



Eastern Division

NATIONAL SKI PATROL



Outdoor Emergency Transportation (OET) Senior Evaluation Additional Guidelines - 2024

Goal

Ensure the Senior Evaluation of a patroller's skiing/riding and toboggan handling skills is conducted in a safe and fair manner, consistent with the Toboggan Fundamentals, while providing a positive environment for feedback.

Toboggan Fundamentals

- ✓ Employ sound judgment to ensure the **Safety** of the toboggan handlers, passenger, and public
- ✓ Use a blend of **Technical Fundamentals**, along with chain/rope management, to control the speed and direction of the toboggan
- ✓ Use **Route Selection** and other tactical skills to optimize the path of the toboggan to safely arrive at a scene or transport a patient
- ✓ Employ appropriate **Communication** between toboggan handlers, passenger, and public

Updates to Senior Evaluation Format

- Addition of a TRAVERSE to the loaded toboggan run
- Consolidation of the skills to one BLENDED SKILLS RUN

Rationale for Change

These tasks promote the use of practical, realistic, and necessary Senior-level skills. Traversing during the loaded toboggan run demonstrates patroller skills, communication, and coordination between the front and tail roper during a traverse, which is regularly required in order to transport an injured patient. A blended skills run requires the candidate to choose when and where they use each patroller skill throughout varying terrain. This more closely represents how patroller skills are used while transporting an injured patient, opening a trail, or checking trail conditions.

Traverse

Description: The loaded toboggan run includes a traverse across the hill in one direction, down the fall-line a short distance such that the tail roper clears the obstacle, and a traverse back across the hill in the opposite direction.

- Set: the patroller needs to traverse to the other side of the trail to navigate around a bare spot, lift tower, obstacle, or out of the moguls.

Objective: Demonstrate patroller skills, communication, and coordination between patrollers on handles and tail rope while completing a traverse in both directions.



Diagram: The team is transporting an injured patient and encounters the need to traverse the slope. When safe to do so within the traverse area, the team works in tandem to traverse from one side of the trail (point A) across the trail (Size: Between 15' and 30' or "Two Groomer Tracks" wide) to (point B) and then continue down the mountain in a fall-line descent. When safe to do so, the maneuver is repeated to the opposite side. Traverse area will be marked with bamboo or using a natural obstacle, lift tower, or similar.

Example: Picking up the injured skier at the "X" the safest route is skiers right, but a traverse would be required to navigate around the trees and then return to the edge of the trail to avoid skier traffic.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is running a loaded toboggan inside the handles appropriate during a Senior Evaluation?

A candidate can choose to run inside the handles. Within the Eastern Division, candidates are generally taught to run toboggans outside the handles in moguled terrain. However, this is not a requirement. Some candidates may prefer to run the toboggan inside the handles. The Toboggan Fundamentals and task objectives apply regardless of the front operators position.

2. Can the front operator stop the toboggan to change position, and move inside or outside the handles?

During the evaluation, the candidate is required to stop in order to change position.

While traversing outside the handles the front operator should be on the downhill side of the toboggan. In order to traverse in both directions while outside the handles, the front operator needs to change positions to the opposite side (or to inside the handles).

In some cases, particularly on steep terrain, candidates may find it helpful to be inside the handles during the traverse. This will require the front operator to change positions from outside the handles, to inside the handles.

3. Is the traverse straight across the slope?

This is not a traverse straight across the slope or perpendicular to the fall line. This traverse is at an angle; the toboggan continues to travel downhill while traveling across the slope as terrain allows.

4. Should the tail roper apply tension on the rope during the traverse?

The tail roper should be actively tail roping from a position that allows them to minimize slipping of the toboggan but without interruption to the front operator. Actively tail roping involves management of tension on the rope; the amount of tension required will be relative to the conditions and to the angle at which the toboggan is traveling across the hill.

