

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## CENTER CERTIFICATION UPDATES

Lane topography and kickbacks have shown their impact on scoring. This, combined with the inconsistency from lane to lane across all centers, throw off the balance of competitions within each center, city and state.

The data USBC received through Center Certifications done for the 2018-2019 season showed approximately 90% of bowling centers across the country are within specification, but additional data is needed.

### **The United States Bowling Congress has decided to extend the study, certifying centers for the 2019-2020 season, provided:**

- All centers have a proper inspection report
- All three required signatures are on the report
- Inspection report is submitted to USBC Headquarters

The extension will allow USBC to collect two years of data to better understand the landscape of bowling center topography and other key measurements within the field of play.

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

#### **1. When did this center inspection process take effect?**

The change began with inspections for the 2018-2019 season; however, centers will be provided an additional one-year grace period for the 2019-2020 season.

#### **2. What are the main changes?**

- As of Aug. 1, 2019, new lane or overlay installations shall have a limit of .030" for crosswise tilts and crown/depressions. These installations must be inspected within 14 days of completion. After the initial inspection, the annual lane inspection reverts to the +/- .040" spec for crosswise tilts and crowns/depressions. The goal is to start the lanes flatter to maintain the +/- .040" requirement longer
- Lane inspections for the 2018-2019 season will require a few changes:
  - a. Topography measurements will require a minimum of five (5) areas of the lane, instead of three, to require a measurement on each major synthetic lane panel.
  - b. Kickback-to-kickback measurement is taken from plate to plate, not wood to wood.
  - c. All lane inspection reports are to be signed by the inspector, center management, and Association Manager, then a copy must be submitted to USBC.

#### **3. Why the changes?**

The three measurements came from resurfacing wood lanes, which were sanded flat every few years, to verify resurfacing was performed correctly. Now, most lanes are synthetic with at least five separate panels. Therefore, to verify the lane stays within certification specifications, there is a need to take a measurement on each major lane panel. USBC determined the lane topography can alter ball path, and flatter lanes can create a more consistent scoring environment.

#### **4. With an additional one-year grace period for centers, does that impact the changes to new installations?**

No, new lane or overlay installations will still be required to have a limit of .030" for crosswise tilts and crown/depressions as previously mentioned.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## CENTER CERTIFICATION UPDATES

5. **Is this for new centers only?**

No. There are separate changes for new installation and for annual inspections. All centers are required to go through an annual lane inspection, which now requires five measurements on synthetic lanes for crosswise tilts and crowns/depressions, no changes for wood lanes.

6. **If I replace one panel on a lane, must it meet the .030" limit?**

No. Only new overlays or new lanes need to meet the new +/- .030" specification right after they are installed.

7. **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.

8. **What are the inspection windows for the five spots?**

You'll be inspecting one location for every 12 feet of the lane with no two measurements closer than five feet apart. The goal is to get a minimum of one measurement per full size panel, to be measured within three inches of a screw row but not on a screw hole dowel, which might affect the results.

For the first panel, closest to the foul line, the measurements should be taken near the trailing end of the panel, furthest from the foul line. USBC wants measurements to stay away from the ball impact area where the balls are hitting and bouncing. We are interested in the lane area where the balls are rolling on the surface.

9. **What if the lanes are wood and don't have panels?**

Wood lanes will remain with three measurements per lane for crosswise tilts and crowns/depressions. Wood lanes get resurfaced every few years, which returns the entire lane back to a flatness which is much less than the +/- .040" specification. Therefore, there is no need to require additional measurements on wood lanes.

10. **What if the lane has more than five panels?**

You will only take measurements on the first five panels.

11. **What is different about the kickback-to-kickback measurement?**

In the past, you were required to measure the space between the kickback plates, then add the thickness of each kickback plate to get the wood-to-wood measurement. Now, you will measure the width the same way, but just report what is measured. This will save you from having to add the fractions and minimize reporting errors showing false out-of-spec measurements.

