



Level 2: Essentials of Surfski

(Sample Skills Course)

Course Overview: The **Essentials of Surfski** course is designed to teach beginner paddlers to safely and enjoyably kayak on lakes, calm protected ocean environments, and other flatwater settings.

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: None

Course Duration: 8 hours

Course Location / Venue: Protected water near shore with winds less than 10 knots, waves up to one foot (.3 M), and current up to one knot



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

Succeeding courses:

Level 3: Fundamentals of Surfski

Level 4: Open Water Surfski (*under development*)

L5: Surfski Advanced Open Water (*under development*)

The following is a general summary of course content for the **Essentials of Surfski** 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
- Personal equipment (reviewed by Instructor, including the use of boat and paddle leashes)
- Learning judgment. Prudent behavior, being aware of what you don't know, can't handle, or should not risk
- Group Equipment: extra paddle, dry bags, first aid kit and rescue equipment (Depending on the environment and nature of the trip this may include cell phones, 2- way radios, PLB's, paddle floats, rescue slings, etc.)

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
- Guidebooks, maps/charts, local knowledge
- Assessing relevant existing and approaching environmental conditions including: tides, weather, time of day, water and air temperature, traffic, and accessibility
- Assessing personal and group dynamics (skills, equipment, group makeup, emotional concerns, logistics, and leadership).
- Filed Trip Plan



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Getting Started:

- Warm-up and stretching
- How to pick up and carry a surfski safely
- Car topping: loading and unloading, racks, straps
- Launching and landing
- Boarding, three points of contact, weight kept low, etc.
- Posture, safety, comfort, effectiveness, rocking, balance
- Falling off
- Water comfort and confidence
- Self Rescue
- Righting a flipped surfski
- Basic Terminology
- Types of strokes (covered in this course): power, turning
- Stroke components: catch, propulsion, exit & recovery
- Posture - Safe and effective body usage.

Equipment:

- Life Jackets (PFDs): types, fit
- Leashes (boat and paddle)
- Surfskis: types, materials, parts, care (including safety features such as inherent flotation) and bailers and different rudders.
- Paddles: types, materials, parts, length, blade size, shape and offset, hand position
- Care of equipment
- Personal equipment: water, food, shoes, hat, sunscreen, bug repellent, sun glasses, eyeglass straps, protective clothing for heat or cold, whistle (or other approved sounding device), knife, light
- Optional equipment and outfitting for improved control

Safety & Rescue:

- Exercising Judgment, Safety as a mind-set, etc.
- Cold Water Shock / Hypothermia: HELP/Huddle, clothing
- Dehydration/ hyperthermia: hydration, clothing
- Hazards: wind, waves, weather, current, rocks, bridges, piers, dams, strainers, traffic
- Do's and don'ts of leashes
- Paddling as a group
- Signaling
- Interactions/ Sharing water with non powered and powered traffic
- Emergency procedures
- "If in doubt, legs out"

Rescue

- Rescue priorities: people, boats, gear
- Deep-water re-mounting, assisted and solo
- Boat assisted rescue, assisting a tired swimmer (pushing or pulling to shore)
- Rescuing a surfski

Maneuvers:

- Paddling in a reasonably straight line
- Using the rudder effectively
- Turning
- Stopping

Strokes:

- Forward
- Back (stopping)
- Draw
- Sweeps
- Low Brace



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Conclusion & Wrap Up:

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