

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CENTER CERTIFICATION UPDATES

The United States Bowling Congress Equipment Specifications Committee determined at its November 2019 meeting to move forward with a tiered center certification program and no longer require the current annual lane inspections that have been performed by local association inspection teams.

Data shows very few centers met 100% of the current specifications during spot checks and very few had a significant portion of the center needing corrections. The data supports creating a tiered certification that can be inclusive and flexible for centers while giving members more information about center measurements.

USBC will certify all bowling centers that wish to hold certified leagues and tournaments if they allow a national inspector to measure their lanes and be classified under USBC's center certification tiers.

Key points about USBC lane inspections moving forward:

- Annual lane inspections conducted by local inspectors are no longer required; inspection fees eliminated for next two years
- The current center certification grace period is extended for two more years; all centers are certified
- A tiered center certification program is being developed for the future
- The new program will be inclusive; all centers inspected can host certified competitions
- Lane inspections will be performed by a national USBC inspection team
- USBC is examining the tools to streamline the inspection process; additional testing of the tools will continue
- Spot-check data found very few centers meet 100% of the current specifications
- Details of the tiered center certification program will be announced at the 2021 USBC Convention

A look at Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) regarding the changes announced and the updates related to center certification:

LANE INSPECTIONS

1. Why are local inspections being eliminated?

The current lane inspection process is not working. Only a portion of certification forms are being submitted on time and the data does not match spot-check data taken by USBC. In order to fix the process, USBC is developing a new program.

2. Which season is USBC canceling its lane inspections performed by local associations?

This will start with the 2020 inspection period for the 2020-2021 season and each year after.

3. With center inspections by local associations being eliminated, does that impact the changes to new installations?

No. New lane or overlay installations still will be required to have a limit of 0.030" for crosswise tilts and crown/depressions, as previously required.

However, a USBC national inspector will be required to inspect the lanes upon completion of the installation.

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CENTER CERTIFICATION UPDATES

USBC will rely on the local associations to communicate with the Associations team regarding upcoming new installations.

4. When will I need to get my new lanes or overlays inspected?

The inspection must be completed within 14 days of installation. Ideally, inspection would occur while the installation crew is finalizing their work, so they can make corrections before leaving.

5. If I replace one panel on a lane, must it meet the 0.030" limit?

No. Only new overlays or new lanes need to meet the new +/-0.030" specification right after they are installed.

6. How will this impact bowling centers on military bases?

Domestic military centers in the U.S. will be required to be inspected by a national inspector.

Military bases in foreign countries will be allowed to continue to inspect lanes themselves with current lane inspection tools.

7. Will USBC continue to hold Lane Inspection Workshops (LIWs)?

No, this education program in its current form will be discontinued. However, USBC will keep associations updated on the tiered center certification program.

8. With the tiered center certification program, will centers be required to make repairs to my center to be certified?

Repairs will be optional, but not required. Some centers will choose to make repairs in order to achieve a higher certification tier.

DATA

9. What is USBC doing with the data collected from local inspections?

USBC now has published two research reports with the data provided by local associations. Without this data, the evolution of the program into a tiered center certification would not be possible.

This data was analyzed thoroughly to understand the existing certification process and provided great insights into the future of this program.

10. Why did USBC decide to perform spot checks?

It was important to visit centers recently inspected to determine the validity of the data submitted.

11. How did USBC select the centers it spot-checked?

USBC took care to select random bowling centers across the country, evaluating as many local associations as possible.

USBC conducted spot-check inspections on the certification data. In spot checking, USBC found a large discrepancy from the data reported by the local associations.

USBC found very few centers met all specifications.

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CENTER CERTIFICATION UPDATES

TOOLS

12. What will I need my inspection tools for now with local inspections eliminated?

Moving forward, local associations can assist their centers by loaning the tools to centers when making corrections. The centers cannot make corrections properly without having the measuring tools when making the changes.

13. The tools were a big investment. Do they have any value now?

USBC greatly appreciates the time and money associations have invested in lane inspections. To say thank you, USBC will offer a buyback program to offset some of your cost for inspection equipment purchased since 2017.

USBC will send a follow-up communication, before the end of January 2020, to associations who qualify for the buy-back program.

FINAL

14. What is the bowling center's cost for an inspection under the program?

No decisions have been made about the costs of inspections. The final details of the tiered center certification program, including pricing, are being worked on and will announced at the 2021 USBC Convention. USBC will continue to collaborate closely with industry stakeholders, including proprietors, on these decisions as we have in other aspects of this program.

15. Can you give more details of how the tiering levels will be determined?

The final details of the tiered certification program are being worked on and will announced at the 2021 USBC convention.

Should you have additional questions not covered above, please direct those to certifications@bowl.com.