



Level 5: Coastal Kayaking Rough Water Maneuvering, Towing and Rescue

(Sample Skills Course)

Course Overview: The **Coastal Kayak Rough Water Maneuvering, Towing and Rescue** course is designed to teach paddlers how to read and surf waves with good boat control

Course Objectives: Participants will be asked to:

- Plan a rough water outing
- Practice decision-making process to manage risk
- Determine proper equipment
- Practice group formations and communicate in rough water
- Perform advanced strokes in rough water
- Perform towing exercises in rough water
- Perform self and assisted rescues in rough water with loaded boats
- Launch and land through moderate surf, if available
- Transit through areas of moderate current or tidal rip where necessary, if available

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.*



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Course Prerequisites: Completion of an open water course and proficiency and experience in executing all strokes, maneuvers and techniques in open water. A reliable roll and the ability to aggressively self-rescue required

Minimum Personal Equipment for the Course:

Properly sized and outfitted sea kayaks with front and rear flotation and related paddling and safety equipment (I.e. paddle & spare, PFD, spray skirt, tow rig, paddle float, bilge pump, wet/dry suit & hypothermia kit if necessary, helmet, first aid kit, repair kit, emergency signaling devices appropriate for the time and area of travel, extra clothes, food and water).

Course Duration: 8 hours

Course Location / Venue: Areas where escape from rough conditions is reasonably accessible. Course should not be taught in flat calm, but conditions such as wind up to 20 knots, or seas to 4 feet, or surf break to 3 feet, or currents up to 4 knots, with standing waves. Some combination of 2-3 of these conditions may exist but all 4 together are not recommended in the same course.

Instructors should reduce student to instructor ratio when conditions warrant.

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

The following is a general summary of course content for the **Coastal Kayaking Rough Water Maneuvering, Towing and Rescue** course. The content covered 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
- 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)

Dry-Land Presentations



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- Trip planning and risk assessment (wind, weather, waves, tides, currents, group gear).
- Equipment check/orientation, (boat, clothing, gear, first aid, repair, navigation, communication, hypothermia kits)
- Group formations and communication

Launching Through Mild Surf

- Boat positioning and alignment.
- Sequence and spacing.
- Powering through the break.
- If all goes wrong, where to meet on the other side

Note: Assisted rescues should not be attempted in shore break

Strokes in Rough Water

- Sweeps from a static position (looking through the turn, edging, and driving with the pegs)
- Using the tops of waves to turn
- Turning into the wind (sweeps with edge control to increase weather cocking, bow draws and static brace turns)
- Turning down wind (use of edge control to free the bow, stern rudders, reverse strokes and skeg use to assist in lee cocking)
- Surfing wind waves and swell (when to accelerate, use of correction strokes and stern rudders)

Rough Water Towing

- The Single tow, In-Line tow, Contact tow and Rafted tow
- Towing a rescue in progress, and releasing under tow

Landing in Mild Surf

- Sequence and spacing
- Wave selection

- To ride or not to ride
- Landing on the top or riding the face
- Wave dynamics and boat control

Rough Water Rescues

- The swimmer bow rescue
- Back deck rescue
- The bow and paddle shaft rescues.
- Rolling in waves and current.
- Self-rescues (re-entries):
- Re-Enter and roll
- Re-Enter and roll w/ paddle float
- Paddle float self rescue (back deck)
- Cowboy (scramble) self rescue
- Assisted Rescues:
- T-Rescue with back deck re-entry
- T-Rescue with crab re-entry
- T-Rescue with swimmer at bow
- Loaded boat options for assisted rescues:
 - Assisted T
 - Hull down method of crossing the “T”
 - Re-Enter and pump
 - Curl (swamped hatch recovery)

Note: These are suggested exercises. Instructors must weigh time, safety and logistical concerns in deciding which if not all exercises are to be covered

Additional Land / Water Exercises

- Review weak spots or move on to take advantage of local conditions
- May include current and tidal rip training if conditions, skill and energy permit
- Predicting tides/current
- Crossing eddy lines
- Surfing standing waves
- Calculating ferry angles

Conclusion & Wrap Up:

- Group debrief / Individual feedback
- Course limitations



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- 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