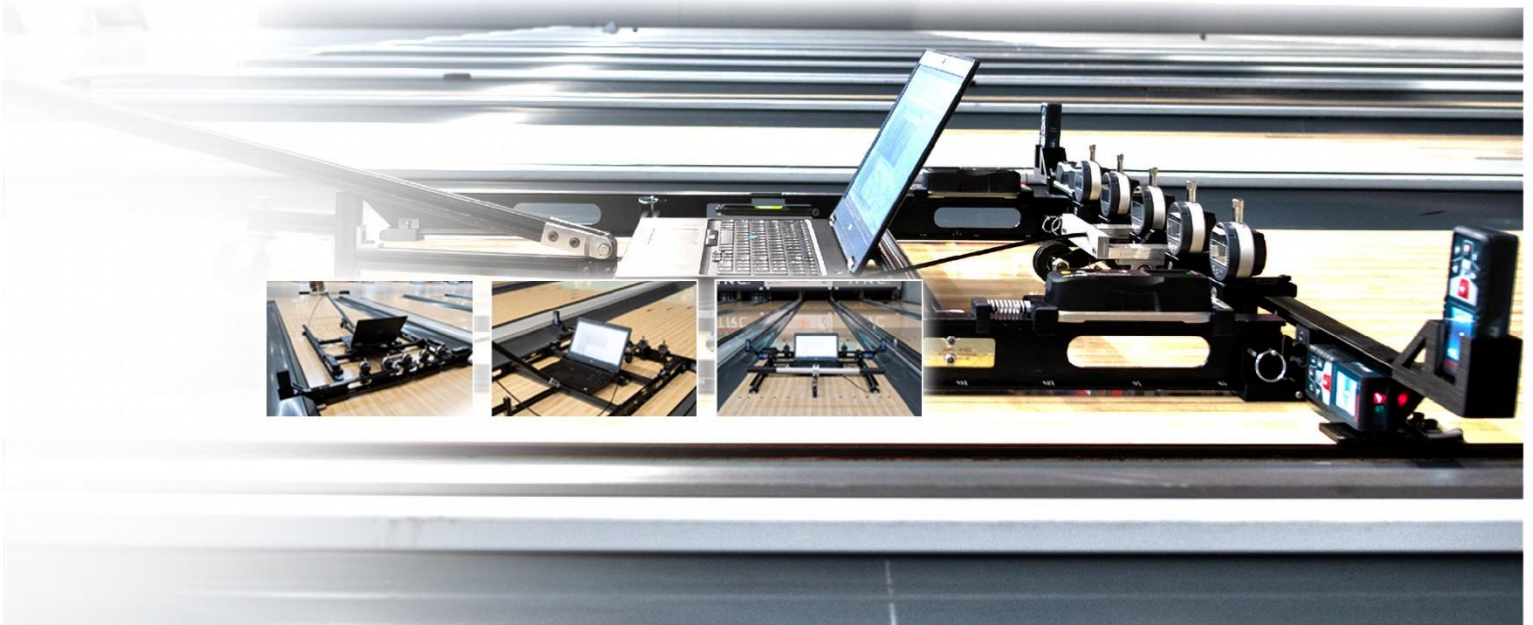




**CENTER
CERTIFICATION**

A **Future** FOR
THE **Sport**®



Tiered Center Certification **Handbook**

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Overview

The United States Bowling Congress Tiered Center Certification Program was created to offer an inclusive program to all bowling centers that wish to host USBC-certified competition. Becoming a certified center allows a center to host USBC-certified events, such as leagues and tournaments. Bowlers participating in certified events are eligible to receive award score and average recognition.

The program requires that a member of the USBC National Inspection Team complete an inspection of the center. USBC will share those measurements with the center. This allows USBC to provide a consistent inspection process and work to educate centers on how they can make corrections to their playing field if they choose to do so.

This Tiered Center Certification Handbook, which will govern the program, has been developed to educate stakeholders on the details of Tiered Center Certification.

What is required to become a Certified Center?

The USBC Tiered Center Certification Program requires bowling centers that wish to host USBC-certified competition to comply with the following requirements:

1. Undergo center inspections conducted by USBC staff.
2. All equipment used on the certified lanes must be listed on the USBC approved products list.
3. Stay current with the invoiced certification fee.
4. Follow USBC playing rules during USBC-certified competitions.
5. Continue best effort compliance with USBC equipment requirements after inspection has been completed.

