



Level 4: Whitewater Stand Up Paddleboarding

Instructor Criteria

Overview: Fundamentally, we expect that participants should have the paddling skills, technical knowledge, rescue ability, teaching ability, group management, and interpersonal skills commensurate with this level of certification 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 in / out of a paddlecraft independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
9. Independently get out and from under a capsized paddlecraft*
10. 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 Level 2: Essentials of SUP Instructor in good standing, and successfully completed a Level 4: Whitewater SUP skills assessment or have equivalent skills. It is strongly recommended to have taken a swiftwater rescue class from a certified instructor.



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Course Duration: IDW (8 hours – 1 day) & ICE (8 hours – 1 day)

Course Location / Venue: The IDW and ICE will take place on sections of whitewater rivers rated up to class I-II rapids. All of the following instructor requirements are to be completed in the course venue on rivers up to and including class II rapids.

Class Ratio: 4 Instructor Candidates : 1 Instructor Trainer; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 8 : 2

Succeeding Levels of Certification:

Level 5: Advanced Whitewater SUP

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 & ICE)
- Be a full ACA member
- Upon successful completion, register with the Safety Education & Instruction Council
- Have and maintain First Aid and age appropriate CPR
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of boardsports, paddlesports and the ACA
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform and teach all of the following material unassisted in the appropriate venue

The following is a list of the criteria used to evaluate Instructor Candidates. The content covered and sequence of evaluation should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance.

Demonstrate knowledge and ability to efficiently/effectively plan and implement appropriate instructional sessions and assessments for a different learning styles and ability levels, to include:

- Differentiation of instruction based on the individual learner (student centered)
- Use of an appropriate skills progression when teaching complex skill sets
- Selection of appropriate teaching venue based on ability and desired outcomes
- Focus on core principles rather than specific technique
- Provides appropriate, specific and meaningful feedback

Maintenance Requirements:

- Teach at least two courses that meet ACA standards within the four-year certification period and report the results to the National Office



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- Complete an Instructor Update, at the highest level of certification, during the four-year certification period
- Maintain ACA membership and SEIC registration annually

Level 4: Whitewater Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) Instructor Requirements:

Fundamentally, we expect that paddlers should have basic paddling skills, before presenting themselves for evaluation as instructor candidates as below:

- 1) Demonstrate a knowledge of ACA Paperwork:
 - How to register & report a course (with and without insurance)
 - An understanding of the ACA Waiver & Release of Liability
- 2) Demonstrate a knowledge of:
 - Teaching theory
 - Learning theory
 - Effective methods of providing feedback
- 3) Demonstrate the following:
 - Positive interpersonal skills
 - Appropriate group management skills (including leadership and judgment)
 - Ability to choose an appropriate venue / class site

4) Demonstrate the ability to effectively and efficiently perform, assess and teach the following paddle strokes and maneuvers in Level 4: Whitewater SUP venue(s) and conditions:

All items below unless otherwise specified are to be performed in regular & goofy stance. Only the dominant stance has to be at demo quality. Non-dominant stance to be evaluated to the standard of the candidate being comfortable and confident during execution.

- Forward
- Reverse (back stroke)
- Cross Forward
- Sweeps (Forward / Reverse)
- Extended Forward Sweep (cross board draw & forward sweep combo)
- Draw (dynamic / static / sculling)
- Draw to the Nose
- Rudder Stroke (tail draws and prys)
- Cross Board Draw
- Bracing (Low, High, Sculling, Slap, Cross Tail – Heel Side Low Brace)
- C-stroke (draw to the nose-forward-J-stroke exit/recovery)

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5) Demonstrate the understanding of and the ability to effectively and efficiently perform, assess and teach board control skills in Level 4: Whitewater SUP venue(s) and conditions, to include:

All items below unless otherwise specified are to be performed in regular & goofy stance. Only the dominant stance has to be at demo quality. Non-dominant stance to be evaluated to the standard of the candidate being comfortable and confident during execution.

- Prone
- Sitting
- Kneeling
- Neutral stance with variation/slight stagger & placements
- Board wiggle: legs act independently from upper body, head/torso remain over center of board
- Offset Stance: offset stance with various weight distribution nose to tail
 - Offset surf stance variations: narrow, wide, drop knee on back leg, one or both feet forward
- Asymmetrical stance relative to the axial & lateral centerlines
- Open vs closed stances
- Front Ferry
- Eddy Turns (wide / shallow)
- Peel Outs (wide / shallow)
- C-Turn
- S-Turn
- Front Surfing with control

6) Demonstrate the ability to effectively and efficiently perform, assess and teach rescue topics and techniques in a variety of river levels and currents up to the Level 4: Whitewater SUP certification course venue and conditions:

- Describe Rescue Priorities and Responsibilities of Individuals
- Falling Techniques: deep water vs. shallow rocky
- Recoveries: (with and without a leash as appropriate)
- Unassisted board remount – Self Rescue in class I-II whitewater conditions
- From SUP, retrieve stray SUP and return it to swimmer
- Swim SUP to retrieve stray paddle
- Towing a swimmer/board – in class I-II conditions
- Deep Water Rescue: unassisted remounting of board from side or back of board
- Swim Rescue: swim to shore (25 yards) in full paddling gear

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- Board Assisted Rescue
- Towing: Use leash or PFD tether to pull a weak or injured paddler
- Unresponsive paddler rescue (passive victim rescue)
- Consistently throw a throw bag at least 40 feet to a swimmer in a rapid
- Demonstrate a proper 1-person wade
- Demonstrate the basics of foot entrapment rescue
- Safety Equipment: whistle, knife, throw bag
- Signals: universal river signals: paddle, hand, whistle
- Knots: Figure 8 or bowline, truckers hitch and 2 half hitches

7) Demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to effectively and efficiently perform, assess and teach, the following:

- History of SUP in whitewater
- SUP terminology used in whitewater SUP
- Awareness of whitewater SUP destinations (local, regional, national, international)
- Etiquette for whitewater rivers
- Concepts of paddling in whitewater
- Current dynamics, river features and hazards (whitewater river)
- International Scale of River Difficulty
- River Running Strategies
- Scouting
- Portaging
- Regulations – USCG / State / Local safety requirements
- Safety: understand the risks of SUP in whitewater and hazard avoidance
- Cold Water Shock ~ Hypothermia ~ Hyperthermia: recognition and treatment
- Environmental Issues: Leave No Trace
- Personal Preparation: planning, clothing, food and water for whitewater SUP
- SUP Board: types, parts, materials for whitewater SUP
- SUP Paddle: types, parts, materials, fit for whitewater SUP
- Appropriate PFD type and use
- Appropriate helmet and use (types, parts, materials) for whitewater SUP
- Leash wear (types and appropriate venues)
- Appropriate shoes for the type of paddling, board used, and river
- Safety Equipment:
 - Spare paddles: take apart SUP paddle, flatwater canoe paddle, two piece sea kayak paddle
 - Dry bags and other waterproof containers
 - First aid kit and repair kit
 - Emergency signaling devices

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- Elbow pads and knee pads
- Towing rigs: bags, belts, PFD cow tail

8) Demonstrate the ability to effectively and efficiently perform, assess, and teach group management and incident management skills and concepts, to include:

- Planning a whitewater river trip
- Float Plan
- Put-in Briefing
- Group (3 person minimum)
- Group Management (Lead /Sweep, Safety, Spacing) (*e.g.* CLAP: Communication, Line of Sight, Assessment, Position)
- Demonstrate leadership, group management skills, experience and judgment necessary to be a safe, effective instructor in this courses venue
- Trip Planning: how to prepare for a whitewater day trip