

Meeting Minutes—Monday, June 29, 2020
CT Region Patrol Leadership
Zoom conference 1900-2100

Attendees:

Patrol Directors: Bob Cassello (Alumni); Mike Smarz (Mohawk); Ken Joyce (Pahquioque); Justin Lonergan (Powder Ridge); **Assistant Patrol Directors/NSP Reps:** Walt Behuniak (Southington); **Training Coordinator:** Kevin Muravnick (Powder Ridge); **Medical Advisors:** Melinda Mingus (CT Region); Steve Goldblatt (Sundown); **CT Region Assistant Safety Advisor:** Jenny O'Donnell; **Region OEC Administrator:** Peter Bayer; **CT Region Admin:** Sue-Ellen Repeta (Pequot Section Chief); Tony Philpin (Housatonic Section Chief); Mark Pahmer (Alternate Region Director); Skip Mudge (RD)

Open/Closed Courses

Open courses have been a significant problem plaguing not only our region and division, but throughout the NSP system. IORs and ITs have done a great job in completing and closing courses in a timely manner. COVID-19 did impact some classes, as our training activity was interrupted by unplanned shutdowns and cancellations. In many cases, IORs have extended their course end dates to allow them sufficient time to complete the courses.

Website

Since May 1 (about when we went “live”) there have been 550 visits, 257 of which were “unique”. For reference, our region has 491-503 active and alumni patrollers (131 are alumni).

Please send any patrol information, photos, etc. to either our webmaster, John Segretta (john@synergysolutions.team) or Skip Mudge (skip.mudge.nsp@gmail.com)

Awards Banquet survey results

There is still a lot of apprehension and uncertainty regarding COVID-19. Just because it seems to be contained in CT at this time, does not mean we can let our guard down. The way we maintain these infection levels is through social distancing, hand hygiene and wearing face coverings. Therefore, our plan is to invite award recipients to a small in-person gathering that will allow social distancing (outside if the weather is good) and video the presentations. The finished video would then be uploaded to the website for all to see. We might also have a region-wide Zoom to get everyone together in a virtual sense, to present the video.

Key to pulling this off is a videographer to capture the event and then produce/edit a final video that we can share with the rest of the region. This could be one individual or a team. Tim Appleton has offered his services in this regard over the years, but he is simply overloaded right now. Producing a video can be a time-consuming project.

Patrol Leadership: Please identify someone (could be more than one person) who might be interested in documenting the awards presentation for our region.

Safety Team—Jenny O'Donnell

Looking for each patrol to assign a Safety Captain. This would entail more than just running a single event, or multiple events, but would really be the person who would represent the safety message for the patrol. This would be the point person for the Region Safety Team and relieve the Patrol Directors of one responsibility. This becomes even more important as we are all dealing with COVID-19 on top of everything else. It might also be a great opportunity for a YAP to become involved in a leadership role. A safety message from a YAP may resonate better with the younger skiers and boarders. Kathy Fitzpatrick mentioned this to everyone back in February. We would like to have some names no later than our next Leadership meeting [July 27]. Please contact Jenny O'Donnell (jennyod55@gmail.com), Kathy Fitzpatrick (klsfitz@gmail.com), Melinda Mingus (mmingus@gmail.com) or Skip Mudge (skip.mudge.nsp@gmail.com).

Melinda shared that Massachusetts beat us to the punch on this, and began their Safety Captain program last year. It was a big hit. Their Safety Captain name tags, were very desirable. The program allowed many patrollers to stay connected and have a job. This position will be very important as we move forward. But they don't have YAPs as Safety Captains, yet.

Sue-Ellen echoed the value of YAPs as Safety Captains, but had some concern regarding the pressures that may come if distance learning is still in force as the school year returns. One name that comes to mind (for Southington) is Austin Hochstrate who was just recently a YAP and does not currently have the school demands. He is ready to take on more responsibilities. CT YAPs are very capable. It may be a good opportunity, depending upon the individual. Sue-Ellen is ready to support any YAP who might be interested.

Jenny will submit a writeup for the website.

