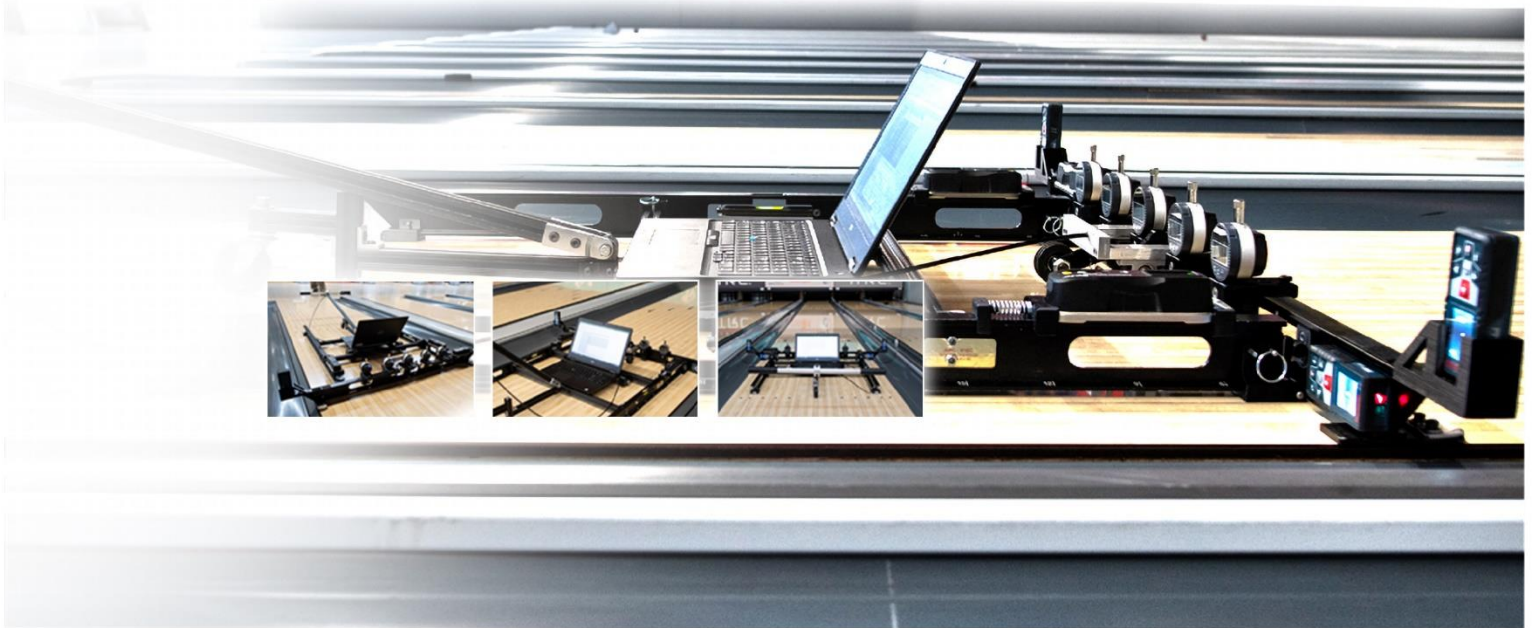




**CENTER
CERTIFICATION**

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.

Tier Structure:

- Gold-tiered centers meet at least 90% of all specifications outlined in the USBC Equipment Specifications Manual.
- Silver-tiered centers meet between 80-89.9% of all specifications outlined in the USBC Equipment Specifications Manual.
- Bronze-tiered centers meet between 70-79.9% of all specifications outlined in the USBC Equipment Specifications Manual.
- Standard-tiered centers meet less than 70% of all specifications outlined in the USBC Equipment Specifications Manual.

