



Level 1: Introduction to Kayaking

Instructor Criteria

Overview: Fundamentally, we expect that participants have the paddling skills, technical knowledge, rescue ability, teaching ability, group management, and interpersonal skills commensurate with this level of certification (Level 1) prior to presenting themselves for evaluation as Instructor Candidates at an Instructor Certification Exam (ICE).

Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC):

ACA courses are open to all individuals who acknowledge the ability to perform the following essential eligibility criteria.

1. Breathe independently (i.e., not require medical devices to sustain breathing)
2. Independently maintain sealed airway passages while under water
3. Independently hold head upright without neck / head support
4. Manage personal care independently or with assistance of a companion
5. Manage personal mobility independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance
6. Follow instructions and effectively communicate independently or with assistance of a companion
7. Independently turn from face-down to face-up and remain floating face up while wearing a properly fitted life jacket*
8. Get on / off or in / out of a paddlecraft independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
9. Independently get out and from under a capsized paddlecraft*
10. Remount or reenter the paddlecraft following deep water capsize independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
11. Maintain a safe body position while attempting skills, activities and rescues listed in the appropriate Course Outline, and have the ability to recognize and identify to others when such efforts would be unsafe given your personal situation*

** To participate in adaptive programs, participants must acknowledge only the first six EEC listed above. Entry-level adaptive programs will involve teaching and practicing EEC #7-11.*

Course Prerequisites: Completion of the appropriate level skills course, assessment course, or equivalent skills.

Instructor Trainer: This certification course may be offered by Level 1 or higher ACA Instructor Trainers or Instructor Trainer Educators in the appropriate discipline

Course Duration: Combined IDW and ICE - Minimum 2 days (16 hours) for one discipline.

Course Location / Venue: Flat water, protected from wind, waves and outside boat traffic, with current less than 0.5 knots, and within swimming distance of shore.

Class Ratio: 5 Instructor Candidates : 1 Instructor Trainer; with an additional instructor, the ratio can be 10:2

Succeeding courses: Level 2 Instructor Skills, Assessment, and Certification courses in the appropriate discipline



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The following is a list of the criteria used to evaluate Instructor Candidates. The content and sequence of evaluation is to be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location, time allowance, and be craft appropriate. The course content includes the [National On Water Standards for human powered craft](#). The full rubric for Level 1 paddling and rescue skills can be found in the above link, pages 16-46. The full set of related content knowledge standards can be found on pages 59-66.

General Requirements for all Instructor Certifications:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Meet the appropriate essential eligibility criteria
- Successfully complete an Instructor Certification Workshop (IDW and ICE)
- Be a full ACA member
- Upon successful completion, register with the Safety Education and Instruction Council
- Have and maintain first aid and age appropriate CPR
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of paddlesports and the ACA
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform and teach all of the following material, unassisted, in the appropriate venue

Maintenance Requirements:

- Teach at least two courses, that meet ACA standards, within the four-year certification period and properly report the courses to the National Office
- Complete an Instructor Update, at the highest level of certification, during the four-year certification period
- Maintain ACA membership and SEIC registration annually
- Maintain appropriate CPR and first aid certification for the duration of certification

Level 1: Introduction to Kayaking Instructor Requirements:

- 1) Demonstrate a knowledge of ACA Paperwork:
 - How to register and report a course (with and without insurance)
 - An understanding of the ACA Waiver and Release of Liability
- 2) Demonstrate a knowledge of teaching and learning theory:
 - Have an understanding of multiple modalities of teaching and how they impact different learners
 - Differentiate instruction targeting different learners
 - Use effective teaching methods
 - Present information effectively (both prepared and impromptu)
- 3) Use of [National On Water Standards for human powered craft](#) (NOWS) to:
 - Evaluate other paddlers and provide effective feedback
 - Effectively make documented skill assessments
 - Display familiarity with NOWS rubrics (pages 16-46)



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- 4) Demonstrate the following:
 - Positive interpersonal skills
 - Appropriate group management skills (including leadership and judgment)
 - Ability to choose an appropriate venue /class site

- 5) Demonstrate ability to paddle efficiently and comfortably, in flat water.
 - Boat stability (trim, stance, etc.)
 - Efficient and effective paddle placement for intended maneuver
 - Safe and effective body usage: Bio-Mechanics (Body, Linkage and Rotation)
 - Parts of strokes: CPR (Catch, Power, Recovery), static and dynamic