Stress Management—Melinda Mingus

The Safety Team has two main initiatives right now. One is social media, led by Kathy Fitzpatrick, the other is patroller stress awareness training which is a follow-on from last summer's survey. Among the findings, it revealed that 36% had experienced some sort of critical incident stress injury, and only 33% of the respondents had used CISM. These resources are listed on the Eastern Division website (<https://www.nspeast.org/cism-resources.html>). This work is not complete. One goal is to create a checklist for patrollers to help us understand how stress can manifest itself. Symptoms can be significantly delayed, even up to a year after an event. COVID-19 adds another layer on top of this as patrollers experience stress due to new family, financial, employment situations. Plus, physical distancing, concerns about age, medical co-morbidities, working in new/different teams, being asked not to work, quarantines, possible exposures, new procedures, etc. It is important that we get a handle on this early.

CT has a good CISM team already. We need to build upon and leverage our regional resources. (Charlie Epstein is still active in this area and has expressed a desire to become more involved). Cal Goldsmith has asked Melinda to collaborate more with local CISM resources. It is important for all patrollers (and candidate patrollers) to know how to access these resources. In addition to what is on the Eastern Division site, we will add it to the CT Region website. Melinda will make sure we have the correct, up-to-date contact information.

Another survey will be going out to all Patrol Directors in early August to learn more about what they actually do in these situations, how patrols use local resources. While it is good practice to conduct informal debriefings after calls, it needs to be stressed that a CISD done improperly can do harm. The members of the division task force (not necessarily members of the Safety Team) are experts in their fields, most of whom are International Critical Incident Stress Foundation certified and trained. It is also important to understand that stress reactions are normal reactions and should not be considered a sign of weakness.

OEC—Peter Bayer

OEC6 Rollout: All instructors must complete the rollout before teaching (IORs will not be able to register courses nor can ITs be assigned to courses until they have completed the rollout). Peter will register an OEC 6 Rollout Instructor Training course shortly. The training is available on the NSP.org website as of July 1. Each patrol will be responsible for ensuring all patrollers complete the online OEC 6 Rollout. Peter will be checking with each Patrol Director to identify an instructor to administer this process. It is probably best if this is not the IOR for the candidate OEC course, as they will be busy enough. It might be a good opportunity for a new instructor to become comfortable with some of the administrative aspects of course management (e.g., register and close courses). Peter will be the IT for these courses.

Refresher: This will consist of the workbook and online course (both available online now). The skills that would have been included in this year's refresher will be included in the 2021 refresher. There will be no regional refresher, but instead, each patrol will be responsible for running this as well. The workbook compliance will be handled by having each patroller sign a form that attests to their workbook completion and then send the form to the IOR (photo, scan or other means). Peter will also be contacting the Patrol Directors to identify an IOR for each patrol. There is no separate instructor refresher this year.

Peter will confirm CPR demonstration requirements. A question came up about AHA CPR expiration dates being extended. Per the May 21 AHA Guidelines (see our website, ctnsp.org/aha-update) this should not impact us for the winter season.

Are we allowed to do on-the-hill training? Lift evac? National and Eastern Division do not have a policy on this, as this is really driven by local regulations and area management. The COOPED-UP guidelines (updated monthly) are just that, guidelines, things to consider as we develop our own area protocols.

Patrol ownership of equipment

Discussed the importance of keeping ownership of all equipment with the area. Patrols should not own any equipment such as snowmobiles, quads, toboggans, lift evac equipment, etc. A single lawsuit has the potential to bankrupt not only the ski patrol and region, but the Eastern Division and National. National has \$8 million liability insurance coverage. A single snowmobile suit could be as high as \$15 million (or more?). Legal fees, alone, could be devastating.

Ken Joyce will check with area management on some open issues. Skip will follow up with Ski Sundown.

Open Region Positions

Please talk to your patrollers about becoming involved with our region. There are brief descriptions on our website.

- Awards Advisor
- STC (probably no Sr. OEC this season)
- Historian
- Administrative Assistant

Powder Ridge Mountain Biking

There are still opportunities for mountain bike patrolling at Powder Ridge. Contact Justin Lonergan for more information. It is a good opportunity to maintain skills and gain experience in a non-snow environment.