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 that 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 the 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 Gold Tier requirements at minimum. Centers failing to reach the Gold 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 review the results of the inspection with the center should they wish for that. Upon payment for 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. 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

		1	2	3	4	5		Measurement	6
	Distance (ft):	12'6"	24'3"	31'0"	39'9"	50'0"			
Lane	Measurement								
1	L10	-0.017	0.005	-0.008	-0.007	0.001		CT	0.000
	L15	-0.020	-0.004	-0.003	-0.011	-0.005		LT4-7	0.096
	C20	-0.030	-0.010	-0.002	-0.023	-0.021		LT6-10	0.059
	R15	-0.031	-0.003	0.009	-0.013	-0.020		KB	60.141
	R10	-0.030	0.010	0.009	-0.006	-0.016		GD7	3.662
	CT	0.006	0.012	0.020	0.007	0.009		GD10	3.462
2	L10	-0.007	-0.004	0.006	0.003	-0.009		CT	0.023
	L15	-0.010	-0.011	0.006	-0.002	-0.013		LT4-7	0.057
	C20	-0.015	-0.023	-0.003	-0.012	-0.020		LT6-10	0.079
	R15	-0.014	-0.020	-0.002	-0.003	-0.013		KB	60.135
	R10	-0.012	-0.012	-0.002	0.001	-0.006		GD7	3.562
	CT	0.004	0.005	0.011	-0.001	-0.017		GD10	3.533
3	L10	-0.003	-0.001	-0.011	-0.011	-0.010		CT	-0.029
	L15	-0.006	-0.002	-0.007	-0.016	-0.019		LT4-7	0.089
	C20	-0.009	-0.006	-0.013	-0.021	-0.028		LT6-10	0.035
	R15	-0.004	0.002	-0.010	-0.009	-0.022		KB	60.011
	R10	-0.002	0.005	-0.012	-0.004	-0.012		GD7	3.515
	CT	-0.003	-0.012	-0.019	-0.007	-0.019		GD10	3.399
4	L10	0.002	0.001	-0.007	-0.002	0.005		CT	0.018
	L15	-0.001	0.002	-0.006	-0.005	0.003		LT4-7	0.076
	C20	-0.016	-0.012	-0.014	-0.017	-0.012		LT6-10	0.118
	R15	-0.015	-0.006	-0.013	-0.007	-0.003		KB	60.088
	R10	-0.011	0.001	-0.015	-0.003	0.002		GD7	3.585
	CT	-0.007	0.005	-0.018	-0.008	-0.007		GD10	3.419

Part II – Inspection Frequency and Scheduling

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

A USBC staff member will contact the center approximately 90 days out to schedule the inspection. Once a date is determined, the center will receive an email confirmation.

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 \$40/lane certified, and certification is valid for five years.

**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 met 120 days 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.

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 may 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 center was inspected will result in:

- Loss of USBC certification at the end of the current season.
- The center is not being scheduled for inspection or certification until the 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 may be invoiced the \$100 cancellation fee outlined in Part III, item B.

Part VI – Certification

Upon payment for the completed 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.

The center will receive a certificate and decal for display. Certificates will expire at the end of the fifth 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

1. **Can a center certification be denied or withdrawn after it has been issued?** Yes. A center certificate 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.
2. **What steps can a center take if they disagree with their inspection results?** 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.
3. **Will the tier or inspection results be shared publicly?** No. USBC will keep certification results confidential. However, centers may choose to disclose their own tier status.
4. **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.
5. **Will lane conditioning (dressing) be part of tier evaluation?** No. Certification only measures the physical specifications of the lanes, lane dressing is not part of the tiering process.
6. **What happens if a center chooses not to be inspected?** All centers must be inspected to maintain USBC certification. If a currently certified center declines inspection, USBC will request written confirmation of the decision — either mailed to USBC Headquarters, Attn: Center Certifications, or sent by email to certifications@bowl.com.

Once confirmation is received, the center will be placed in Inactive Status in the USBC database. USBC will also notify the local association that the center is no longer certified, and no certified competition, averages, or awards will be recognized from that location.

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.
7. **Does a center's tier affect its ability to host events or how bowler participation is recognized?** No. A center's tier does not impact its certification status. All USBC-certified centers, regardless of tier, can host certified leagues and tournaments. Additionally, all bowler participation, awards, and averages from certified competition held in these centers will continue to be fully recognized by USBC, just as they were prior to the tiered system.
8. **Does a center have to obtain a specific tier for tournament consideration?** No. Any USBC certified center may host leagues and tournaments of any level regardless of their overall tier.