

AMGA Terrain and Supervision Guidelines

(Version 5.14.14, revised May 7, 2014)

Note: *The new Terrain and Supervision Guidelines standards only apply to field staff hired after January 1, 2008. All field staff hired before this date are exempt from the new guidelines.*

I. Supervision - Definition of Terms

Unsupervised: These are guides who are AMGA certified for the terrain in which they work.

Indirect Supervision: Indirect supervision implies regular meetings and periodic briefings and debriefings about route selection, strategy and client care, along with regular progress and performance reports. Such meetings should be documented in the guide's personnel file. It is the supervising guide's responsibility to ensure that assigned tasks are appropriate to a guide's training and ability.

Direct Supervision: Direct supervision implies side by side guiding such as two rope teams traveling near by on a glacier or on nearby multi-pitch routes, daily briefings and debriefings about route selection, strategy, and client care. Side by side guiding and meetings should be documented in the guide's personnel file. It is the supervising guide's responsibility to ensure that assigned tasks are appropriate to a guide's training and ability. It is allowable for the mentored guide to be in radio or phone contact when turning around with clients to descend.

Supervisors: These are guides who are certified or highly trained for the terrain in which they work and have been assigned a supervisory role for that terrain within the company. Certified supervisors are able to supervise up to 10 employees at any given time. Graduates of the Advanced level courses are able to supervise up to 5 employees at any given time. In addition tenured guides who meet the 2008 exemption are allowed to supervise and mentor the same as certified guides.

II. Mentoring and Supervision

Mentoring and supervision of candidates is a critical component to the training of a guide. This apprenticeship is considered by the AMGA as critical in the development of many skills that cannot be adequately covered in a formal system only. Because of this the AMGA relies on the Accredited Businesses to provide that apprenticeship.

For that apprenticeship to be effective it is important for Accredited Businesses not only hire individuals that meet the terrain descriptions but also give those who are appropriately trained, tenured or certified in a discipline the authority and responsibility to mentor and supervise employees.

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It is also imperative that certified or tenured individuals understand this responsibility and makes sure they have the tools and skills to accomplish the task.

III. Definition of Terms for Training and Certification Levels

Instructor: An individual who has passed the Climbing Wall Instructor, Single Pitch Instructor Assessment or Rock Instructor Exam.

Example: an individual who has passed the Climbing Wall Instructor assessment is a Climbing Wall Instructor. An individual who has passed the Single Pitch Instructor assessment is a Single Pitch Instructor. An individual who has passed the Rock Instructor Exam is a Rock Instructor.

Apprentice Guide: An individual who has taken one of the first level courses (Alpine Skills Course, Rock Guide Course, Alpine Guide Course, and Ski Guide Course).

Example: an individual who has successfully completed the Ski Guides Course is an Apprentice Ski Guide.

Note: *an individual who has successfully completed the Alpine Skills Course is an Apprentice Guide, but needs to work under direct supervision.*

Assistant Guide: An individual who has passed the exam component of an advanced level course.

Example an individual who has passed the Advanced Rock Guide Course and Aspirant Exam is an Assistant Rock Guide.

Aspirant Mountain Guide: An individual who has passed the Aspirant Exam component of all three advanced level courses.

Example: an individual who has passed the Rock, Alpine and Ski Aspirant Exams is an Aspirant Guide.

Certified Guide: An individual who has passed a full exam.

Example: an individual who has passed their Alpine Exam is an Alpine Guide.

Example: an individual who has passed their Rock Exam, Alpine Aspirant Exam and Ski Guide Course is a Rock Guide/Assistant Alpine Guide/Apprentice Ski Guide.

American Mountain Guide/IFMGA Guide: Any guide who has passed all three guide level exams is an American Mountain Guide.

IV. Terrain and Supervision Guidelines

Terrain Types:

- Single Pitch Instructor
- Rock Instructor
- Ice Instructor
- Rock Guide

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- Alpine Guide
- Ski Guide

Single Pitch Instructor Terrain:

Single pitch instructor terrain is not of wilderness in nature, up to Grade I, that is climbed without intermediate belays. Approaches and descents to and from climbing venues present no difficulties such as route finding, scrambling, navigating, or short roping. The routes should not exceed Grade I or be more than one pitch in length.

