

The



Learn to  
Slalom



Fifteen easy steps for you to progress from your first attempt to slalom skiing on one ski.



# Level 1

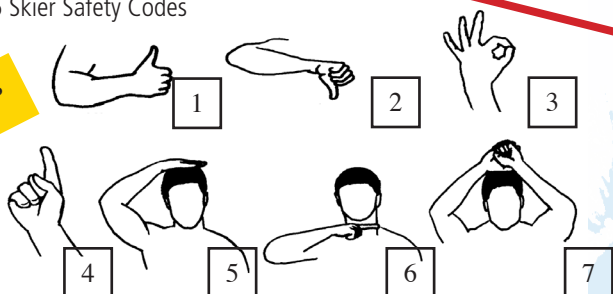
On land, demonstrate:

- The seven skier hand signals
- Placing feet in and adjusting bindings
- Holding the handle properly
- Proper body position for starting
- Proper body position while skiing

Explain five of the 15 Skier Safety Codes

**Important safety rule:  
Always wear flotation**

**Hand Signals**



- 1. Speed up:** The “thumbs-up” gesture indicates that the skier would like the speed increased.
- 2. Slow down:** The “thumbs-down” gesture indicates that the skier would like the speed decreased.
- 3. OK:** If the set speed or boat the path is good, the skier may use the OK signal.
- 4. Turn:** When either the skier or the driver wants the boat turned, a circle motion with the arm over the head with one finger in the air is used. It is usually followed by pointing in the direction of the turn.
- 5. Back to the Dock:** A pat on the head indicates that the skier would like to return to the dock.
- 6. Cut Motor/Stop:** A slashing motion with the hand across the neck indicates the boat is to stop immediately. This signal can be used by the skier, driver or observer.
- 7. I’m OK (after a fall):** This important signal indicates that a skier is OK after a fall. It consists of both hands clasped over the head. It should be used every time the skier falls.

## Water Skier’s Safety Codes

**Rule 1: Always wear flotation.** A properly fitted personal flotation device is designed to fit snugly, so that it won’t slip up on the body during a fall. The recommended type is a jacket or vest that covers the chest, abdomen and back.

**Rule 2:** Always be sure your equipment is in good condition. Your personal safety and enjoyment depend on the equipment you use. Check your equipment regularly. Be sure that your skis do not have sharp or protruding surfaces that could cut or scrape the skier. Check towropes for frayed areas or broken bridles and handles. Repair or replace damaged or unsafe articles.

**Rule 3:** Don’t give the starting signal until ready. Make sure you are ready, the slack has been taken out of the rope and you are clear of any dangerous obstacles around you. Keep your ski tips up.

**Rule 4:** Do not ski near docks, pilings, other boats or swimmers. Always look ahead and be sure you are aware of your surroundings and where you are going at all times. Many water ski injuries result from collisions with docks or other solid objects.

**Rule 5:** Never put any part of your body through the handle or wrap the line around yourself in any way.

**Rule 6:** Never ski in shallow water or an area where there may be obstructions above or just beneath the surface.

**Rule 7:** When a fall is inevitable, try to fall backward or to either side. A forward fall increases the chances of contact with the ski.

**Rule 8:** Know and use the skier hand signals. It is particularly important to use the skier’s “I’m OK” signal after a fall if you are all right.

**Rule 9:** If you fall in an area where there is other boat traffic, lift one ski half way out of the water. This will signal to other boats that there is a skier in the water.

**Rule 10:** Never ski to the point of excessive fatigue.

**Rule 11:** Always ski during daylight, from sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

**Rule 12:** Never ski directly in front of another boat.

**Rule 13:** Always use equal length ropes when skiing double.

**Rule 14:** Always ensure that the motor is “off” when a skier is entering and exiting the boat.

**Rule 15:** Always have an observer in the towboat.

## Level 1

On land, demonstrate:

- The seven skier hand signals
- Placing feet in and adjusting bindings
- Holding the handle properly
- Proper body position for starting
- Proper body position while skiing

Explain five of the 15 Skier Safety Codes

### Placing Feet In Bindings And Adjusting



### How To Properly Hold The Handle



For two skis, use the knuckles up grip; for one ski, use the baseball grip (with either hand up).

### Proper Body Position For Starting



Demonstrate proper cannonball body position on land before entering the water to get the proper feel. Hold the handle and have a partner pull on the rope slightly to help pull you up. This will give you the feeling of being pulled up by the boat. While practicing this task, make sure your knees are together at all times, and stay in the cannonball position as shown in the picture. Let the boat do the work for you rather than trying to do the work yourself.

Helpful  
Tip

### Proper Body Position While Skiing

Helpful  
Tip

Be sure to remain in the chair position at all times while on the water. This will ensure proper posture. You should have your arms straight and shoulders up.



## Level 2 Two-Ski Starts

Complete a deep-water start and maintain the proper two-ski body position for three seconds.



Place the rope and handle between your skis. When ready, signal the driver to begin accelerating. Let the boat slowly pull you up. **DO NOT** try to pull yourself out of the water by pulling in with your arms. When you feel the boat begin to pull you up, slowly rise to a sitting position using your legs. Once up, maintain the proper body position of arms straight, knees bent and flexible and keep your head up, looking toward the boat.

### Practicing on land will speed the learning process



**IMPORTANT Level 2 Tip:**  
Keep your **Arms Straight,**  
**Knees Bent, Head Up**

## Level 3 Two-Ski Balance

Maintain proper two-ski body position for 20 seconds.

Place emphasis on the proper two-ski body position: head up, arms straight and knees bent and put some downward pressure on the handle.



