



Level 3 Big Mountain Coach - Program Overview

5 DAY SKI / TEACH Course

- Skier Development and Terrain Exploration / Coaching and Guiding Development

3 DAY Evaluation Course

8 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.

Skiing

Advanced Skiing Skills — Versatility and Adaptability

Short Turns - Free

- Ability to manage speed and turn shape in advanced off-piste terrain.
- Force created by skis may or may not deflect the mass (situation dependent)

Short Turns - Hop turns

- Ability to CONTROL speed and ELEVATION on steep advanced off-piste terrain.
- Ability to hop the skis into the fall line
- Turn shape requires very limited time spent above the fall line.
- Turn shape requires minimal deflection of mass.
- Speed is controlled and consistent.

Varied Turns - Your best skiing

- Ability to control and choose speed, path and performance in advanced off-piste terrain.
- Turn shape requires deflection of mass at times

Bumps - Advanced terrain

The intention is primarily short turn, fall line.

- Ability to adapt line, speed and snow contact (at will) in advanced bumps.

Navigation of features and entrances (Purpose based skills) - Advanced terrain

Vertical side slip & Vertical hops (frog hop)

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

Diagonal side slip

- Ability to manage speed and direction across the fall line in Advanced terrain
- Ability to manage angle of direction (forward and reverse) and speed with control

Straight line and Speed Management

- Ability to remain balanced and controlled through feature.
- Ability to regain speed and direction control with intent

Drops (feature, cornice).

- Ability to take off with intent and balance
- Ability to land balanced and manage speed and direction control

- Ability to land balanced and maintain speed, and direction control

Traverse (Advanced terrain)

- Ability to manage and maintain speed, direction, and elevation
- Ability to drop down to a lower or pop up to a higher track

Kick Turn and Mobility

- Ability to demonstrate mobility in Advanced terrain
- Ability to kick turn both ways

Teaching / Guiding - The Adventure (Fun Safe Learning)

Guiding Skills

- Demonstrates a competent understanding of Alpine Terrain including entrances, bowls, couloirs, chutes, and steeps.
- Demonstrates a competent level of safe guiding techniques and strategies
- Effectively identifies hazards in the big mountain environment.
- Efficiently moves group through terrain
- Applies a competent decision-making framework
- Identify and Evaluate + Consequence and Probability + Technical and Tactical = Decision

Teaching Skills - (Adventure Builder and the Method)

- Builds connections with trainees and trainers by engaging in the process and learning activities of the program fostering an advanced-level exchange of knowledge.
- Applies advanced tactical approaches for navigation in advanced terrain.
- Creates verbal, visual, and experiential methods providing effective competent level of explanations, demonstrations and practice.
- Adapts lesson in response to terrain changes and utilizes terrain play to enhance skill development and the learning experience.

Technical Skills - (Application of Technical Blueprint)

- Applies technical principles grounded in understanding of force and balance, and the technical blueprint to guide students toward a clearly defined purpose.
- Guides advanced skiers through an organized development process that includes identifying purpose, assessing progress and developing practical skills that enhance the intended purpose.

Course Structure:

The Level 3 Program includes three components (total 8 days):

- Skiing, Guiding and Teaching Development (5 days)
- Assessment and Evaluation (3 days)

Level 3 Big Mountain Skiing, Guiding and Teaching Development Component

- The Level 3 course is a 5 day on-snow training approximately 5-6 hours per day.

- This is a training program and does not include a final evaluation.
- The course focuses on development of your skiing skills and Teaching, 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 Trainer, create 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 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, guiding, 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.
- 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 successfully passed both the Skiing, Guiding and Teaching learning outcomes.

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/Teaching/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 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!