



## **THE NATIONAL SKI PATROL SYSTEM, INC. Roles and Responsibilities of Volunteer Patrollers**

**August 2024**

The National Ski Patrol is a professional educational and membership association committed to promoting safety in outdoor recreational activities. Our members, both paid and volunteer, undergo rigorous training in NSP's renowned first response medical programs, including Outdoor Emergency Care and Outdoor First Care.

**Differences Between Volunteer and Paid Patrollers:** Because paid patrollers are employees of ski areas (and other outdoor recreation providers), their rights and responsibilities are typically governed by federal and state employment laws and regulations. By contrast, there is no overarching federal law governing volunteers, and relevant laws and regulations vary from state to state. As a result, our volunteer members frequently have questions about their rights and responsibilities when engaging in patrol activities.

**NSP Is Responsible for Education; Ski Areas Are Responsible for Operations:** NSP is responsible for education, training, and credentialing, not for "on the ground" patrol operations. Volunteers who are members of NSP operate under the direction, supervision, and control of the management of the ski area or other recreation facility at which they patrol. That means that each area's management has broad discretion over whether to allow any particular NSP member to volunteer at their area, so long as the area does not unlawfully discriminate or otherwise violate the law.

Area management is responsible for establishing and maintaining protocols, policies, and procedures for patrol operations at the area. Those procedures range from routine operational matters (such as opening and closing procedures), to customer care (including creation and preservation of incident-specific documentation), to seasonal or longer-term planning (such as developing and procuring signage and other equipment), to preparation for and remediation of potential emergencies (such as lift evacuations). Area management may also choose how to allocate responsibility among personnel, including between patrollers and other area personnel, and among patrollers, whether based on paid or volunteer status, seniority, leadership role, or credentials.

**Volunteer Patrol Units and Ski Areas:** Volunteers form and actively participate in patrol units, which are responsible for maintaining the standards and adhering to the procedures established by area management. Because volunteers and patrol units operate under the direction, supervision, and control of area management, area management has final approval over patrol leadership selection and continued service. Area management can ask the Patrol Representative (or other unit leadership) to verify a member's NSP-issued training and credentials.