

EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE REPORT

***Purpose:** Based on USBC strategic planning, this committee shall set direction to maintain and protect the integrity and credibility of the sport of bowling.*

To uphold this purpose, the Equipment Specifications and Certification (ESC) Committee remains guided by the USBC Vision “to continue to be the leading authority to the sport, servicing the needs of bowling.” The committee is responsible for reviewing and making final decisions regarding new items of equipment on which USBC approval is requested. The committee also is responsible for setting policies and procedures regarding equipment and specifications and for granting, withholding, suspending, withdrawing, or otherwise regulating bowling center certificates.

As the National Governing Body for the sport of bowling, USBC executes its mission to “provide services, resources and the standards for the sport.” Translating these bold statements into reality means engaging a world-class ESC Team at the International Bowling Campus, USBC’s home in Arlington, Texas. Our team of research engineers and research technicians invest significant resources in a continual effort to make sure your bowling experience is as fair as it is enjoyable and that bowling’s future is ensured through thoughtful research, planning, and delivery.

A substantial part of the groundwork performed by the ES group is behind the scenes. In 2018, USBC:

- Tested and approved **326 bowling ball models**
- Tested **31 additional bowling products** (cleaners, polishes, lane surfaces, ball plug, lane conditioners, lane decals, embedded warnings)
- Issued **27 bowling pin permits**
- Issued center certificates for the 2018-19 season currently standing at **3,973 centers** comprising **87,000 lane beds**.

USBC has made significant progress in research and development of both existing and emerging specifications and technologies. Below are some brief highlights and notes detailing progress and changes across the past 12 months:

- **Center Certification and Lane Inspection Program** – Building on a successful start to major changes in both the lane inspection program and center certification process, USBC opted to continue data collection for another year. Additional detail on the data can be found in the December 2018 Center Certification Research Report located on BOWL.com. Certification for the 2019-2020 season will be granted to centers that submit all data and obtain the three signatures required by the new inspection form. This will allow USBC to further analyze and confirm accuracy of supplied data and refine and look for additional opportunities to improve the process. More than 960 people from 300 associations (in addition to 450 association volunteers at Convention) have attended Lane Inspection Workshops in the field. This commitment, coupled with the increased demands of the program, prompted USBC to also allow for a change to lane bed certification fees. Beginning in 2019-2020, a maximum of \$10 per lane bed may be charged, an increase from the \$5 implemented in 1995-1996

- **Bowling Ball Specifications** - Announced at Convention last year, key changes to bowling ball specifications underwent further analysis and modification. Exact details of those changes can be found on BOWL.com.

The news release, published June 16, 2018, contains a concise explanation of the lengthened transition window regarding static weight specification changes being implemented Aug. 1, 2020. Further stakeholder conversations led the ESC to decide on a course that serves to balance the needs of governance and the practicality of field implementation. Additionally, “house balls” (definition in the article) also will be exempt from the gripping hole changes.

Regarding oil absorption, bowling balls that will be grandfathered in on Aug. 1, 2020 that currently fall below the 2 minutes, 15 second oil absorption time limit must cease production no later than Jan. 31, 2022.

A sustainable future for the sport includes preserving a balance of time-honored tradition, foresight into what is sometimes unknown, a resolute focus on credibility, and responsibility to all stakeholders.

On a personal note, I would again like to offer a few words of gratitude – to Chad Murphy, Danny Speranza, the entire ESC staff and the ESC Committee. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to the complex work necessary to unravel the mysteries within the science of bowling. Your passion and knowledge make the many challenges seem less daunting and your love for our sport is inspiring. Also, to the USBC Board and President Karl Kielich, thank you for affording us the commitment and latitude to fulfill our committee charge with confidence.

And finally, to the USBC members, for entrusting us with bowling’s governance as we continue to shape a sustainable future. It is because of you that we strive to do our very best and protect the sport responsible for giving us all a lifetime of fun and memories.

Respectfully submitted,

USBC Equipment Specifications and Certification Committee

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