The tail roper:

- Strives for the optimal and safest position behind the toboggan to manage toboggan slipping/bouncing and assist in an emergency stop

- Effectively manages the rope to assist in a controlled descent without abrupt stops or unnecessary rope tensions impacting toboggan movement
- Demonstrates the use of skill maneuvers without interruption to the front operator

5. What communication is recommended during traverse?

The front operator should alert the tail roper, verbally or with hand signals, prior to the traverse and receive an affirmative response from the tail roper that the communication was received and understood.

6. Is this a set course?

There is not a set course for the traverse. Candidates should be given a general area, landmark, or a visual cue (bamboo, brushie, ski pole, etc.) to indicate where they should begin a traverse. candidates will not be required to go around and/or clear a gate or other marker (bamboo, brushie, ski pole, etc.). However, a traverse in both directions must be demonstrated during that run.

7. Is the tail roper required to have their skis pointed in the direction of travel during the traverse?

As part of striving for the optimal and safest position behind the toboggan it is recommended to have the tail roper's skis point in the same direction of the traverse being performed. This improves patroller vision for upcoming terrain changes and prevents tails from burying into an object. However, facing the same direction as the front operator is not required.

8. What happens if there is too much skier traffic in order to allow for a safe traverse?

If possible, and with mountain approval, partially restrict skier traffic in an area of the trail (traffic control measures) during the toboggan run.

Blended Skills Run

Description: Patroller skills are evaluated as a BLENDED SKILLS RUN inclusive of snowplow, sideslip, moving changes in direction (transitions, pivot slips), and static changes in direction (i.e., kick turn, wedge and match, jump turn or static 180 for snowboards).

- Set: In moguled/difficult terrain, the patroller needs to navigate down the slope demonstrating patroller skills, and kick turn/static direction change in a designated area.

Objective:

Demonstrate effective application of the Technical Fundamentals using patroller skills appropriate for the terrain and conditions throughout the demonstration of each skill (to include sideslip, snowplow, moving direction change, static direction change). The candidate's choice of skill maneuver and route selection will impact their ability to maintain effective use of edges and a consistent speed. Snowboarders must demonstrate sideslip on the heel and toe side.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Does the candidate need to maintain a consistent speed throughout the entire blended skills run (can the speed of snowplow and sideslip be different)?

The speed used during snowplow and sideslip may be different. The blended skills run should be performed without abrupt stops and starts.

2. Is the blended skills run a set course where the candidate must perform tasks in a prescribed area?

The blended skills run is not intended to be run as a set course. The candidate will choose where and when to use each skill maneuver, with the exception of a static direction change (i.e., kick turn, wedge and match, jump turn or static 180 for snowboards). Evaluators may designate a location for the static direction change to be performed.

3. What skills should a snowboard patroller demonstrate?

The primary snowboard maneuvers are heel-side side slip and pivot slips. Some toe-side sideslipping should also be demonstrated.

4. Are skills scored separately from toboggans?

Under the toboggan portion of the evaluation, a separate score is provided for loaded toboggans, tail rope, and skills. The skills score is based upon the performance of those skills throughout the blended skills run.

Evaluators may use context and feedback from toboggan and tail rope runs to further support the score provided for skills. Regional Advisors are strongly encouraged to use an Evaluation Team format, where candidates are assigned to an evaluation team of three or more evaluators for the entirety of the evaluation. This format allows evaluators to observe the candidate's performance throughout the entire evaluation.

5. Is there one blended skills score, or is each individual component being scored?

One score will be provided for the blended skills run. However, feedback relative to each component will be provided: side slip, snowplow, a moving change in direction (i.e., transition or pivot slip), and a static change in direction ((i.e., kick turn, wedge and match, jump turn or static 180 for snowboards).

Each evaluator will provide a score for the section they observed, and indicate what specific skills were observed. Each evaluator does not need to see every skill, they need to score what they observed.

6. Does the candidate have to perform each skill for a defined amount of time, distance, or proportion of the run?

The candidate chooses the timing and duration of each skill performed. There is not a set requirement for how much of any particular skill is required.

