

## Skier Ability Guidelines

### Download Skier Ability Guidelines

Helicopter skiing is not an activity reserved for professional "extreme" skiers. Most accomplished skiers and snowboarders have the necessary skills to helicopter ski. Wasatch Powderbird Guides tries to match your ability to our broad mix of terrain, from gentle ridges and bowls to the steep and deep. Perfect style and technical expertise are not pre-requisites, but the ability to control your speed in a variety of snow conditions is critical. It is absolutely necessary that you are proficient at kick-turning, traversing, side-slipping and snow-plowing. These skills will help you handle anything we might encounter.

To fully enjoy helicopter skiing, our guests should have some previous soft snow experience and enough endurance to ski seven runs at a moderate pace. Though we try to access the best snow available, occasionally we encounter sections of heavy snow or breakable crust. On some days, back country snow conditions can be exhilarating for seasoned soft-snow skiers, while at the same time challenging for less experienced clients.

Snow in the back country can often be more consistent and easier to ski than the snow found within the ski areas. Tricky sections can usually be easily negotiated with kick-turns and traverses. Please note, however, that once we leave our base, we do not return until the end of the day. If you are flown in early for any reason, we must charge you for the full day of skiing plus the cost of the fly-in.

The development of the 'wide-body' powder ski has dramatically changed powder skiing. This ski, which is substantially wider and shorter than a traditional ski, offers much more stability and flotation in powder conditions. Many expert skiers have realized that this ski allows for an entirely new dimension in powder skiing. For intermediate and beginner skiers, these skis can make a dramatic difference in their powder skiing and, therefore, increase their enjoyment of the day. **We highly recommend 'wide-body' skis for all skier abilities!**

We try to group people according to their skiing ability, interest, and physical condition. Grading our clients on this system is not done to "make or break" your skiing self-image, but to ensure you have the best day possible. Snowboarders should consider their ability to handle traverses or flat terrain that may be encountered when assessing their ability levels. Please review the letter-grade system and let us know how we should categorize you for your heli-day. Be objective and honest, there is nothing worse than over- or under-estimating your skills and being grouped with people whom you do not feel compatible. Guests who excessively slow the group or compromise their own or others' safety will be flown back to our base and charged for the full day, plus the cost of the fly in. Feel free to call and speak with one of our reservationists if you need additional help assessing your skills. Ability level is assessed by using the letter-grade system below:

#### **Type "A" Skiers**

Capable of skiing any slope in any snow condition;  
Strong skiers who can maintain a rapid, non-stop pace;  
Never Fall (well, almost never...);  
Experienced back country skiers;

*There are very few 'A' skiers. This rating is only issued by one of our guides.*

#### **Type "B" Skiers**

Capable of skiing most slopes in most conditions;  
Enough endurance to maintain a steady pace;  
Seldom Fall - when they do, they regroup quickly;  
Able to confidently kick-turn and traverse anything;  
Proficient powder skiers with back country experience;  
"B" skiers are often some of the best in the ski areas;

*Most of our guests are "B" skiers.*

#### **Type "C" Skiers**

Competent skiers who favor moderate slopes with consistent snow;  
Well-conditioned, but prefer a leisurely pace;  
May fall often, but collect themselves quickly;  
Good recreational skiers with little powder experience;  
Skiers with little or no back country experience;  
*Wide Powder skis are required.*

**Type "D" Skiers**

Skiers who can handle moderate slopes only in good conditions;  
Able to ski seven runs at a slow pace;  
Solid recreational skiers who have minimal in powder experience;  
Skiers with little or no back country experience;  
Often fall repeatedly and may not be able to collect themselves quickly;  
*If you think you are "D" skier please speak to a host.*