



Level 3 Big Mountain Coach - Program Overview

3 DAY SKI Course (Skier Development and Terrain Exploration)
4 DAY TEACH/GUIDE Course (Coaching and Guiding Development)
3 DAY Evaluation Course
10 DAYS TOTAL

Introduction and Purpose:

This overview provides details about the Professional Ski Instructors of Canada (PSIC) Level 3 Big Mountain Coach Certification Course.

The Level 3 Big Mountain program aims to enhance your versatility and adaptability in Big Mountain skiing, guiding, and coaching skills, building upon the foundations set in the PSIC Big Mountain Level 2 certification.

Big Mountain Terrain refers to advanced off-piste terrain, typically found at treeline and alpine elevations. This includes steeps, entrances, bowls, couloirs, chutes, drops, cornices, bumps, trees, and various snow surfaces like powder, ice, crud, mixed, slush, spring, and wind affected layers.

This dynamic program focuses on:

- Developing advanced skiing skills and terrain awareness.
- Improving coaching and guiding abilities in advanced terrain.

A Big Mountain Coach is essentially a “front country” guide, trained for off-piste, big mountain terrain within ski area boundaries. While not a backcountry guide certification, the program's guiding mindset pertains to risk management and guiding skills which also applies to Big Mountain environments accessible from many ski resorts in Canada - particularly out West.

A refined understanding of the physics of skiing and equipment used in steep terrain is important when skiing, guiding and coaching at this level. The Level 3 Big Mountain program is designed to cultivate subject matter experts by challenging and empowering participants, while refining their skills and understanding in advanced off-piste terrain. 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 for the Level 3 Big Mountain program align with the PSIC's Adventure Philosophy, emphasizing fun, safe, learning for skiers in advanced on-piste and off-piste terrain. The program focuses on developing versatility and adaptability in a variety of situations encountered in the Big Mountain environment.

Advanced Skiing Skills — Versatility and Adaptability

- Versatility and Adaptability
 - Short turns — Hop turns
 - Ability to CONTROL speed and ELEVATION on advanced off-piste terrain. Slope > 40 degrees.
 - Turn shape requires very limited time spent above the fall line.
 - Turn shape requires minimal deflection of mass
 - Short turns — Free
 - Ability to manage speed and turn shape in advanced off-piste/varied terrain.
 - Force created by skis may or may not deflect the mass (situation dependent)
 - Varied turns — Your Best Skiing
 - Ability to control and choose speed, path and performance in advanced off-piste terrain.
 - Bumps — Advanced Terrain
 - The intention is primarily short turn, fall line.
 - Ability to adapt line, speed and snow contact (at will) in advanced bumps.
 - Entrance navigation — Drop (chute, bowl, couloir, cornice)
 - Ability to land balanced and arrest speed immediately.
 - Ability to land and maintain speed, and direction control.
 - Ability to decide landing location and initiate a transition into a turn.
 - Entrance navigation — Straight line (chute, bowl, couloir)
 - Ability to remain balanced and controlled through feature.
 - Ability to introduce direction and speed, control.
 - Vertical side slip / hop
 - Ability to manage speed and direction down the fall line. Slope > 40 degrees.
 - Diagonal side slip
 - Ability to manage speed and direction across the fall line. Slope > 40 degrees.
 - Traverse
 - Ability to manage and maintain speed, direction and elevation > 50 degrees.

Advanced Guiding and Coaching — Versatility and Adaptability

- The Adventure — Fun, Safe, Learning
 - Engage actively with peers, trainers, and program activities.
 - Recognize and celebrate milestones in teaching approach.
 - Identify hazards in the Big Mountain environment.

- Apply safe guiding techniques and strategies.
- Apply the decision making framework (EEPPTT)* in a consequential environment.
 - *Equipment, environment, physical, psychological, technical, tactical.
- Application of terrain sense — terrain awareness and intelligence.
- Facilitate development through tactical approaches in off-piste advanced terrain.
- Apply purpose based assessments of skiers.
- Apply learning activities based on assessments.
- Develop technical aspects by linking purpose and movements.

Assessment and Evaluation:

- Evaluation is derived through a coached, ongoing assessment of the learning outcomes throughout the three-day Level 3 Evaluation Course. For this reason, your engagement and participation throughout the program 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 3 Big Mountain coach certification is recognized once you have achieved both the Skiing and Teaching portions of the program, and have passed the Evaluation.
- 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 3 Program includes three components (total 10 days):

- Skiing Development (3 days)
- Guiding and Coaching Development (4 days)
- Assessment and Evaluation (3 days)

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/coaching module.

Level 3 Big Mountain Skiing Component

- The Level 3 Skiing Component is a 3 day on-snow training approximately 5 hours per day.
- This is a training program and does not include a final evaluation.
- The three days focus on development of your skiing skills as well as your understanding of how to assess and develop skiing skills in advanced off-piste terrain.

- Throughout the program, you will, together with your LPT, develop a development plan to assist you with the next steps in your development toward achieving Level 3.
- Participation, collaboration and teamwork are important throughout the course.
- You will receive a detailed description of meeting time and place when you register.

Level 3 Big Mountain Guiding and Coaching Component

- The Level 3 Teaching component is a 4 day on-snow training approximately 5 hours per day.
- This is a training program and does not include a final evaluation.
- The five days include development of your guiding and coaching skills as well as your understanding of how to assess and develop skiing skills in advanced off-piste terrain.
- Throughout the program, you will, together with your LPT, develop a development plan to assist you with the next steps in your development toward achieving Level 3.
- Participation, collaboration and teamwork are important throughout the course.
- You will receive a detailed description of meeting time and place when you register.

Level 3 Big Mountain Assessment and Evaluation Component

- The Level 3 Assessment and Evaluation Component is 3 days on-snow, approximately 5 hours per day.
- Participants should arrive prepared to ski advanced off-piste terrain and conditions within the range of skiing, guiding and coaching outcomes described above, and with a reasonable level of experience and comfort in working with advanced skiers in advanced off-piste terrain.
- This is an ongoing assessment process framed in a learning environment. Come to this component with a willingness to learn and a curiosity to explore. Multiple teaching and skiing opportunities will focus on and allow for the development and assessment of the learning outcomes described above.
- Participation, collaboration and teamwork are important throughout this course.

Course Prerequisites:

- PSIC Level 2 Big Mountain or PSIC Level 4 Instructor (or equivalent)
- You MUST be a minimum of 16 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: 90mm to 120mm under foot, bindings & din well adjusted. Well tuned. Radius 18-30m 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!