7. What if the candidate does not perform one of the skills during the blended skills run?

Candidates are required to demonstrate side slip, snowplow, a moving change in direction (i.e., transition or pivot slip), and a static change in direction (i.e., kick turn, wedge and match, jump turn or static 180 for snowboards). If a candidate does not demonstrate a skill, evaluators should make an effort to accommodate a second blended skills run for that candidate after clarifying the objectives.

8. What if the candidate performs several skills frequently and at a satisfactory level (successful), but performs one skill not consistently (not successful)?

The blended skills run requires the demonstration of sideslip, snowplow, moving direction change and a static direction. The performance of each skill needs to meet the objectives for that skill. To be successful in the blended skills run, the candidate needs to perform each of the skills at a satisfactory level.

While one score is provided, evaluators will provide feedback relative to each component (sideslip, snowplow, moving change in direction, static change in direction).

9. Does the candidate have to perform each skill for a defined amount of time, distance, or proportion of the run?

No, the candidate chooses the timing and duration of each skill performed. There is not a set requirement for how much of any particular skill is required.



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Early Season

- No later than December, Regional Advisors should confirm the location of the evaluation with mountain management.
- Evaluation and clinic dates should be published on regional websites, including a registration deadline is recommended.
- RA's are encouraged to send direct communications to members regarding the Senior Program.

Training and Feedback

During clinics and on-hill training, Trainer Evaluators provide Senior candidates with opportunities to perform evaluation tasks and provide feedback relative to the Senior standard in skiing/riding, skills, and toboggan handling. Each clinic or training session is a learning opportunity and should be structured to be positive and encouraging. Feedback is delivered using the PISE method (Positive, Improve, Specific, Evaluation). Use the OET Trainer Evaluator Handbook (i.e. your flip book) to help develop specific feedback throughout training.

A clear understanding of where a candidate stands relative to the Senior standard enables learning, growth, and realistic expectations of evaluation outcomes. Post-training feedback may be verbal or written and should include a recap of the candidate's overall performance relative to the standard (not yet consistent, frequently, consistently, or continuously), and specific areas for the candidate to work on.

Recap Examples

Meeting the standard - frequently

- Start with the P in PISE. Tell them something positive! Highlight the tasks performed that met the standard or areas where they improved throughout the day.
- *Your performance today met the Senior standard, and if you performed similarly at the evaluation, you should be successful. As you train, continue to focus on...*
- Recap areas where the candidate can improve and provide specific feedback that ties to the standard* (i.e. engaging edges early in the turn, controlling speed with turn shape, directing pressure to the outside ski)

Not meeting the standard - not yet consistent

- Start with the P in PISE. Tell them something positive! Highlight the tasks performed that met the standard or areas where they improved throughout the day.
- *Overall, your performance today did not (consistently or yet) meet the Senior standard. While we don't recommend testing now, we would like to keep training with you as you work on... Our goal is for candidates to be successful.*
- Recap specific areas for improvement and tie that back to the standard (i.e. engaging edges early in the turn, controlling speed with turn shape, directing pressure to the outside ski).

Prior to Evaluation

Planning Items

- Date, time, and exact location of the event
- Lift tickets
- Register for the course online with NSP
- # of expected candidates
- Names of evaluators (and confirm currently qualified to evaluate)
- Consider prospective TEs (ie, involving future instructors being apprenticed for the next level in the event)
- High-level plan for the event (including meals) and expected available terrain. Often, this involves having multiple plans for terrain, given that availability may change. Always have a backup plan!
- Ensure appropriate details and materials have been shared with candidates and evaluators (eg, parking, sign-in process, evaluator materials, competing events at resorts, any management concerns)
- Coordinate with the Quality Assurance (QA) person assigned to the event

Day of Evaluation

- Arrive EARLY and BE ORGANIZED and PREPARED!
- Bring release forms, evaluation plans, score cards, score summary sheets, pencils, group assignments, and name tags or bibs if they are being used
- Evaluation Kick Off
 - Communicate the plan for the day to the evaluators and then to the candidates. Details should include:
 - Groupings and introductions, trails to be used, timing on activities (including breaks/lunch), a process for flagging issues or re-attempts (advocate assigned), a reminder that safety is first (ie, you are responsible for your safety if there is an activity that you are not comfortable completing tell the evaluators).