Supervision Guidelines

- AMGA Single Pitch Instructors, Rock Instructors, Assistant Rock Guides, Rock Guides, and IFMGA Guides can work unsupervised in this terrain.
- Graduates of the Single Pitch Instructor Course can work under direct supervision of an AMGA Rock Instructor, AMGA Rock Guide or IFMGA Guide.
- All graduates of the AMGA SPI Course working in this terrain must attain AMGA SPI Certification within one year of completing the AMGA SPI Course.
- Mentor for this terrain must be an AMGA Rock Instructor, AMGA Rock Guide or IFMGA Guide. In addition tenured guides who meet the 2008 exemption are allowed to supervise and mentor the same as certified guides.

Rock Instructor Terrain:

Rock instructor terrain is not of wilderness nature, up to Grade III, with simple approaches and descents that require minimal short roping. The approach and/or descent should have only short sections of Class 3 and/or Class 4 terrain that does not require any movement on snow that creates a falling hazard. The routes should not exceed Grade III in length.

Supervision Guidelines

- Rock Instructors and Assistant Rock Guides can work unsupervised in this terrain.
- Apprentice Rock Guides can work under indirect supervision of an Assistant Rock Guide, Rock Guide or IFMGA Guide for routes up to Grade II.
- Mentor for this terrain must be an Assistant Rock Guide, Rock Guide or IFMGA Guide. In addition tenured guides who meet the 2008 exemption are allowed to supervise and mentor the same as certified guides.

Ice Instructor Terrain: *Single pitch ice terrain is not of wilderness nature and has simple approaches with no short roping. Objective hazards such as avalanche and icefall should be minimal. Multi pitch ice terrain is not of wilderness nature, up to Grade II, with simple approaches and descents that require minimal short roping. The approach and/or descents should have only short sections of low angle ice or other hazards that require minimal management the routes should be no longer than 2-3 pitches.*

Supervision Guidelines

- In single pitch ice terrain:
 - Assistant Alpine Guides, Alpine Guides, and IFMGA Guides can work unsupervised in this terrain.
 - Graduates of the Ice Instructor Course can work under indirect supervision of an Alpine Guide or IFMGA Guide.

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- Single Pitch Instructors can work under direct supervision of an Alpine Guide or IFMGA Guide on single pitch terrain where they do not lead.
- Mentor for this terrain must be an Alpine Guide or IFMGA Guide. In addition tenured guides who meet the 2008 exemption are allowed to supervise and mentor the same as certified guides.

Supervision Guidelines

- In multi-pitch ice terrain

- Alpine Guides and IFMGA Guides can work unsupervised in this terrain.
- Assistant Alpine Guides can work under indirect supervision of an Alpine Guide or IFMGA Guide.
- Graduates of the Ice Instructor Course who are either a Rock Instructor or Rock Guide can work under indirect supervision of an Alpine Guide or IFMGA Guide.
- Apprentice Alpine Guides who are also graduates of the Ice Instructor Course can work under direct supervision of an Alpine Guide or IFMGA Guide.
- Mentor for this terrain must be an Alpine Guide or IFMGA Guide. In addition tenured guides who meet the 2008 exemption are allowed to supervise and mentor the same as certified guides.

Rock Guide Terrain:

Rock Guide Terrain includes Rock Instructor terrain and terrain that is of wilderness nature, up to Grade V, with complex approaches and descents that require substantial short-roping. The approach and/or descent should not require movement on snow or ice that creates a falling hazard. Rock Guides should refrain from guiding terrain where the preponderance of the climbing is 3rd and 4th class and it is alpine in nature without holding Alpine Certification.