Terminology

USBC: When used in this document, refers to the management of the league, tournament or association having jurisdiction over the competition, practice, training or event. This is either the league officers, tournament management, local or state association board of directors or USBC national headquarters.

Certified Center: When used in this document, refers to a center that has been inspected by a USBC National Lane Inspector.

USBC National Lane Inspector: A member of USBC headquarters staff trained in the USBC Tiered Center Certification Process.

Active Centers: Refers to bowling centers who are currently certified by USBC, or centers that are choosing to certify and were constructed more than 12 months prior to requesting certification.

New Centers: Centers that have been constructed from the ground up within the last 12 months of requesting certification.

Certification Specifications

The following specifications must always be maintained and are checked at time of a new installation:

Basic Center Specification	Minimum	Maximum
Approach Depression: Measured 5" from foul line	-.250"	.250"
Approach Length: Not including foul line	15'	No Max
Foul Line Width	3/8"	1"
Lane Length: Foul line to center of head pin spot	59'- 11½"	60'- ½"
Lane Panel Gaps	0	.050"
Pit Length (end of lane to nearest point on cushion)	25"	No Max
Pit Depth (pin deck surface to pit floor)	4 ¾"	No Max
Pin Spots: Center-to-center spacing	11 15/16"	12 1/16"
Lane Width: (applied to entire lane but measured at rear row of pins)	41"	42"
Gutter Width	8 ¾"	9 3/8"
Center of Corner Pin to Gutter Edge	2 ½"	3"
Lane Panel Drop Offs	0	.040"

Note: For new center installations, the inspection must be within 14 days of completion of the installation or within 14 days of being notified.

The following are requirements for new installations and overlay installations. These items are part of tiered certification requirements.

Tier Specification- new center	Minimum	Maximum
Lengthwise Tilt of Lanes*	-.040"	.040"
Crosswise Tilt of Lanes**	-.030"	.030"
Crowns/Depressions**	-.030"	.030"

*Lengthwise tilt only applies to new installations and not to overlay installations.

** New centers or overlays have tighter specifications only at the time of initial installation.

The following make up the tiered certification specifications:

Tier Specification- existing center	Minimum	Maximum
Crosswise Tilt of the Lane	-.040"	.040"
Crowns/Depressions	-.040"	.040"
Kickback Plate to Kickback Plate Distance	59 5/8"	60"
Gutter Depth (7 and 10 pin sides)	3 3/8"	3 5/8"
Lengthwise Tilt of Pin Deck (between 4-7 and 6-10 pins)	-.187"	.187"
Crosswise Tilt of Pin Deck	-.040"	.040"

USBC Certification Policies

Part I – Center Certification

For a center to be certified by USBC, that center will be required to undergo an inspection performed by USBC authorized personnel and must stay current with invoiced certification fees. Results of the inspection will place the center in a tier. Tiers will be based on the percentage of measurements that meet the specifications as outlined in the USBC Equipment Specifications Manual.

Note: USBC may authorize annual inspections of bowling centers located at U.S. military installations overseas and in Puerto Rico to be conducted by local inspectors.

A. Inspection Process for Active Centers

Lanes are expected to meet specification and, as such, may be inspected for compliance anywhere on the playing surface.

For the normal inspection process, all centers will be inspected using the same procedure, regardless of lane surface or type. Parts of the playing field being inspected are:

- Crosswise tilt of the lane at five distances. All centers will be measured at the same distances, and the distances will change with each inspection cycle so centers will have an overview of the total lane over time.
- Crown/Depression of the lane surface at five distances of the lane on the following boards:
 - Left 10 board
 - Left 15 board
 - Center 20 board
 - Right 15 board
 - Right 10 board
- Kickback plate to kickback plate distance at the rear row of pins
- Crosswise tilt of the pin deck at the rear row of pins
- Lengthwise tilt of the pin deck in two locations:
 - Between the 4-7 pin spots
 - Between the 6-10 pin spots
- Flat gutter depths at the rear row of pins:
 - 7 pin side of lane
 - 10 pin side of lane

Other items being observed are:

- Foul Lights
- Edge Strips
- Lane Panel Drop Offs
- Pin Spots
- Kickback Conditions

Note: The five items being observed are for informational purposes to the center and will not be used in the center's overall tiering.