- 6) The ability to teach and model:
 - Forward
 - Back
 - Sweeps (forward, reverse)
 - Draws (out of water and in water recovery)
 - Stern Rudder
 - Low Brace

- 7) The ability to teach and model these basic maneuvers effectively:
 - Enter and launch kayak from shore in a controlled manner, checking for clear departure
 - Propel the kayak forward in a straight line 15-20 boat lengths
 - Stop the kayak within two boat lengths
 - Move the kayak backwards 3-4 boat lengths
 - Turn the kayak from a stationary position 180° to the right and left
 - Move the kayak sideways 10 feet (3 meters) to each side
 - Propel the kayak in a figure of 8 course around markers 3-4 boat lengths apart
 - Turn the kayak while maintaining forward motion 90° to the right and left
 - Arrive at destination point, checking for clear approach, and exit the kayak in a controlled and safe manner.

- 8) Demonstrate the ability to teach and model basic rescue techniques/concepts effectively, **and as appropriate to craft.**
 - Awareness of rescue priorities: people, kayak, paddle, gear
 - Use of safe progressions T-RETHROG (Talk, Reach, THrow, ROw, Go) - including throwable floating aid or throw bag use.
 - Responsibilities of: the group, rescuer, swimmers
 - Demonstrate the use of appropriate rescue and safety gear for the kayak and planned activity
 - Exit the kayak after a capsize (may include wet exit)
 - Rescue self and the kayak using multiple effective self rescue techniques (e.g., swim self and boat to shore, and deep water re-entry).



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- Rescue a person in the water and capsized kayak using appropriate techniques and equipment for the craft (bailers, pumps, paddle floats, rescue slings, tow lines, etc.)
 - Perform assisted rescues: boat over boat or side by side or T-rescue or others appropriate to conditions
 - Perform assisted re-entry: heel hook or stern entry or others appropriate to conditions
 - Techniques for bulldozing or towing a kayak and/or swimmer to shore
- 9) Demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to teach, the following knowledge and skills effectively, referring to the [NOWS document](#) for human powered craft knowledge standards (pages 59-66):
- Weather conditions, forecasts, and other environmental hazards (wind, water, weather, waves)
 - Evaluating hazards to navigation
 - Importance of developing good judgment and group responsibility for a trip
 - Evaluating ability, water comfort, and confidence of participants prior to trip
 - Warm ups, conditioning, physical training to reduce injury
 - Securing kayak for transport using proper tie downs, straps, or knots.
 - Proper techniques to safely lift and carry the kayak on shore
 - Life jackets appropriate for the individual's size, kayak, and activity, assuring all others in the group are properly wearing their life jacket
 - Inspect the kayak and all safety equipment to meet state, federal, and local requirements for the vessel and activity
 - Safe boating practices (behavior, substance abuse, on water and land etiquette, leave no trace ethics)
 - Elements of a float plan (Who, What, When, Where, filing practices)
 - Review personal equipment needed for the craft, activity and environment
 - Prepare kayak for departure: stowing gear securely, and ensuring it is balanced
 - Review paddling equipment, terminology (kayak and paddle), and care of gear
 - How to hold the paddle in correct orientation and grip for effective paddling
 - Personal and group gear including, but not limited to:
 - Environmental supplies (food, water, appropriate clothing, sunscreen, etc.)
 - Navigational and signaling tools (maps, charts, whistle, etc.)
 - Safety and rescue tools
 - Repair kit
 - First aid kit (appropriate to training)
 - Review the dangers of paddle sports and how to plan an appropriate course to avoid potential hazardous situations.
 - How to avoid and prevent cold water shock, hypothermia and hyperthermia by choosing proper clothing; recognizing and treating early symptoms; 1-10-1 rule.
 - Recognize the importance of hydration
 - Appropriately use communication (paddle and whistle) signals
 - Basic navigational rules for inland waterways
 - Awareness of the group and effective on water management techniques; minimum/maximum standards
 - Secure the kayak and equipment before leaving unattended, with attention paid to environment and conditions



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- 10) Demonstrate leadership, group management skills, experience and judgment necessary to be a safe, effective instructor.

Note: An Instructor is expected to be able to demonstrate and teach everything on the Level 1 Skills Course and Level 1 Skills Assessment for their craft.