



Reg. Charity SC020833

Requirements/Obligations for being a SVIS Ski Guide

Minimum Ski-ing Competency

The ability to ski safely in normal weather and slope conditions while looking after another unsighted person who you are directing and making assessments for on a continuous basis. The level of ski-ing being directed and controlled is that of the Visually Impaired Skier and all judgements must be made on that basis, not whether the guide can manage the conditions. No formal qualifications are necessary, instruction is not to be given under normal conditions and the whole purpose of the guiding is to have enjoyable recreational ski-ing with a difference. No ski training will be given but some guides are extremely good skiers with formal training and good tips can be had by shadowing them or being second guide when VI Skiers are being instructed by those authorised to do so. Your level of basic ski-ing will be assessed by an experienced guide who has the necessary experience to make that assessment.

Obligations

If you have made a commitment to guide then try to do so, being there on time and staying to the end. Obviously there are times when unavoidable circumstances may make this impossible. By increasing our available guide pool there is more flexibility for all and a greater chance to form good pairings under different circumstances.

Understanding that the person you are guiding may be a B1, with no sight, a B2 with some sight, a B3 with useful vision or a B4 someone who is



registered partially sighted and can manage many things but deems it safer for himself and other skiers to have a guide 'looking out for him'. All individuals have different techniques and requirements and SVIS Skiers are no different. It is accepted some pairings will work better than others and safe trial and error will sort this out. 'On site training will be given and shadowing until confidence of guide and VI Skier is gained will always be undertaken.

Get experience in working with as many different sight categories and skiers as possible two/three at minimum simply to get a feel for the scope of the guiding and don't be afraid to realise that the VI Skier may be a better Skier than yourself but it is the team that counts!.

An appropriate Reflective Bib will be provided and a helmet is recommended. If radios are used they will also be provided.

Know how to assist skiers from the reception desk up to the ski hire. Collect skis and/or boots, find a suitable bench, and when you are both ready put any bags in lockers and assist the skier to the slope. Assist the skier to get his boots into the ski and verbally give instructions to get to the foot of the tow. All of this will be done with another guide initially and the Club will look at getting a Mobility Matters Course with Linburn for new Guides or Guides who have not undertaken this course which was extremely useful.

Communication on the slope may be by radio or normal voice. If using Radios they will be checked and set to appropriate channels before leaving the ski collection area. The VI skier is responsible for their pair of radios and any spare batteries. A communications protocol is established before going on to the slope, how to direct, what to do if communication fails, what to do in an emergency etc.

Know the best way to hand the skier the poma, jump on the one behind and give a continuous set of instructions to keep the skier straight when ascending. 'Left a bit, right a bit, crossing the first path, crossing the second path etc. and finally a 3 2 1 and a direction to get off the tow. You probably have previously discussed whether to go to the left or right at the top but repeat the instruction.



Give verbal instructions to reach the ski area after leaving the lift(s). Competently and clearly give instructions to the skier remembering that you can stop at any point if you feel this is necessary. You may choose to ski right behind the skier or if using radio communication stay farther behind and ski down a turn or two behind your skier but do not stay so far behind that you cannot make a proper assessment of the slope that your skier is on – always remember you are skiing and making judgements for them, not yourself – we have already established that you can get down safely (although this does not always happen!).

Know how to use the chairlift with a visually impaired skier – talk through a methodology and if VI Skier has not used a chair before then more than one guide will need to be involved initially and the chair control will also need to be alerted. A single chair should never be used with a VI Skier; the risks are too great so it's double or more.

Recognise the importance of a clear slope and trying to judge the path your skier should take - when to suggest a turn not only as regards the space on the slope and the terrain but where the turn takes place in relation to the skier's speed, remembering that it is the skier's ability and not the ability of the guide which will determine when and where turns can be safely made.

Know what to do if you or your skier takes a tumble.

Know how to guide with and without radios and be able to continue if the radios suddenly fail.

Understand that it is hard not only physically but mentally so don't be afraid of suggesting a five minute break or ending the session.

At the end of the session assist the skier to remove the skis, and return them to the hire and return to the reception area.

Your guiding skills will ultimately be assessed by the VI Skiers you guide.

