



# Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Instructor Criteria

## Course Outline

Fundamentally, participants are expected to 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

- Acknowledgement of personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Be a current ACA member
- Successful completion of Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment or Level 3: Coastal Kayak Trip Leader Assessment

## Course Duration

Combined Instructor Development Workshop (IDW) and Instructor Certification Exam (ICE) - Minimum 5 days (40 hours).

## Course Location / Accessible Venues

Lakes or coastal waters with potential areas of exposure to mild wind and wave conditions, with constant access to safe landing and within 1.5 nm from shore:

- 10 - 15 knot winds
- 1 - 2 foot waves (chop) (0.3 – 0.6 meters)
- 1 - 2 foot surf (0.3 – 0.6 meters)

- 1 - 2 knots of current

## **Course Size**

5 Participants : 1 Instructor Trainer; with an additional qualified assistant, the ratio can be 10 : 2. The maximum number of participants permitted is 10.

## **Instructor Trainer**

This certification course may be offered by Level 3: Coastal Kayaking (or higher) ACA Instructor Trainers or Instructor Trainer Educators.

## **Succeeding Courses**

- Level 4: Open Water Coastal Kayaking Skills, Assessment, Trip Leader, or Certification Course

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

## **General Requirements for all ACA Certification Candidates**

- Be at least 18 years old
- Demonstrate general knowledge of ACA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives
- Successfully complete an Instructor Certification Workshop (IDW and ICE)
- Upon successful completion, register with the Safety Education and 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

## **Certification Maintenance Requirements**

- Teach at least two courses that meet ACA standards within the four-year certification period and properly report the courses using the ACA Course Management System (CMS)
- Complete an Instructor Update, at the highest level of certification, during the four-year certification period
- Maintain ACA membership and SEIC registration annually
- Maintain appropriate CPR and first aid certification for the duration of certification

## **ACA Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Instructor Requirements**

### **Demonstrate a knowledge of ACA administrative processes:**

- How to register and report a course (with and without insurance)
- An understanding of the ACA Waiver and Release of Liability
- Familiarity with the ACA website and the resources and SEIC policies available

### **Demonstrate a knowledge of teaching and learning theory:**

- Understand multiple modalities of teaching and how they impact different learners
- Differentiate instruction targeting different learners
- Use effective teaching methods including appropriate skills progressions when teaching complex skill sets
- Present information effectively, both prepared and impromptu
- Effectively make documented skill assessments
- Focus on **core principles** rather than specific techniques
- Provide appropriate, specific, and meaningful feedback

### **Demonstrate the following:**

- Positive interpersonal skills

- Appropriate group management skills including leadership and judgment
- Ability to choose an appropriate venue / class site

**Demonstrate ability to paddle efficiently and comfortably in venue utilizing:**

- Boat stability (trim, posture, rocking, balance, etc.)
- Efficient and effective paddle placement for intended maneuver
- Safe and effective body usage: bio-mechanics (body, linkage, and rotation)
- Parts of strokes: CPR (catch, power, recovery), static and dynamic

**Demonstrate the ability to safely, effectively, and efficiently perform, assess, and teach these paddle strokes, maneuvers, and boat control skills:**

- Launching and landing: low dock or bank to enter and exit safely
- Forward (touring and power)
- Reverse and stopping
- Forward and reverse sweeps
- Draw (in-water / out-of-water / sculling)
- High and low braces
- Sculling brace
- Rudder
- Low brace turn
- High brace turn
- Bow rudder
- Side-Slip
- Edge awareness and control
- Forward paddling, reverse paddling and maneuvering in a variety of sea states, wind conditions, wind directions and tidal current

**Demonstrate the ability to safely, effectively, and efficiently perform, assess and teach rescue techniques in this certification course venue. *All rescue techniques must be performed in a reasonable amount of time.***

- Wet exit with spray skirt
  - Wet exits must be modeled and taught two ways: (1) utilizing the spray skirt grab loop and (2) releasing the skirt off the hip
- Self-rescue (scramble, paddle float with and without sling)
- Boat over boat rescue (T-rescue)
- Rescue (bow / stern / paddle)
- Scoop rescue
- Swimmer recovery (bow, stern)
- Unresponsive paddler rescue
- Reentry and roll with and without paddle float
- Perform a roll in course venue

**Demonstrate ability to teach these concepts effectively:**

- Paddling environments and forecasts pertinent to paddlers
  - Wind
  - Waves
  - Weather
  - Water
    - Water confidence and comfort including swimming ability
- Boat traffic awareness and safe practices, rules of the nautical road
- Navigation: basic chart reading and use
- Principles of Rescue
  - Use of safe rescue strategies such as T-RETHROG (Talk, Reach, Throw, Row, Go)

- Rescue Priorities: people, boat, paddle, gear
- Responsibilities of the group, rescuer, swimmers
- Appropriate use of rescue and safety gear
  - Bailer, pump, sling, lights, etc.
  - Signaling devices: pyrotechnics, smoke, etc.
- Emergency procedures
- Communication
  - Paddle, hand, and whistle signals
  - Cell phone and VHF radios when appropriate
- Paddling etiquette and Leave No Trace (LNT) principles and application to paddling environments
- Self care and care of other group members
  - Importance of fueling, hydration, clothing/insulation, and sun protection
  - Cold shock, hypothermia, and hyperthermia: prevention and treatment

**Demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to teach, the following knowledge and skills effectively:**

- Life jackets: types, usage, fitting, regulations
- Kayak: types, parts, materials, nomenclature, and design
- Paddle: types, parts, materials, fit
- Spray skirts: types and materials, grab loop
- Towing equipment and techniques
- Securing boat for transport on car or trailer using proper tie downs, straps, or knots
  - Knots: Figure-8, bowline, truckers hitch, and 2 half hitches
- Kayak carries
- Importance of developing good judgment and group responsibility for a trip
  - Group organization, trip planning, and travel strategies

- Float plan components and filing
- Maps, guide books, local knowledge
- Lead boat, sweep boat, safety boats, spacing, group members with repair kits, first aid kits, and first aid and CPR training
- Federal, state, and local laws and regulations that apply to trip venue or route
- Situational awareness
- Put-in safety briefing
- Three boat minimum for group trip

**Demonstrate the ability to perform demonstration quality strokes, maneuvers, and rescues outlined above with competence:**

- Perform in real-time
- Perform in slow motion
- Emphasize particular phases of skills through exaggerated movements
- Perform at mental ease
- Perform consistently

**Demonstrate leadership, group management skills, experience and judgment necessary to be a safe, effective instructor**

**Notes:**

*An ACA Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Instructor is expected to be able to demonstrate and teach everything on the Level 3: Skills Course and Level 3: Skills Assessment for their craft.*

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<https://americancanoe.org>

This curriculum is managed by the ACA Coastal Kayaking Committee. To connect with the leadership of this committee, please view the SEIC Committee rosters on [the ACA](#)

website.