



Level 2 Big Mountain Coach - Program Overview

5 DAY SKI / TEACH Course

Skier Development, and Terrain Exploration

Coaching and Guiding Development

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

- Ability to CONTROL speed and ELEVATION on Steeper terrain
- Ability to hop the tails of the skis off the snow
- Turn shape requires minimal deflection of mass

Medium Turns - Steered

- Ability to MAINTAIN speed, direction and flow on low angle off-piste terrain
- Turn shape requires deflection of mass

Navigation of features and entrances (Purpose and situation specific) - Moderate terrain

Vertical side slip

- Ability to manage speed and direction down the fall line in moderately steep terrain

Diagonal side slip

- Ability to manage speed and direction (forward and reverse) across the fall line in moderately steep terrain

Rolls and drops

- Ability to control takeoff, snow contact, air and balance appropriate to the feature

Teaching / Guiding Course - The Adventure (Fun Safe Learning)

Guiding Skills

- Demonstrates a foundational understanding of Alpine Terrain including entrances, bowls, couloirs, chutes, and steeps.
- Demonstrates a foundational level of safe guiding techniques and strategies and can identify hazards in this terrain.
- Applies a foundational probability / consequence decision-making framework

Teaching Skills - (Adventure Builder and the Method)

- Engage Actively with Peers, Trainer and program activities
- Applies foundational tactical approaches in moderate off-piste terrain
- Creates verbal, visual, and experiential methods providing foundational level explanations, demonstrations and practice.

- Can identify terrain changes and utilizes terrain play to enhance skill development and the learning experience.

Technical Skills - (Application of Technical Blueprint)

- Applies proficient application of the three skills in observation and development of skiers
- Applies Foundational 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 learning outcomes of the program.
- All participants receive a written development plan to help provide guidance on next steps for ongoing development.

Course Structure:

The Level 2 Big Mountain Program comprises 5-days of on-snow training, emphasizing Skiing Skills and Guiding/Teaching Skills.

*** 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.

Skiing and Teaching - approximately 5 hours on hill per day.

- 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.
- 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!