

Ski Patroller interview questions

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What to expect

Ski patroller interviews combine technical snow safety knowledge, emergency medical judgement and teamwork. Expect questions that test how you read terrain, make decisions under pressure, and communicate with guests and colleagues.

- **Technical snow safety:** Questions about snowpack tests, avalanche risk assessment and explosives handling.
- **Scenario and emergency response:** Situations where you must triage injuries, manage a rescue or make a call in bad weather.
- **Behavioural:** Past experiences of teamwork, conflict or stress, using STAR.
- **Process and safety compliance:** How you follow WHS procedures, complete incident reports and manage hazards.
- **Client-facing communication:** How you handle guests who ignore safety rules or need reassurance.
- **Practical assessment:** Some resorts include a ski test, toboggan handling or first aid scenario as part of the interview day.

Typically a one-on-one or panel interview with the patrol director and a senior patroller, sometimes after a practical ski and rescue assessment. The conversation moves from your background and qualifications to technical snow safety, then scenario questions, and finishes with your questions about the resort and roster.

1. Walk me through your typical morning routine before the resort opens.

Why they ask

Tests your understanding of snow safety, hazard marking and communication with lift operations.

How to structure your answer

Chronological walk-through: weather and snow observation, snowpack tests, avalanche control if needed, hazard marking, radio check, then pre-open briefing.

Example answer

"I start with a weather and snow observation from a known study plot. I dig a snow profile, run a compression test and record the results. If the risk is elevated, I join the control team for explosives or ski cutting on specific slopes. After that, I mark any new hazards with bamboo and signs, check my transceiver and first aid kit, and radio the patrol director with an all-clear. Then we have a quick briefing before lifts start spinning."

2. Tell me about a time you had to manage a stressful rescue with limited resources.

Why they ask

Shows how you prioritise, communicate and stay calm.

How to structure your answer

STAR: situation, task, action, result.

Example answer

"Last season, a snowboarder collided with a tree on a black run. I was first on scene with one other patroller. The patient had a suspected head injury and was confused. I took control of the airway and cervical spine, sent my partner to set up the toboggan and call for the on-mountain doctor. We

packaged the patient carefully and transported them to the clinic. The doctor later said our spinal precautions made a real difference. I debriefed with the team afterwards to improve our radio wording."

3. You are patrolling a busy run when you see two skiers collide. One is holding their shoulder, the other is not moving. What do you do?

Why they ask

Tests triage and decision-making under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: scene safety, triage, delegate, treat, transport.

Example answer

"First I make the scene safe by asking other skiers to slow down and stop. I check the non-moving skier first because they are the priority. I call for backup on the radio and ask a nearby ski instructor to keep the area clear. I assess airway, breathing and circulation, and protect the spine. If they are stable, I move to the shoulder injury, which is likely a fracture. I splint it and prepare both patients for transport, handing over to the paramedics when they arrive."

4. How do you assess snowpack stability for avalanche risk, and what tests do you use?

Why they ask

Checks your technical snow safety knowledge.

How to structure your answer

Technical explanation: method, tools, interpretation, limitations.

Example answer

"I start with a weather history and recent snow observations. Then I dig a snow pit on a representative slope and look at layering, grain type and any weak layers. I use a compression test and sometimes an extended column test to see how the snowpack reacts. I record results and compare them with other pits across the resort. I also use a rutschblock test if the terrain allows. The key is not one test but a pattern of evidence, and I always communicate uncertainty to the patrol director."

5. How do you make sure you are following WHS procedures when using explosives for avalanche control?

Why they ask

Tests your understanding of Australian safety law and explosive handling.

How to structure your answer

Process and compliance walk-through: licences, risk assessment, communication, storage, blast area, post-blast check.

Example answer

"I hold the required explosives licence and follow the resort's shot protocol. Before any control work, I check the weather and snow conditions, complete a risk assessment, and confirm the blast area is clear with lift operations and patrol. I use the correct storage and handling procedures, and I never work alone. After the blast, I wait the required time, then do a post-blast check for misfires and stability. I record everything in the daily snow safety log."

6. A guest ducks a rope into a closed area. You catch up with them. How do you handle it?

Why they ask

Shows how you enforce safety rules while keeping the guest calm.

How to structure your answer

De-escalation and education: approach calmly, explain risk, ask for compliance, escalate if needed.

Example answer

"I approach calmly and introduce myself as a patroller. I explain that the area is closed because of unstable snow or a hazard, and that they are putting themselves and others at risk. I ask them to return to the open run with me. If they refuse, I radio for backup and note their pass number. Most people comply once they understand the real danger. I would rather educate than escalate, but safety comes first."