On-hill Evaluation

- Overall, clear expectations and good direction/leadership
 - Appropriate and safe terrain selected for each skill
 - Read criteria before every run/objective
 - Demos - essential elements are “frequently,” “consistently,” or “continuously” present (i.e. meets Senior criteria or better). Redo demos immediately if they do not meet the criteria
- Provide a positive candidate experience
 - No scorebooks in hand, completed throughout the day. Most appropriately done on a chairlift.
 - PISE feedback – no secrets, engage the advocate
 - Keep it consistent; all candidates should get the same opportunities on similar terrain

Scoring & Feedback

- After the on-hill evaluation, evaluators meet to consolidate scores using the Senior Evaluation Score Summary
- Ensure thoroughness, fairness, and consistency
 - Make sure the criteria are being applied appropriately
 - Ensure the evaluation of all candidates is consistent
 - Each evaluator should be present for the performance review and able to ask questions or express any concerns
- Thoughtful delivery of results and feedback
 - Provide the evaluation outcome and PISE feedback that day, shortly after the conclusion of the event, to the candidate

- All unsuccessful candidates should receive clear feedback on their performance, including specific areas to improve in order to meet the evaluation criteria
 - Results should be delivered in a manner that is respectful of the outcomes (ie, no public display of anybody that was not successful)
 - A copy of the Senior Evaluation Score Summary should be provided to each candidate. (Tip: have them take a picture of it before they leave).
- Feedback from candidates on the event should be solicited
 - Remember, this is an opportunity for recruitment of future Toboggan Instructors and Trainer evaluators. When delivering feedback, encourage continued learning and growth!

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Where do I find the Senior Evaluation Scorecard and Senior Evaluation Score Summary documents?*

The Score Card and Score Summary are available [here, at the bottom of the OET homepage](#).

2. *Can we still use the old numbered scoring system?*

The current scorecards and scoring system will be used. If you or your team need additional information regarding the scoring system, please consult the OET Guidelines and Evaluation Manual [available here](#) (a PDF is available at the bottom of that page), or consult a Steering Committee Member.

3. *Are score summaries an average or a consensus?*

evaluators are encouraged to discuss performance relative to the standard and arrive at a consensus regarding the overall score for each task.

4. *Should a candidate be required to attend a clinic prior to the evaluation?*

candidates should be training with OET staff in clinics or during on-hill training at their resort. Some regions may require attendance at a clinic in order to ensure that the candidate has worked with a Trainer evaluator and understands the evaluation and the Senior standard. (See page one for more information on mid-season or pre-evaluation feedback).

Whether or not a clinic is required should be determined by the Regional Advisor, taking into account the availability of OET staff, senior terrain, and local training

programs across the region. The goal is for candidates to be prepared for and positioned to be successful in the evaluation.

5. *How should an evaluation be structured?*

When determining which format to use, Regional Advisors should consider the number of candidates, availability of terrain, and availability of evaluators. There are two primary evaluation formats:

Evaluation Team Format

candidates are assigned to an evaluation team of three or more evaluators. All evaluation components for the groups are evaluated by that team. An advocate could be assigned to the group or may float between multiple groups. When using this format, it is important that clear expectations for terrain choices are communicated to all teams. All candidates should get the same opportunities on similar terrain. This setup allows the evaluators to see a candidate's performance throughout the entire evaluation.

Station Format

candidates are rotated through toboggan, skills, and skiing/riding stations. evaluators are assigned to a station for the evaluation. An advocate could be assigned to the group or may float between multiple groups. The logistics involved in changing stations can present a challenge. Keeping on time and communication between stations is important.

