These next levels requires even more advanced OEC, skiing and toboggan handling skills. Training is provided by Schuss Patrol Trainers and when the candidate is prepared, patrollers may take the Senior OEC test and the Senior Hill Test to reach either Senior Patroller or Alpine Senior Patroller Status.

Q – What if I’m not a super proficient skier/boarder, but I still want to become involved?

A – The Schuss Mountain Ski Patrol also includes a staff of Ski Patrollers that are not Alpine Patrollers. They provide invaluable aid and assistance inside the First Aid Facility, and assist the Alpine Patrollers to ensure the best possible care is provided to injured guests. They, too, are National Ski Patrol members.

Q – Where can I read and learn more?

A – Visit the Schuss Mtn. Ski Patrol website (limited access) at www.SMSP.us , the National Ski Patrol Website at www.nsp.org or the Northern Michigan Region website at www.nspnrm.com.

