

# How to Ski with a Ski Patrol Toboggan

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One of the most important tools used by professional Ski Patrolmen is the rescue toboggan. Usually made of a lightweight plastic or fiberglass material, toboggans are durable enough to accommodate a 250 lb. man. Handling a rescue toboggan takes skill, especially when skiing over steep or uneven terrain. Here are the ways that experienced Ski Patrolmen get their victims safely down the mountain.

Difficulty: Challenging

## Instructions

things you'll need:

- Skis, boots and poles
- A rescue toboggan
- Assistance by another Patrolman (optional)

- 1 On even and moderately steep terrain, most Patrolmen can safely handle a rescue toboggan by themselves. On steeper, more challenging terrain a Patrolman will often depend on the assistance of another Patrolman handling a "drag line."
- 2 Once the victim has been safely loaded and secured in the toboggan with their equipment, send another Patrolman ahead to clear the path for the toboggan. Loaded toboggans are difficult to stop once they're moving, so a clear path is absolutely necessary.
- 3 Stand with your body between the front toboggan struts, holding onto the handles. To get going, point your skis forward and control your speed by making regular parallel turns.
- 4 When encountering steeper terrain, you can slow the speed of the toboggan by side slipping, staying between the handles. To avoid fatigue, alternate slide slipping from right to left and vice versa.
- 5 To further slow the speed of descent, drop the drag chain. The drag chain is a short link of chain that slides underneath the running surface of the toboggan offering more resistance.
- 6 If you encounter terrain that is so steep you can't handle the toboggan yourself, enlist the help of another Ski Patrolman to handle the drag line. A drag line is a length of rope that is attached to the back of the toboggan. The rear Ski Patrolman holds onto the drag line and skis behind the toboggan, usually using frequent turns or side slipping to help the lead Patrolman slow the speed of the toboggan.

## Tips & Warnings

- Control your speed at all times.
- Enlist help from another Ski Patroller if you think you won't be able to safely control the speed of the toboggan.
- Look for the easiest way down the mountain. The most direct route is not always the safest.
- Never allow yourself to build up too much speed.
- Stop frequently to check on your victim.