6. *What are the considerations for terrain selection?*

For information on terrain selection, go to the [Senior Terrain Selection page on Patrollerschool.org](https://www.patrollerschool.org).

What National has given us in The Ski Patroller's manual, page 129, National Ski Patrol Senior Program Terrain Requirements is: " To host senior alpine and evaluation activities, an area should have a slope that averages 40% grade (22 degrees) for at least 800 feet. Senior training and evaluation clinics may be on a shorter slope if it is steeper and if the hill is configured in such a way that many repetitions are reasonably possible. The terrain should be smooth and moguled. Moguls may be unexpectedly unavailable because of last-minute grooming, snowfall, etc., but every effort must be made to select ski areas that meet terrain requirements under normal operating conditions.

7. *We do not have moguls due to unexpected grooming, trail closures or other factors outside our control. Can we hold the evaluation?*

The Senior standard calls for moguled terrain for toboggans, skills, and ski ability. If moguls become unexpectedly unavailable, consult your Quality Assurance person and/or a Steering Member to discuss alternatives. As terrain considerations are made, also discuss evaluation considerations (i.e. sharpening the pencil, dulling the pencil depending on the terrain available).

Look for sections of terrain that could be used, potentially together, to meet the terrain requirement of 800 feet. Ideas to consider include:

- Corridors where the trail is not groomed edge-to-edge
- In soft conditions, structuring the evaluation to complete tasks on moguled terrain later in the day to allow terrain variability to develop
- Steeper terrain that includes variations of pitch and/or a double fall line where a variety of skills and maneuvers are required in order to maintain a smooth, consistent speed

If terrain is not considered appropriate by the Regional Advisor and the Staff assigned to Quality Assurance, the evaluation may be rescheduled or canceled.

8. *Is gladed terrain appropriate for use during a Senior Evaluation?*

Gladed terrain is not typically used during a Senior Evaluation and would be considered more difficult than the terrain expected for a Senior Evaluation. There may be situations where wide/open gladed terrain might be considered when other moguled terrain is unexpectedly unavailable. If moguls become unexpectedly unavailable, consult your Quality Assurance person and/or a Steering Member to discuss alternatives.

9. *What level should demos be performed at?*

Demos during the evaluation should exemplify the Senior standard. The essential elements should be “consistently” or “continuously” present. If a demo does not consistently meet the standard, an additional demo should be provided along with an explanation to the candidates.

The Regional Advisor should consider demos in the evaluation plan, including the capabilities of the evaluation team. If possible, make TEs aware of the specific tasks they may be asked to demo during the evaluation. If a Division Staff member, including Quality Assurance, observes demos not meeting the Senior standard consistently, that staff member should provide feedback to the RA, and assist in providing demos.

10. What window should the evaluators be focused on for scoring?

Evaluators will score what they see; there is no restriction on scoring above or below the next examiner.

Senior Evaluation scoring establishes Senior level as meeting the essential elements of the standard “frequently and at a satisfactory level”, meaning - regularly, habitually, or often. One bad turn or one low score does not indicate a failure to meet the standard. Evaluators are encouraged to discuss performance relative to the standard and arrive at a consensus regarding the overall score for that task.

11. Should demos on alternate equipment be provided?

Where possible, demos on alternate equipment should be provided. However, this may not always be practical (i.e. the region does not have a TE on a snowboard). Consider inviting a Senior patroller who consistently meets the Senior standard to provide demos at the evaluation.

When reading the objectives, highlight the snowboard and telemark specific fundamentals and standards.

12. Should the Regional Advisor score? Should their scores count?

The Regional Advisor serves as the non-biased administrator of the evaluation, where their scores are not formally recorded. There may be cases where, due to staffing shortages, a Regional Advisor serves as a scoring evaluator. The Regional Advisor will not be assigned as the advocate.

13. Should the Advocate score? Should their scores count?

The Advocate should keep scores, or at least general impressions, to assist them in advocating for the best interest of the candidates. Advocate scores are not formally recorded.