Supervision Guidelines

- Rock Guides and IFMGA Guides can work unsupervised in this terrain.
- Assistant Rock Guides can work under indirect supervision of a Rock Guide or IFMGA Guide on routes up to Grade IV.
- Apprentice Rock Guides can work under direct supervision of a Rock Guide or IFMGA Guide on routes up to Grade II. This allows for mentorship in complex short roping and route finding terrain.
- Rock Instructors can work under direct supervision of a Rock Guide or IFMGA Guide for routes up to Grade III. This allows for mentorship in complex short roping and route finding terrain.
- Mentor for this terrain must be a Rock Guide or IFMGA Guide. In addition tenured guides who meet the 2008 exemption are allowed to supervise the same as certified guides.

Alpine Terrain:

Alpine terrain includes Rock Instructor terrain and terrain that is of wilderness nature, up to alpine Grade V, with complex approaches and descents that may include snow, ice and glaciated terrain. The routes can be long and complex with the majority of the terrain being 3rd and 4th class with significant steps of 5th class. The Certified Alpine Guide should refrain

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from doing long sections of high standard 5th class climbing that is more akin to Certified Rock Guide terrain without also holding that certification.

Supervision Guidelines

- Alpine Guides and IFMGA Guides can work unsupervised in this terrain.
- Assistant Alpine Guides can work under indirect supervision of an Alpine Guide or IFMGA Guide, for routes up to Alpine Grade IV.
- Apprentice Alpine Guides can work under indirect supervision of an Alpine Guide or IFMGA Guide, for routes up to Alpine Grade III without significant ice climbing.
- Apprentice Alpine Guides who have also completed the Ice Instructor Course can work under indirect supervision of an Alpine Guide or IFMGA Guide, for routes up to Alpine Grade III with significant ice climbing.
- Apprentice Alpine Guides can work under direct supervision of an Alpine Guide or IFMGA Guide, for routes up to Alpine Grade IV.
- Graduates of the Alpine Skills Course can work under direct supervision of an Assistant Alpine Guide, Alpine Guide or IFMGA Guide, for routes up to Alpine Grade III.
- Mentor for this terrain must be an Alpine Guide or IFMGA Guide. In addition tenured guides who meet the 2008 exemption are allowed to supervise and mentor the same as certified guides.

Ski Terrain: *Ski terrain is of wilderness nature, includes glaciated and non-glaciated terrain, may have simple or complex ascents and descents, and may include short roping on moderate rock and ice terrain. The AMGA Ski Guide should refrain from doing complex short roping on difficult rock and ice terrain that is more akin to AMGA Alpine Guide Terrain without also holding that certification as well.*

Supervision Guidelines

- Ski Guides and IFMGA Guides can work unsupervised in this terrain.
- Apprentice Ski Guides with level 3 avalanche training can work under indirect supervision of an Assistant Ski Guide, Ski Guide or IFMGA Guide, on simple, non-glaciated terrain.
- Assistant Ski Guides can work under indirect supervision of a Ski Guide or IFMGA Guide, on complex, non-glaciated or simple glaciated terrain.
- Assistant Ski Guides can work under direct supervision of a Ski Guide or IFMGA Guide, on complex glaciated terrain.
- Mentor for this terrain must be a Ski Guide or IFMGA Guide. In addition tenured guides who meet the 2008 exemption are allowed to supervise the same as certified guides.

V. Training Timeline

The stated goal of the new accreditation standard is to have all field staff, except those meeting the 2008 exemption, be trained by the AMGA for the terrain they work on. To that end, it is an expectation that non-exempt staff seek out the training required to meet that goal within a prescribed timeframe. No more than 3 years should elapse between the time

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that a course or exam is completed and the next course or exam is taken. The one exception is for single pitch terrain where the expectation is that the SPI assessment be successfully completed within 1 year of having completed the SPI course.

VI. In-House Training

AMGA courses are considered the baseline technical training for specific terrain types and are not a substitute for in-house training. In-house training is considered an integral part of guide training as a means of preparing guides to meet the specific operational needs of an accredited business. In-house training, in conjunction with AMGA training and certification, serves to develop well-rounded and competent guides and employees.

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