



Level 3: Coastal Kayak Basic Strokes and Rescues (Sample Skills Course)

Course Overview: The **Coastal Kayak Basic Strokes and Rescues** course is designed to introduce basic coastal kayaking skills and safety to beginners.

Course Objectives: Participants will be introduced to:

- Proper fit and adjustment of their kayak for effective control and comfort
- Attaching and releasing the spray skirt
- Safely entering and exiting kayak, including wet exit
- Effective use and control of the paddle
- Performing basic strokes efficiently
- Performing T-rescue and Paddle float self rescue
- The importance and influence of weather and tides on the coastal kayaker
- Dealing with marine hazards and other safety issues
- Understanding personal limitations and skill level

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.*



Level 3: Coastal Kayak Basic Strokes and Rescues

(Sample Skills Course)

Course Prerequisites: None

Minimum Personal Equipment for the course:

- Properly sized and outfitted kayak with front and rear flotation.
- Standard gear and safety equipment (paddles, PFDs (lifejackets), sprayskirts, paddle floats, bilge pumps, and appropriate clothing for weather and immersion)

Course Duration: One day (8 hours)

Course Location / Venue: Ideal teaching conditions are a protected freshwater lake or saltwater cove environment. Waves should not exceed 1 foot (0.3 meters) ; winds should not exceed 10 knots. Groups must be kept within ½ mile (0.8 km) of shore

Class Ratio - 5 students : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 10 : 2

Succeeding courses:

Level 3: Coastal Kayak Strokes and Maneuvers Refinement

The following is a general summary of course content for the **Coastal Kayak Basic Strokes and Rescues** course. The content and sequence of instruction should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance.

Course Content

Introduction, Expectations, & Logistics:

- Welcome, introductions, paperwork
- Student & instructor course expectations and limitations
- Course itinerary & site logistics
- Review waiver, assumption of risk, challenge by choice, medical disclosure
- About the ACA
- Lifejacket (PFD) policy (always wear on water)
- Appropriate personal behavior
- No alcohol / substance abuse
- Proper etiquette on & off the water
- Respect private property
- Practice Leave No Trace ethics

The Paddling Environment:

- Wind
- Waves
- Weather
- Water

Personal Preparation:

- Personal ability
- Swimming ability
- Water comfort & confidence
- Fitness, conditioning, and warm up
- Safe paddle and boat handling
- Safety and rescue considerations
- Personal equipment (reviewed by Instructor)

On Shore Presentations

- Equipment orientation
- Personal clothing and gear
- PFDs, wetsuits, spray skirts



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(Sample Skills Course)

- Safety equipment
- Basic boat design and kayak terminology
- Boat fit and adjustment
- Boat/body weld
- Foot brace adjustment
- Spray skirt attachment/release
- Dry land “wet exit” drill
- Paddle orientation and use
- Correct hand placement
- Control hand/relaxed grip
- Torso rotation and paddler’s box

Launching & Landing / Wet-exit practice & Kayak Orientation

- Carrying kayak to and from water
- Entry/exit of kayak from shore or dock
- Boat stability, “hip wiggle,” edging
- Practice wet-exits with one-on-one supervision by instructor (if in cold water environment, wait until rescue session)
- Allow students a few minutes to paddle around and get oriented with their kayak

Basic Strokes & Skills

- Rafting up
- Sweep stroke (forward/reverse/pivot in place)
- Forward Stroke
- Reverse stroke and stopping
- Draw stroke
- High and low braces (hip snap/boat edging/lower body control)

On Land Discussion Items

- Weather conditions
- Chart use
- Tides and currents (if applicable)
- Signaling and safety devices

Deep Water Rescues

Note: Use stirrup if necessary

- Demonstrate and practice T-rescue
- Demonstrate and practice paddle float, and other self-rescues
- Demonstrate and practice towing, contact tow, as well as in-line tow
- *Bonus:* Reentry and roll with Paddle float

Group Safety Discussion

- Group signals
- Staying together (i.e. lead/sweep)
- What to do in an emergency
- Dealing with boat traffic

Short Skills Development Tour

- Continue to develop efficient stroke technique
- Practice course corrections
- Have fun

Conclusion & Wrap Up:

- Group debrief / Individual feedback
- Course limitations
- Importance of First Aid & CPR
- Importance of additional instruction, practice, experience
- Importance of appropriate level of safety & rescue training
- Demo advanced maneuver
- Life sport / Paddling options
- Local paddling groups / Clubs
- Handouts / Reference materials
- ACA Membership forms
- Course evaluation
- Participation cards