PPE supplies are okay right now, thanks to donations from local fire departments as well as some online suppliers. They have had about 12-13 accidents thus far, about half of them serious, and a few transports, so they are keeping busy. Minor injuries have been treated outside the patrol room utilizing a “self-treatment” protocol, which has worked quite well. They do a quick yes/no COVID patient survey and document the results as well as PPE used for each patient. PPE are not recycled.

Every chair is disinfected, lift attendants wear gloves and load/unload bikes. “Please knock for assistance” sign on patrol room door, but not locked. Patrollers typically sit right outside the door anyway. Have been following the COOPED-UP task force guidelines. Have developed procedures that can be used in other pandemic-type situations, not limited to COVID-19. Prior to reporting for work, every employee (including patrollers) is screened (questionnaire, pulse ox, temperature, etc.) Patrol administers this screening. To date, no reports of “abnormal readings” and no suspected or confirmed COVID-19 contacts. No guest screening, per management. Following CT Restaurant Guidelines (see May 11, 2020 meeting notes).

N-95 to be used when risk of aerosolized particulates (coughing, sneezing, etc.) KN-95 used in lieu of surgical masks. Fire department will fit test if a patroller requests, however, this is not required. Understand that OSHA has relaxed guidelines and while they recommend fit testing, they no longer require it. Have put together a few “go bags” with a couple face shields, gowns, N-95’s, gloves, etc.

Decon: currently cover treatment cots with tarps so that it is easier to wipe down adjacent cots and not have to deal with disinfecting linens. If needed, it is easy enough to remove the tarp.

Looking toward the winter season, expect additional challenges due to cold weather and larger staffing levels—how to socially distance in a small patrol room. More difficult to treat minor injuries outside. Most patrollers will not tolerate sitting in the patrol room with masks for extended periods of time.

Sue-Ellen mentioned that she has a contact with a medical supplies company that has plenty of N95, gloves, gowns, finger-prick tests, etc., and will send some samples to her. None of the patrols on the call had contacted their suppliers yet. It was suggested that we all try to forecast our needs, and see if this supplier could handle our needs in case our current suppliers experience inventory shortfalls. (Post-meeting note: all CT schools will be requiring staff and students to wear masks. One of two Bristol high schools as 1200 students. This could add to the demand of needed PPE just as we will be ramping up. Factor in the expected increase in COVID-19 activity and flu season ...) Powder Ridge uses buyemt.com.

How are we doing?

Many Patrol Directors report that their area management feels it's too early to begin planning. However, as the safety representatives at our respective areas, this is something we can do to be proactive. Most experts anticipate a fall/winter resurgence concurrent with flu season, so we should start thinking of how we might handle things, such as possible patrol room traffic flow and reconfigurations, top shack use, contaminated uniforms (patrol or area facilities to decontaminate? Expense of decontamination?) staffing issues, etc. It is likely some patrollers will decide not to patrol this season. Some patrols may even be asking some high-risk patrollers not to patrol this season. What if we find our rosters down 25-30%? What are the ramifications of patrollers who may have been infected or been contagious during their shifts? What if an entire shift must self-quarantine for two weeks? Do we pro-actively downsize shifts and hold some patrollers in reserve to fill in? Do we stagger start/end times for patrollers to minimize contact events in the patrol room? Do we ask patrollers to gear up at home/in their cars to minimize time in the patrol room? Some patrols have dedicated patrol staff in the base area and take over patient care. This may need to be changed so that there is a continuity of care. The lead patroller stays with the patient until discharge. If a patroller has no contact and just ran the sled, he/she would have no patient contact unless needed. Keep patient care personnel to a minimum. If you're not absolutely needed, don't help. Tony Philpin has had some training through the CT Medical Reserve Corps and says that the current definition of "contact" is within 6 feet for 15 minutes or greater. This is subject to change as we continue to learn more about the virus.

Next Meeting: July 17 at 1900. Posted on the website.