



Level 3: River Safety and Rescue

Skills Assessment

Assessment Overview: This ACA Assessment Course is designed to evaluate a participant's ability to perform all of the skills listed along with demonstrating an appropriate level of knowledge. This assessment course provides the participant with the opportunity to receive documentation of having achieved a certain level of rescue skills ability.

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: Must be an ACA Member

Course Duration: 1 day (8 hours) minimum

Course Location / Venue: In-water skills are covered in up to Class II rapids

Assessor: Level 3: River Safety and Rescue Instructor (or higher)

Class Ratio: 12 Students : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor the ratio can be 24 : 2

Succeeding courses: Level 4: Swiftwater Rescue Skills Assessment
Instructor Certification



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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
- 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

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



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Participant: _____ **ACA #** _____ **Date:** _____

Location and venue: _____

Rating: ✓ - *Passing* N - *Needs more practice.*

Participant must be able to perform all strokes, maneuvers, rescues, and skills in the appropriate venue. In addition the participant must demonstrate the appropriate level of knowledge for this skill assessment level.

RESCUE PHILOSOPHY	P / N	COMMENTS
Focus on prevention and preparation as the keys to managing river accidents		
Establish rescue priorities and apply them throughout the course		
Focus on simpler, safer, faster techniques as highest priority		

SCENE MANAGEMENT		
Appropriately apply ICS to course evolutions and scenarios		
Demonstrate effective communication techniques		

EQUIPMENT		
Emphasize prior planning and practice		
Understand the strengths and limitations of personal gear and rescue equipment		
Equipment check: Participant wears suitable and properly outfitted helmet,		



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PFD, and clothing for conditions		
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THROW ROPES		
Consistently throw a bag at least 30 feet and cross a stationary, on-land, 4 foot wide target, using any method.		
Consistently throw a bag at least 30 feet to a swimmer in a rapid.		
Recognize advantages and disadvantages of all throwing techniques.		
Coil and make a second accurate throw, to a victim in a rapid at least 30 feet away, within 20 seconds.		
Coil a rope using effective technique.		
Demonstrate a vector pull and describe its advantages and disadvantages.		
Effectively re-stuff a throw bag.		
Demonstrate appropriate belay techniques.		
Demonstrate rope receiving techniques.		
Demonstrate appropriate rope care.		
Discuss appropriate rope selection.		

KNOTS		
Tie, and dress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - figure 8 - figure 8 on a bight 		

PINS		
Focus on avoiding pins and early self rescue.		



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Understand rescuer hazards in releasing pins.		
Focus on rescuing entrapped victims over pinned equipment.		
Effectively release simple pinned craft / gear in up to a class II rapid via unbalancing forces		

ENTRAPMENT		
Focus on avoiding entrapment situations.		
Effectively use other skill modules (e.g., wading) to make contact with victims.		
Demonstrate stabilization and snag lines		

WATER HAZARDS AND HYDROLOGY		
Demonstrate effective shore based scouting explaining river features and hazards as well as alternative paddling routes		

SWIMMING		
Effectively demonstrate defensive swimming technique including ferries		
Effectively and repeatedly peel out, catch eddies and ferry. Effectively swim through waves and hydraulics.		



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Aggressively swim a downstream class I/II whitewater course at least 100 yards long, with several ferries and eddy moves.		
Demonstrate a proper shallow water entry		

WADING		
Effectively discuss strengths, limitations and risks of wading.		
Explain the Safe Eddy Rule		
Demonstrate one person paddle prop and 2 person wade techniques		

BOAT BASED RESCUES		
Paddle candidate's craft of choice (raft, canoe, SUP or kayak) effectively and comfortably in up to class II whitewater. Effectively self-rescue after swimming from the candidate's craft of choice.		
Demonstrate a working knowledge of all types of boat-based rescue, for all paddle craft. Recover swimmers, boats and paddles using the candidate's craft of choice.		
Emphasize the importance of paddling skill for effective boat-based rescues.		

SCENARIOS		
Participate effectively in appropriately challenging scenarios.		

FINAL ASSESSMENT	COMMENTS
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PASS	NEEDS MORE WORK	
ASSESSOR		
<p><i>Assessor must be a currently certified ACA Instructor at or above this level.</i></p> <p>IT or Instructor: _____</p> <p>Signature: _____</p> <p>ACA #: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>Assisting IT or Instructor: _____</p> <p>ACA #: _____</p>		