B. Inspection Process for New Centers or Reopening Centers

Centers that have not been certified by USBC or have opted out of certification and wish to reenter the program may request an inspection for certification. The inspection will be completed on the same areas of the playing field as Active Centers, with the following additional items being checked during the first inspection:

- Length of lane
- Length of approach
- Width of lane
- Verification that equipment used is on the USBC approved products list

For a New Center to receive its initial certification, they must meet Silver Tier requirements at minimum. Centers failing to reach the Silver Tier requirements must make corrections and be reinspected to receive certification.

C. Inspection Tools

The Tiered Certification Program will utilize specific equipment to complete inspections. Only data collected by these tools may be used for certification and tier placement, unless otherwise authorized by USBC or for centers located on overseas military bases. These tools will be checked for calibration on-site by the inspector and will feed the data collected to the inspector's laptop. Calibration and assembly time can take up to 40 minutes, with each lane requiring about five minutes for completion after the assembly and setup is completed.

Photo of ACE (Automatic Certification Equipment)



D. Inspection Report

Once all lanes have been completed, the inspector will create a PDF of the data, including a summary page that shows the results of the inspection. This report will be emailed to the center for their records and uploaded to USBC headquarters to be kept on file. USBC will keep specific measurements confidential between USBC and the center. USBC only will publish the center’s overall results. Center proprietors may share their data as they see fit.

Measurements in green, yellow and orange meet USBC specifications, with yellow and orange designating that the measurement is near the specification tolerance. Red measurements indicate the measurement is outside of the specification tolerance.

Inspection Report Example

		Cross Tilt Shim Location										
		7 Pin 1	7 Pin 2	7 Pin 3	10 Pin 4	10 Pin 5	10 Pin 6	10 Pin 7	7 Pin 8	10 Pin 9	10 Pin 10	7 Pin 11
Step 5	Tilts	Cross Tilt	0.024	0.022	0.008	-0.010	-0.003	-0.020	-0.005	0.012	-0.003	-0.024
		Length Tilt 4-7	0.021	0.041	0.036	0.039	0.005	0.003	-0.006	0.028	0.025	0.031
		Length Tilt 6-10	0.038	0.063	0.036	0.041	0.014	0.014	-0.007	0.045	0.045	0.035
Distance Panel 5	Crowns / Depression	Right 10 board	-0.003	0.004	0.007	0.003	0.013	0.011	0.007	-0.009	0.008	-0.002
		Right 15 board	-0.011	0.003	0.003	-0.002	0.016	0.009	0.008	-0.013	0.006	-0.007
50	Crowns / Depression	Center 20 board	-0.019	-0.003	-0.007	-0.010	0.013	0.003	0.004	-0.018	0.001	-0.012
		Left 15 board	-0.005	0.006	0.000	-0.002	0.017	0.005	0.011	-0.010	0.006	-0.001
		Left 10 board	0.002	0.010	0.005	0.004	0.014	0.005	0.014	-0.001	0.007	0.004
		Cross Tilt Shim Location										
		10 Pin 1	7 Pin 2	10 Pin 3	7 Pin 4	7 Pin 5	10 Pin 6	7 Pin 7	10 Pin 8	10 Pin 9	7 Pin 10	7 Pin 11
Step 6	Tilts	Cross Tilt	-0.005	0.026	-0.019	0.029	0.021	-0.004	0.003	-0.002	-0.033	0.026
		Length Tilt 4-7	0.071	0.037	0.071	0.059	0.093	0.045	0.050	-0.007	-0.013	-0.030
		Length Tilt 6-10	0.066	0.076	0.042	0.102	0.093	0.074	0.046	0.010	-0.010	0.012
Pit 63.2	Distances	Kickback Spacing	60 1/16	60	59 15/16	60	59 15/16	59 15/16	59 15/16	60	60 1/16	59 15/16
		Gutter Depth 7 pin	3 5/8	3 1/2	3 7/16	3 9/16	3 3/8	3 7/16	3 3/8	3 7/16	3 7/16	3 7/16
63.2	Distances	Gutter Depth 10 Pin	3 3/8	3 1/2	3 5/16	3 3/8	3 3/8	3 3/8	3 7/16	3 3/8	3 7/16	3 3/8

Part II – Inspection Frequency and Scheduling

Center inspections will be completed throughout the calendar year. Inspections will occur in a center every three years.

