



## **J-1 Visa Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Where Is Stevens Pass?**

Stevens Pass is located 78 miles northeast of Seattle at the summit of Highway 2 in Washington State. Washington State is located in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States and is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west and Canada to the north.

### **How Many People Work At Stevens Pass?**

We have 900+ employees and 100+ volunteers during our winter season, over half of whom have worked in previous years. We also serve over 400,000 guests each winter.

### **What Is The Weather Like?**

We receive an average of 450 inches or 1,143 centimeters of snow each season, when a storm is coming through it is usually snowing and can be windy. It is cold here, temperatures range from about 5 degrees F (-15C) to 50 F (10C). You will have a much easier time adjusting to the colder temperatures if you are dressed properly for the conditions.

You will need warm clothing that can be layered. The weather conditions can vary quite a bit. Search online for "outdoor winter clothing stores" and you will find plenty of choices.

- Water repellent jacket
- Warm jacket - fleece, micro-fiber, wool, or down
- Warm hat
- Warm gloves or mittens
- Warm water repellent pants that can be worn over other pants and long underwear
- Warm boots with good traction (the parking lots can be icy and full of snow). Regular hiking boots are usually not warm enough for most people. They should be insulated winter boots.
- Long underwear tops and bottoms - polypro, Smartwool, capilene and silk work well.  
Warm socks (not cotton)

\* Many of these items are available in our on mountain retail stores at a discounted price.

\*\* We advise you to shop around. If you have questions before you buy, email us a photo of the item or the webpage and we should be able to help.

### **When Does The Mountain Open For The Season?**

We are usually open by the first week of December. If you arrive after we open, we will put you through an orientation to the company, and you will receive any necessary training you will need to do your job. Business begins to peak during the Christmas Holiday Season - around December 15. Since the season can sometimes get off to a slow start, full time schedules might not begin until mid- or late December. You may only work a limited number of shifts/hours until we receive more snow and/or business levels increase. If you arrive before this time, be sure to be FINANCIALLY prepared.

### **Will Employee Housing Be Available?**

We have employee housing that is extremely limited. This housing is usually not offered to J-1 employees because we believe J-1 employees have a better cultural experience and many more opportunities to perfect their English when living in the local communities. We maintain a list of available housing in the local communities that we give out to the J-1 employees upon hire.

**Where Can I Live?**

The nearest town from the ski area is 15 miles away. All of the housing that you will find will be off the mountain on the "Eastside" (small town, more snow and cold) or "Westside" (closer to Seattle, cool and rainy) of the pass. You are responsible for your own housing. If you have trouble and need assistance we will do our best to help.

**How Do I Get To Work?**

We have free employee transit with multiple uphill and downhill runs daily along Highway 2. The number of daily runs will increase when night operations open. When looking for housing, ask if potential rentals are within walking distance to Highway 2, and keep in mind that it will be cold outside- a shorter walk is better. The transit runs can also be taken on your days off, for example to the grocery store or to see a movie and back. Transit schedules will be available when you arrive.

**What Is There To Do At Night?**

Night Operations! This is the perfect opportunity for employees who work during the day to enjoy the slopes after work. Night skiing usually opens a few weeks after the initial resort opening and closes a few weeks before the entire resort.

We also have The Foggy Goggle and Bulls Tooth bars on the hill. On most Friday and Saturday nights during night operations we have live music until about 11pm. Please remember that the drinking age in the United States is 21 years of age and ID will be required. Underage drinking on company property is grounds for discipline up to and including termination. You will not need to dress up unless you plan to go out in Seattle. The nightlife at and around Stevens Pass is very casual. Jeans, a sweater and tennis shoes will work for just about any gathering. Please leave your dress shoes at home; it gets very slippery.

Many of the J-1 employees in previous years have organized trips to Seattle, Canada and to the airport for domestic trips to California, Las Vegas, etc. (please keep in mind that any missed days of work must be approved through your manager before you book any trips). Local trips can be organized using combinations of the Stevens Pass Employee Transit and public transportation (trains and buses).

**Will I Have A Uniform?**

Each department has its own look which helps signify which crew you are on. The clothing issued will depend on the job you have. If you only work inside, you will get a shirt and maybe a vest. Kitchen workers receive white kitchen/chef shirts. If you work outside you will likely be issued a warm fleece and shell jacket. Even with all that, many employees need to wear their own extra layers on colder or windy days. Uniforms are not allowed to be worn when you go out skiing or snowboarding on your own time.

**What Are Some Of The Employee Perks?**

The most popular seasonal benefit is the season pass and the ability to ski/ride at 40 other ski areas in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and British Columbia, Canada.

Here are a few other employee perks:

- Discount on food and beverage (excluding alcohol)
- Discount on rental equipment
- Discount on retail items
- Discounts on ski and snowboard lessons
- Direct Deposit (especially useful to receive your last check of the season)
- Free Employee Transit
- Company Store (sells food and small items at low prices for employees only)
- And more!

**Will I Be Able To Learn How To Ski Or Snowboard?**

Many of our previous J-1 employees learned to ski or snowboard by taking advantage of their season pass and discounts on rental gear and lessons. If you want to learn, you will have plenty of opportunities.

**How Much Will I Get Paid?**

Washington's minimum wage is currently \$8.55 per hour and may go up as of January 1, 2010. Most of the positions we offer J-1 employees will be paid at or slightly above minimum wage. Washington's minimum wage is one of the highest in the United States (Federal minimum wage is only \$6.55 per hour).

**Are There Any Tipped Positions Available?**

We do not hire J-1 employees straight into tipped positions.

**Can I Get A Second Job?**

We have two answers for this one, one related to on the mountain and the other describing off of the mountain:

**On Mountain:** Yes, you would be able to get a second job in another department with the approval of your primary manager. You might also be able to get extra hours at your regular job. You cannot exceed 56 hours per week total for all work in all departments at Stevens Pass. Also, we only pay overtime after the 56th hour.

**Off Mountain:** Yes, you would be able to get a second job in one of the local communities. However, you must meet the scheduling needs of Stevens Pass first. If you are interested in finding a second job in a local community, start looking early and make sure your second employer understands the commitment you have already made to Stevens Pass.

**Will I Always Get To Work My Scheduled Hours?**

The amount of hours you will actually work will most likely be different from your scheduled hours. The amount of hours you will work at Stevens Pass, or any other winter resort, will be dependent on these factors: weather, snow and how many guests we have visiting our resort on any given day. During holidays and weekends, you may work very long hours. Other days you may have very few hours. Slow days usually result in employees being sent home early; these are great days to go outside and practice skiing or snowboarding.