## Suggested Towboat Speeds

Approximate Weight Of Skier	Less than 50 lbs.	50 to 100 lbs.	100 to 150 lbs.	150 to 180 lbs.	180 lbs. or more
Two-Ski Speeds	13 mph	18 mph	22 mph	25 mph.	28 mph
One Ski Speeds	16 mph	22 mph	26 mph	30 mph.	32 mph

## Level 4 Two-Ski Steering

Steer back and forth in control inside the wakes

Initiate each turn by putting more pressure on the inside edge of the ski opposite to the direction you want to go. Example, to turn right, lean to your right and apply more pressure on your left ski.



Releasing pressure on one foot while placing pressure on the other foot will allow you to go in the direction you want to go. For example: unweighting the left foot while placing pressure on the right foot will allow you to turn toward the left wake.

Helpful  
Tip

## Level 5 Two-Ski Wake Crossing

Cross over to the outside of the boat wakes on one side only and return to the center of the wakes.



Cross the wakes by turning both skis at a sharp angle to the wakes and bend your knees to absorb the shock. Crossing one ski at a time with not enough angle will result in a fall.

Try to cross the wake at an angle. Turn toward the wake and keep pressure on the ski closest to the boat (furthest away from the wake) until you are well over the wake. Trying to go over the wake slowly will result in a fall.

Helpful  
Tip

## Level 6 Two-Ski Wake Crossing

Leave the center of the boat wakes on one side and cross the wakes one time.

The most common mistake for a skier is to pull on the handle while crossing the wakes. Keep your arms straight, and knees bent and together. Continue to maintain the chair position.

Helpful  
Tip

## Level 7 Two-Ski Wake Crossing

Complete seven wake crossings in 60 seconds or less.

Continue to emphasize proper body position.

## Level 8 Two-Ski, One-Foot Balance

Inside the boat wakes, lift one ski clear of the water and hold it in the air for five seconds.

Shift all your weight to one foot, then lift the opposite foot. Lift your knee to keep the tip of the ski from dragging in the water.



Helpful  
Tip

Which foot are you most comfortable standing on? This will become your dominant foot that you'll put on the **front** of the slalom ski. If necessary, stand on both feet and have a partner give you a slight push from behind. Whichever foot you step with first is generally your dominant foot.

## Level 9 The Transition, Two Skis to One

Inside the boat wakes, drop one ski and ride on the other for five seconds

Shift your weight to one foot and lift the heel of your other foot from the binding. Slowly move the ski back with your toes pointed down. The water will pull the ski away.



**IMPORTANT Level 9 Tip: When the ski is off, bring the free foot to the calf of your standing leg and move it down slowly until it is resting on the ski right behind your standing foot.**

Helpful  
Tip

Make sure you have an adjustable binding on the drop ski. Adjust this binding so you can lift the heel out easily. Place this ski on the less dominant foot. This will be the ski you kick off. Once you kick off the ski, continue to drag your toe in the water for a few seconds and slowly slide your foot into the back binding.

## Level 10 One Ski Steering

Steer back and forth in control inside the boat wakes

Initiate the turn by leaning slightly to the side and while bringing the handle towards your hips to move in the direction you want to go."



Before you attempt this maneuver, be sure to demonstrate the proper pulling position on land. You want your arms straight and hips to the handle. You should always lean with your shoulders to the side rather than back or forward. To initiate each turn, bring your hips to the handle while pointing the tip of the ski toward the wakes. Continue to maintain proper body position.

## Level 11 One Ski, Deep-Water Start

Complete a one ski, deep-water start

Bend the knee of your ski leg until it is touching your chest. Place the rope on the inside of the ski.

Bend the knee of your free leg and use it as a stabilizer. As the boat begins pulling you, your shoulders should slowly move up and slightly back to keep your weight over the center of the ski. To maintain your balance, drag your free leg and keep the tip of the ski in line with the boat.

As you begin to rise, DO NOT push the ski out from under your body. Let the water push the ski to you. Maintain the basic start position as the ski lifts you out of the water and stay low with your weight over the ski. Use your free foot as a stabilizer.



Right-foot forward skiers should have the rope on the left side of the ski and vice versa for left-foot forward skiers. Some skiers have more control putting their back foot in the binding as well. This is based on comfort and control for the skier. Be sure to let the boat do the work pulling you up.



## Level 12 One Ski Wake Crossing

Cross over to the outside of the boat wakes on one side only and return to the center



Maintain proper body position. You should be well balanced and leaning to the side rather than back or forward. Make sure your shoulders are up with hips close to the handle; and, when you cross the wakes, use your knees to absorb the wakes. To initiate the turn, in order to prevent slack, turn the tip of the ski toward the wakes and slowly bring your hips towards the handle.

## Level 13 One Ski Wake Crossings

Leave the center of the boat wakes on one side and cross both wakes and return to the center one time.

## Level 14 One Ski Wake Crossings

Leave the center of the boat wakes on one side and complete seven crossings of both boat wakes in 60 seconds or less

Continue to emphasize proper body position and lean away from the boat. Make sure you're using (bending) your knees and not pulling on the rope (keeping your arms straight).

## Level 15 One Ski Wake Crossings

Cross both boat wakes seven times in 45 seconds or less.

***Congratulations!***  
***You are now a slalom skier!***



For additional information, go to  
[usawaterskiandwakesports.org](http://usawaterskiandwakesports.org) or contact us at:

USA Water Ski

1251 Holy Cow Road

Polk City, Fla. 33868

Phone: (863) 324-4341

E-mail: [usawaterski@usawaterskiandwakesports.org](mailto:usawaterski@usawaterskiandwakesports.org)