



Tiered Center Certification Program Announcement

April 2022

1) Why did USBC move away from local association inspectors?

The data collected over the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 seasons showed us that the previous certification program was not achieving the intended results.

Only 24% of centers met all USBC specs, yet all centers had been reported as meeting all specs prior to USBC requesting the data be submitted.

Also, during our lane inspection workshops, we learned that many associations were struggling to find, train, and retain willing volunteers to complete the inspection process.

2) Why is USBC certifying centers that don't meet all specifications or make repairs?

The data collected suggests that only 24% of centers met all specifications for certifications, yet these centers were still being certified every season. After reviewing this data and meeting with multiple industry stakeholder groups, a tiered system was determined to be the best fit for where the industry.

3) How much does the program cost?

Centers will be invoiced \$30 per lane. This will get the center an inspection and a three-year certification. This keeps in line with the inspection fees that were allowed to be charged in the 2019-2020 season of \$10 per lane annually.

Centers will be given an invoice after the inspection. Invoices have a due date of 90 days from the inspection date.

4) Can centers make payments on the invoiced amount?

No, there will not be a payment plan system for centers. Managing accounts for 3,900 centers would require additional staff and this would in turn drive the cost of the program up to offset that staffing need. Centers will always know the amount that will be invoiced so there should not be a surprise when the inspection is complete.

5) What happens to centers who refuse to pay the invoice?

USBC will contact centers to follow up with invoices. If a center does not pay for the inspection, their certification will be revoked at the end of that season. The local association will be notified so league officials and bowlers may be informed prior to



the next season beginning. The certification may be re-activated once the center pays the invoice.

6) What happens if a center cancels or does not let the inspector in once they arrive?

If a center cancels within 14 days of the inspection date or is not present to allow the inspector in, a cancellation fee of \$100 will be charged to the center.

7) How do centers pay USBC for the inspection?

Centers will contact USBC Certifications Department over the phone to make a payment for their invoice. We hope to have an online portal for these activities in the future but do not currently.

8) Can a center certification be denied or withdrawn after it has been issued?

Yes, center certification may be withdrawn for the following reasons:

- Refusal to allow an inspection.
- Non-payment of the certification fee.
- Purposeful adjustment of the lanes or pits outside of specifications in an attempt to alter ball path or pinfall.

9) What steps can a center take if they disagree with their inspection results?

Centers can request that their lanes be reinspected at any time. A reinspection will be scheduled as inspector availability permits.

10) What do the tiers mean?

The tiers represent the % of complaint measurements found during the inspection. They do not correlate with scoring pace.

The requirements for each tier will be determined after a large enough sample size of data has been collected with the ACE Tool and analyzed by USBC. While levels are being determined, centers will be certified and given their results in a percentage of compliant measurement.



11) Are all centers being inspected the same way, or will wood lanes still be measured differently?

With the new program, all centers will be measured at five distances from the foul line. The makeup of the lanes will not call for different measurements. All centers will be measured with the ACE tool in the same manner.

12) How do these tools compare to the tools previously used?

The tools used today went through a gauge repeatability and reproducibility test at USBC Headquarters. All tools have been determined to be as accurate or more accurate than the previous hand tools.

Also, these tools will be calibrated prior to each center inspection. Calibration will be completed on site.

13) How long does an inspection take with the new process?

The setup time for the tool is approximately 35 minutes, then it takes about five minutes per lane.

14) Can people watch the inspection as it happens?

People may watch from behind the foul line and only at the discretion of the center staff. The data collected during the inspection belongs to the center and USBC Headquarters and is to remain confidential. Only the final overall result of the inspection may be published. Centers may elect to share their data as they wish.

15) Will the inspection results be shared?

The tier of the bowling center will be visible on the certification decal, but the individual measurements of the center are only for the center staff. The center may share information if they choose to, but USBC will keep the inspections confidential.

16) Is a center required to have all lanes inspected?

Centers may elect to have lanes for VIP or recreation-only use. These lanes will not be inspected, and USBC will not recognize competitions, averages or award scores bowled on these lanes.



17) Will lane dressing be a part of Tiered Center Certification?

No. Only the physical measurements of the playing field will be measured and applied in the center's tiering.

18) What happens if a center chooses to not be inspected?

Centers must be inspected to be certified. Should a center that is currently certified refuse an inspection, USBC will request that the center send a written notice to USBC headquarters, Attn: Center Certifications, or email certifications@bowl.com confirming their choice to no longer participate in USBC Center Certification.

Once that confirmation is received, USBC will not certify that center, and they will be moved to Inactive Status in the USBC database. USBC will then notify the local association officials that USBC will not recognize any competition, awards or averages in that center.

If the center chooses to certify again in the future, a request for an inspection can also be sent to USBC headquarters or certifications@bowl.com.

19) How does the center's tier affect members who bowl in that center?

The results of the inspection do not impact the bowlers in any way. All certified competition may still be held in the center and all certified awards and averages will be recognized as they have prior to this program.

20) How will this impact honor scores and averages?

The tiered program will not impact averages or honor score in certified competition. If the center and competition is certified, awards and honor score will be recognized as they were prior to the new program launch.