



Level 4: Open Water Coastal Kayaking

Instructor Criteria

Overview: Fundamentally, we expect that participants will 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 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 Level 3: Coastal Kayak Instructor in good standing, having taught and reported at least two Level 3: Coastal Kayak skills or assessment courses, and must have successfully completed a Level 4: Open Water Coastal Kayak Skills Assessment or Level 4: Coastal Kayak Trip Leader Assessment (effective January 1, 2016).

Course Duration: Minimum 6 days (48 hours)

Course Location / Venue:

L4: OWCK certification cannot be completed unless during some period three of the four conditions (one must be surf) necessary for rough water assessment are present during some portion of the certification



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course. Specified conditions must occur, but they do not have to be simultaneous. Area of escape from rough conditions must be accessible.

The four criteria are:

- 3-5 foot seas
- 15-20 knot winds
- 2-4 foot surf (*required*)
- 2-4 knots of current

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

Succeeding courses:

Level 5: Advanced Open Water Coastal Kayaking

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 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 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.

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
- 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: Open Water Coastal Kayaking Instructor Requirements:

- 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

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- 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 basic paddle strokes and maneuvers, to include:
 - Forward (touring & power)
 - Reverse & stopping
 - Forward and reverse sweeps
 - Draw (to the hip, sculling, on the move)
 - Braces (high, low, sculling)
 - Rudder (stern, bow)
 - Low brace turn
 - High brace turn
 - Side-slip (forward & reverse)

- 5) Demonstrate the understanding of and the ability to effectively and efficiently perform, assess and teach boat control skills, to include:
 - Edge awareness and control
 - Launching and landing
 - Forward paddling, reverse paddling and maneuvering in a variety of sea states, wind conditions, wind directions and tidal current up to the Level 4:OWCK certification course venue
 - Surfing

- 6) Demonstrate the ability to effectively and efficiently perform, assess and teach rescue techniques in a variety of sea states, wind conditions, wind directions and tidal current up to the Level 4: OWCK certification course venue:
 - Wet exit w/ spray skirt
 - Self-rescue (re-enter and roll, scramble, paddle float w/ and w/o sling)
 - Boat over boat rescue (T-rescue)
 - Rescue (bow / stern / paddle)
 - Roll (teach + individual proficiency: 3 rolls within 1 minute, one must be from a non-set-up position)
 - Scoop rescue
 - Unresponsive paddler rescue *e.g. Hand-of-God*
 - Swimmer recovery (bow, stern)

- 7) Demonstrate the ability to effectively and efficiently perform, assess and teach towing techniques in a variety of sea states, wind conditions, wind directions and tidal current up to the Level 4: OWCK certification course venue:
 - Contact towing (tow / push another kayaker w/o use of towline)
 - Solo towing (single paddler and raft)
 - Assisted towing



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- 8) Demonstrate the ability to effectively and efficiently perform, assess and teach navigational skills, to include:
 - Chart / map orientation
 - Plotting bearings
 - Adjusting for variation
 - Identification of relief, aids to navigation / channel markers
 - Time and distance conversion
 - Use of natural ranges (transits)
 - Crossing current using ferry angles
 - Navigation in limited visibility environments

- 9) The Level 4 Instructor must demonstrate venue appropriate skill/knowledge of features and hazards specific to their regions of operation (for example: surf, sea caves, rock gardens, prevalent winds and currents, cold water, marine life, etc.).

- 10) Demonstrate the ability to effectively and efficiently perform, assess and teach trip planning skills and concepts, to include:
 - Development of a float plan
 - Equipment selection / packing
 - Weather forecasting resources and interpretation
 - Tide and current planning
 - Swell and surf forecasting resources and interpretation
 - Leave No Trace, understanding ecology, conservation and stewardship

- 11) Demonstrate the ability to effectively and efficiently perform, assess and teach group and incident management skills and concepts, to include:
 - Communication and signaling (VHF radio protocol / pyrotechnics / smoke)
 - Basic field repair
 - Nautical rules of the road
 - Situational awareness
 - Avoidance, assessment and management of minor injuries
 - Avoidance, assessment and management of cold water shock, hypo/hyperthermia
 - Appropriate leadership, judgment and group management in a variety of open water coastal environments