



Level 2 Big Mountain Coach - Program Overview

3 DAY SKI Course (Skier Development and Terrain Exploration)

3 DAY TEACH Course (Coaching and Guiding Development)

6 DAYS TOTAL

Introduction and Purpose:

The following information provides an overview of the PSIC Level 2 Big Mountain Coach Certification Course.

Welcome to the Professional Ski Instructors of Canada, Level 2 Big Mountain Program!

The purpose of the Level 2 Big Mountain program is to introduce coaching and guiding in Big Mountain Terrain. Big Mountain Terrain is a general term used here to describe Moderate and Advanced off piste terrain. This terrain is ungroomed and is typically found at Treeline and Alpine elevation.

This fun, high-energy program includes:

- Development of advanced skiing skills and terrain awareness.
- Coaching and guiding skill development in moderate and low-consequence terrain.

A Big Mountain Coach is essentially a “front country” guide trained to work in off-piste, big mountain terrain located within the ski area boundary. The Big Mountain pathway is not a backcountry guide certification. However, the guiding mindset as it pertains to risk management and guiding skills also applies to big mountain environments accessible from many ski resorts in Canada - particularly out West.

An understanding of the physics of skiing and equipment used in steep terrain is important to appreciate when skiing at this level. The Level 2 Big Mountain program is designed to challenge, empower and hone the understanding and skills in the alpine environment playground. The Big Mountain and freeride arena is a growing area of the sport of alpine skiing. It conforms seamlessly to the PSIC’s Adventure Philosophy which is a core principle within the organization.

Learning Outcomes:

Learning outcomes align with the PSIC's Adventure Philosophy, emphasizing fun, safe, learning for strong intermediate to advanced skiers on moderate on-piste and off-piste terrain. The Level 2 Big Mountain program outcomes recognize versatility, mountain sense, and risk management, focusing on integrating these concepts into practice.

Skiing Course

Steep skiing — Versatility

- Short turns — Drifted
 - Ability to CONTROL speed, direction and flow on moderate groomed and off-piste terrain.
 - Turn shape may require some deflection of mass - situation specific.
- Short turns — Hop turns
 - Ability to CONTROL speed and ELEVATION on Steeper terrain.
 - Turn shape requires very limited time spent above the fall line.
 - Turn shape requires minimal deflection of mass.
 - Speed it slow.
- Medium turns — Steered
 - Ability to MAINTAIN speed, direction and flow on low angle off-piste OR Moderate ungroomed terrain.
 - Turn shape requires some deflection of mass.
- Features and Entrances
 - Purpose based skills to negotiate entrances (chutes, couloirs and cornices).
 - Vertical side slip — ability to manage speed and direction down the fall line.
 - Diagonal side slip — ability to manage speed and direction across the fall line.
 - Drops and Rolls — Ability to control snow contact, air and balance appropriate to the feature.

Teaching / Guiding Course

FUN

- Engage actively with Peers, Trainer and program activities
- Prioritize “mileage” and terrain play in teaching approach
- Recognize milestones in teaching approach

SAFE

- Identify hazards in the big mountain environment.
- Apply safe guiding techniques and strategies.
- Apply a basic decision-making framework (probability/consequence risk matrix).

LEARNING

- Develop an understanding of Alpine Terrain (Entrances, bowls, couloirs, chutes, steeps).
- Apply progression up to drifted short turns in off piste terrain.

- Apply tactical development approaches in moderate off piste Alpine terrain. (Speed control skills and tactics, Vertical and diagonal side slip).
- Apply Assessment and Development feedback linking movements and purpose with some assistance.

Assessment and Evaluation:

- Evaluation is derived through a coached ongoing assessment of the learning outcomes throughout each of the Skiing and Guiding/Teaching courses. There is no single, summative, final exam. For this reason, your engagement and participation throughout both courses is important.
- Evaluation is provided based on “exceeds expectations”, “meets expectations” and “requires development” in relation to the learning outcomes.
- These results are provided at the conclusion of the program before departure from the ski area at which the program takes place.
- Opportunities for one-on-one check-ins will be available during the program to ensure learning outcomes are understood and increased focus is applied where necessary. The goal is to help you where you need help.
- Full Level 2 Big Mountain coach certification is recognized once you have achieved both the Skiing and Guiding/Teaching portions of the program.
- All participants receive a written development plan following each of the Skiing and Guiding/Teaching components to help provide guidance on next steps for ongoing development.

Course Structure:

The Level 2 Big Mountain Program comprises on-snow training split into two separate 3-day modules, emphasizing Skiing Skills and Guiding/Teaching Skills development pathways. It is STRONGLY recommended that the Skiing skills module be taken first as this will ensure you have the skiing competency to safely navigate the terrain required for the Guiding/Teaching module. Full Level 2 Big Mountain Coach certification requires passing both components.

*** Note that the skiing and physical demands of this program are greater than that of the Level 2 PSIC Instructor course due to the specific terrain associated and required in this program.

Level 2 Big Mountain Skiing Component

The Level 2 Skiing Component is a 3 day on-snow training and approximately 4.5 - 5 hours per day.

- The three days focus on development of your skiing skills as well as your understanding of how to assess and develop skiing skills in moderate off piste, and ungroomed terrain.
- Evaluation is provided through an ongoing assessment throughout the course. There is no single, summative, final exam.
- Participation, collaboration and teamwork are important throughout the course.
- You will receive a detailed description of meeting time and place when you register.

Level 2 Guiding and Teaching Component

The Level 2 Teaching component is a 3 day on-snow training and approximately 4.5 - 5 hours per day.

- The three days include development and practice of your guiding/teaching skills.
- Application of an Assessment and Development approach linking purpose and movements.
- Application and development of a decision making framework for risk mitigation applicable to a Big Mountain environment.
- Evaluation is provided through an ongoing assessment throughout the course. There is no single, summative, final exam.
- Participation, collaboration and teamwork are important throughout the course.
- You will receive a detailed description of meeting time and place when you register.

Course Prerequisites:

- A minimum of PSIC Level 1 is required (*with ski ability approval from Trainer.*)
- PSIC Professional Ski Instructor Level 1, 2 or 3 all enter the Big Mountain pathway at Level 2.
 - Certification from other organizations must be a minimum of Level 2.
- You **MUST** be a minimum of 15 years of age on the day the on-snow portion begins.
- You must be a paid member of the PSIC to register.
- You should be ready to experiment, try new things, collaborate with others, and have a great time! Arrive curious!

Big Mountain Level 3 Direct Entry Exception Eligibility:

Certified Level 3 Ski Instructors who have significant coaching/guiding experience in big mountain terrain may be eligible for an entry exception and allowed to enter the Big Mountain pathway at Level 3. This will be considered on a case by case basis. To apply, email your request to info@psic.pro with the subject "BM L3 eligibility request." Certified Big Mountain administration/trainers will review submissions and provide a response within 48 hours. This opportunity is designed to recognize the expertise of seasoned professionals in advancing their credentials.

General:

- Breaks will happen throughout the day (vary depending on weather), however we recommend that you carry a snack in your pocket as the daily schedule and lunch break timing can vary based on various factors.
- You will receive a detailed description of the meeting time and place of your program when you register.
- Recommended equipment: > 85mm under foot. Radius 16-25m recommended. Tune: well maintained. Your Trainer will inspect your equipment.

Questions?

Please connect with our PSIC staff at info@psic.pro. We look forward to seeing you on-snow!