A USBC staff member will contact the center at a minimum of 90 days out to schedule the inspection. Once a date is determined, the center will receive an email confirmation, along with the service agreement for the inspection. USBC will then contact the center via phone or email 60 days out and 30 days out to confirm the schedule.

Note: If a center needs to cancel or reschedule the inspection, USBC must be notified at least 14 days prior to the inspection date, or the center may be subject to a cancellation fee as noted in the service agreement.

Part III – Certification Fees

Certification fees will be \$30/lane certified, and certification is valid for three years, unless the center does not meet the minimum percent compliant measurements for the Bronze Tier.

Centers not meeting the Bronze Tier requirements will receive a three-year certification, during which time, they may make corrections. Upon the next inspection, the center must meet at least the Bronze requirement, or it will be moved to annual inspections under a pending certification until they can meet the Bronze level.

Cost of the inspection will remain \$30/lane for the pending certification.

**The inspection fee will be waived for overseas military centers, as they are required to annually self-inspect.*

A. Payment of Certification Fees

- Invoices will be created and emailed to the center once the inspection date is scheduled.
- Fees are to be paid in full.
- Invoices will be net 120 from the date that the inspection was scheduled. This gives the center approximately 90 days prior to the inspection and 30 days after the inspection to complete payment to USBC Headquarters.

NOTE: USBC inspectors will not collect payment on-site. Payments are to be made directly to USBC headquarters.

B. Cancellation and Rescheduling of Inspection

- If a center cancels or reschedules their inspection 14 days or more prior to the inspection date, no fee is applied.
- If a center cancels, fails to be ready or reschedules an inspection within 14 days of the inspection, there will be a \$100 cancellation fee applied.

C. Delinquent Invoices

Failure to pay the certification fee prior to the due date may result in:

- Late fee of \$100

Failure to pay the certification fee by the end of the season the center was inspected will result in:

- Loss of USBC certification at the end of the current season.
- Center not being scheduled for inspection or certification until outstanding invoice amount is paid in full.
- Notifications to association and league officials that USBC will not recognize competition in the center for the following season unless all certification requirements are met.

Part IV – Reinspection

If a center makes corrections to items while the inspector is still completing the initial inspection, those items can be rechecked during the inspection at no additional cost.

Centers that choose to make corrections after an inspection may do so. Once corrections are made, the center may request to be scheduled for a reinspection. Reinspection requests may be submitted to certifications@bowl.com. A reinspection will be scheduled for the next time an inspector is in the area.

Part V – Requirements for the Inspection

For the USBC inspector to complete the inspection for certification, some preparation will be needed.

- Power to all pinsetters must be off using a lock out/tag out system if available.
- All lanes being inspected must be stripped and free of oil.

Centers who refuse to comply with the above requirements will not be inspected and will be invoiced the \$100 cancellation fee outlined in Part III, item B.

Part VI – Certification

Upon completion of the inspection, the center will be provided with the detailed inspection report. The

detailed report will show all measurements taken and provide the center with the overall percentage of measurements that meet USBC Specifications. The percentage of compliance will place the center in a tier. Tiers will be announced once sufficient data is collected by USBC National Inspectors.

The center will receive a certificate and decal for display. Certificates will expire at the end of the third bowling season after the date of the last inspection. Certifications also will expire if lanes are replaced or overlays are installed, as that requires a new inspection.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1) Can a center certification be denied or withdrawn after it has been issued?

A1) Yes. A center certificate may be withdrawn for the following reasons:

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

Q2) What steps can a center take if they disagree with their inspection results?

A2) Centers can request that their lanes be reinspected at any time to improve their tier level. A reinspection will be scheduled as inspector availability permits.

Q3) Will results of inspections be available for public viewing?

A3) 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.

Q4) Is a center required to have all lanes inspected?

A4) 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.

Q5) Will lane dressing be a part of Tiered Center Certification?

A5) No. Only the physical measurements of the playing field will be measured and applied in the center's tiering.

Q6) What happens if a center chooses to not be inspected?

A6) 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.

Q7) How does the center's tier affect members who bowl in that center?

A7) 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.