12. **Why do we need to sign the inspection reports and send in a copy to USBC?**

**Usually we just enter them online and everything is done. Why the change?**

USBC wants to further analyze the data, so we are requiring the lane inspection reports to be submitted as a final step once the information has been verified by center management, Association Manager and inspector. With the correct data submitted, we can assess what shape the lanes are in across the country. We will collect the certification forms with all the measurement data during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 certification season to analyze for future changes.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## CENTER CERTIFICATION UPDATES

**13. So, there are all these new requirements. Do I have to make repairs to my center to be certified for the 2019-2020 season?**

For the 2019-2020 certification season, USBC will allow an additional one-year grace period for making repairs if USBC receives a complete and accurate Lane Inspection report with the three required signatures. However, proprietors are encouraged to make the needed repairs as soon as possible.

**14. What if we do not have the money to buy the tools?**

Ideally, every association will have tools to inspect their centers. If you do not have the tools or abilities to inspect, you can contact a neighboring association to inspect for you. Ultimately, the Association Manager is responsible for getting centers within their jurisdiction inspected properly.

**15. What are the dates of the inspection period?**

- **April 1** – You may begin inspections for the upcoming season but not report results to Headquarters until after May 1.
- **May 1** – Start sending Certification reports to USBC Headquarters.
- **June 15** – Recommended date to have lane inspections completed for the upcoming season.
- **Aug. 1** – New certification season begins.
- **Aug. 31** – Deadline for inspections for the upcoming season. Current season's certification expires.

**All new requirements officially start Aug. 1, 2020.**

**16. What are the repercussions for submitting falsified lane inspection forms?**

Persons involved in improper conduct may have their membership suspended.

**17. How much more work is required during the lane inspection process?**

Before the changes were announced, inspectors were taking 21 measurements on the lane. Now, there will be 29 measurements taken per synthetic lane and still 21 for wood lanes.

**18. What is the specification when a lane is resurfaced?**

Resurfacing does not change the current specification. The +/- .040" specification would apply for crosswise tilts and crowns/depressions.

**19. If an association has been inspecting incorrectly, how are we going to educate them to inspect correctly?**

The [lane inspection program manual](#) has been updated with pictures and videos to help the educational process. Please go to the certification area of BOWL.com, located [here](#), to review the training literature.

**20. Where can I locate the new certification form?**

It will be available on the Equipment Specifications page of BOWL.com, located [here](#), or on the Association Resource Center's page, located [here](#).

**21. So, centers basically receive a passing certification for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 season?**

Yes, there will be no ramification for being outside spec in 2018 or 2019 if an accurate and complete Lane Inspection Form is submitted to USBC Headquarters with the three required

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## CENTER CERTIFICATION UPDATES

signatures. USBC wants to gather the true lane certification data from across the country for analysis to determine potential future changes.

**22. Where can certification tools be purchased?**

Tools for inspections, purchased through the [USBC Bowling Store](#).

**23. For the current inspections, must centers make corrections since they are receiving a grace period next year?**

For the 2018 and 2019 certification seasons, no corrections are mandated.

**24. What is the inspection requirement for centers that have synthetic heads and wood backends?**

The front portion of the lane, or the heads, take a lot of abuse due to the continuous impact of bowling balls. Sometimes centers replace only the heads with new synthetic panels and leave the rest of the wood lane in place. Therefore, these lanes are now multi-surface lanes. The area of the lane with synthetic panels will be inspected as a synthetic lane, requiring one measurement for crowns/depressions and crosswise tilts on each panel. In the wood area of the lane, it will be inspected as a wood lane, which needs measurements at 10-15 feet, 20-30 feet and 50-55 feet. For example, most multi-surface Revised 5-25-2017 lanes will have 2-3 synthetic head panels which end past the arrows at 20 feet down lane. Therefore, one measurement will be required on each synthetic panel and two measurements in the wood section at 20-30 feet and 50-55 feet.

**25. If a center has synthetic lanes with six panels, which five spots do we check?**The first panel on some synthetic lanes covers part of the approach and the first lane panel. Many of these installations require six panels with a short panel being installed just before the pin deck. The inspection requires five panels to be measured for crowns/depressions and crosswise tilts. In this case, the first five lane panels should be inspected. The short sixth panel, just in front of the pin deck, also can be inspected but is not required. The measurement on the first panel should be inspected toward the down-lane side of the panel. Balls normally hit the first panel and bounce before going into roll. Therefore, we want to inspect the area of the lane where the ball is most likely to be rolling, which is on the down-lane side of the head panel.

Should you have additional questions not covered above, please direct those to [specifications@bowl.com](mailto:specifications@bowl.com).