



Level 4: Downwind Surfski

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).

Course Prerequisites:

- All participants must acknowledge personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#)
- Be a current ACA Member
- Completion of the appropriate level skills course, assessment course, or equivalent skills

Course Duration: Combined IDW & ICE - 4 days (32 hours)

Course Location / Venue:

Level 4: Downwind Surfski instructor certification cannot be completed unless during some period three (3) conditions necessary for assessment are present during some portion the certification course. The four (4) criteria are:

- Winds between 13- 17knots (15-20 miles/hr or 24-32 km/hr)
- Waves between 3-5 foot (1-1.5 meters)
- Current between 2-3 knot
- Shore Break (Beach launch and return with breaking waves)

Class Ratio: 5 Instructor Candidates: 1 Instructor Trainer; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 10 : 2. The maximum number of candidates permitted is 10.

Succeeding courses:

Level 5: Advanced Open Water and Downwind Surfski (under development)

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.

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



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- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform and teach all of the following material unassisted in the appropriate venue
- Instructors are expected to be able to demonstrate, teach, and model everything on the official ACA skills course and assessment course outlines which correspond to their level/craft.

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 principals 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
- 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: Downwind Surfski 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
- 3) Demonstrate the following:
 - Positive interpersonal skills
 - Appropriate group management skills (including leadership and judgment)
 - Ability to choose an appropriate venue / class site
- 4) The ability to teach and model the basic paddle strokes and maneuvers effectively using a wing paddle. This includes:
 - Forward stroke with no fishtailing
 - Reverse/back stroke, to stop and reverse
 - Forward and reverse sweeps, to turn and or spin the surfski (including pivot turn)



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- Draw and sculling draw, to move the surfski sideways evenly
 - Draw on the move to move the surfski sideways under way
 - Low & High brace to avoid capsize
 - Slap brace in/on a wave
- 5) Demonstrate the understanding of and the ability to safely, effectively, and efficiently perform, assess, and teach boat control skills, to include:
- Launching and landing in the Level 4 environment
 - Controlled capsize and effectively control the surfski
 - Edge awareness and control
 - Forward paddling and maneuvering in a variety of sea states, wind conditions, wind directions and tidal current up to the Level 4: Essentials of Downwind Surfski course venue
- 6) Demonstrate the ability to safely, 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: Essentials of Downwind Surfski course venue:
- Capsize “exit” techniques
 - Self-Rescue with and without assisting devices
 - Side by side assisted rescue
 - Injured paddler rescue
 - Unresponsive paddler rescue
 - Surfski contact towing techniques
- 7) Demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to effectively and efficiently perform, assess, and teach the following:
- Safety issues and hazards relevant to surfski paddling
 - Weather and tide conditions important to the surfski paddler
 - Cold water shock, hypothermia and hyperthermia; prevention and treatment
 - Management of equipment and hydration/nutrition
 - Signaling devices and safety equipment including VHF radios
 - Boat traffic “Rules of the Road,” and safe practice
 - Navigational tools such as maps, charts, guidebooks
 - Good body positioning
 - Proper surfski “fit” and surfski equipment selection
 - Surfski design, materials, and outfitting (footwell, bulkhead, etc.)
 - Surfski equipment and paddle (including wing paddles)
 - Rudder repair and safety equipment for added security (repair kit, flares, etc.)
 - Leashes – boats and paddles
 - The roots, history, and model elements of a surfski



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- 8) Demonstrate ability to safely, effectively, and efficiently and perform, assess, and teach group management and incident management skills and concepts in the Level 4; Downwind Surfski course environment, to include:
- Communications and signaling (VHF radio protocol, Personal Locator Beacon (PLB), flares or mirrors)
 - Situational awareness
 - Appropriate leadership, judgement, and group management in a variety of open water coastal environments