



Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring 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).

Note: These criteria may be used for both spray skirted kayaks, as well as non-spray skirted kayaks. Criteria/skills not applicable to non-spray skirted kayaks are followed by the notation: *.

Bulkheads are not required; however, some form of flotation must be present to keep the kayak from sinking.

Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgement of 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 Instructor Development Workshop (IDW) and Instructor Certification Exam (ICE) - Minimum 3 days (24 hours).

Course Location / Accessible Venues

Protected water with constant access to safe landing and within .5 nautical miles from shore:

- Winds less than 10 knots
- Waves less than 1 foot (0.3 meters)
- Current less than 1 knot

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 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring (or higher) ACA Instructor Trainers or Instructor Trainer Educators.

Succeeding Courses

- Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Skills, Assessment, Trip Leader, or Certification Course
- **Note:** *The use of non-spray skirted kayaks in conditions above Level 2 is not appropriate*

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 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring 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 and maneuvers:

- Launching and landing: low dock or bank to enter and exit safely
- Forward stroke, to propel the kayak forward, in a straight line for 200 yards/meters
- Reverse stroke, to stop the boat within 4 strokes
- Paddle backwards, in a straight line, for 50 yards/meters
- Forward and reverse sweeps, to turn and to spin the kayak through 360 degrees
- Draw and sculling draw, to move the kayak sideways a minimum of 15 feet (4.6 meters), on both sides, while keeping the boat pointing in the same direction
- Rudder (stern) to glide straight and turn to paddle side
- Low brace to avoid capsize including upper/lower body separation (hip snap) and use of the paddle
- Low brace turn

- Understand uses of edging including for bracing, stability in waves, and to enhance turns
- Able to use edging (i.e., by shifting weight) to facilitate turns and maneuvers

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.*

- Capsize and wet exit the kayak with a spray skirt*
- Skirted wet exits must be modeled and taught two ways: (1) utilizing the spray skirt grab loop and (2) releasing the skirt off the hip
- Swim rescue: swim to shore (25 yards/meters), with kayak and paddle, in full paddling clothing and life jacket and drain boat
- With a high degree of reliability, the candidate must be able to re-enter their boat, without any assistance, in deep water, using any technique of their choice (may include paddle float with or without sling)
- Demonstrate an understanding of rescue fundamentals as they apply across a variety of kayaks including sit ins, sit-on-tops, recreational boats. For example, demonstrate curl and T-X rescues for boats without bulkheads and cross kayak life jacket grab assisted rescue for-sit on-tops
- Be able to support both sit in and sit on top kayaks by rafting alongside such that a swimmer can re-enter/re-mount the boat
- T-rescue, rafted-T
- Scoop rescue*
- Bulldoze and/or use the push technique to maneuver a kayak from one location to another location (25 yards/meters)
- Contact towing, with and without a tow strap (be able to perform and teach)
- In-line towing (perform only)
- Swimmer tows (bow, back deck, toggle)
- Unresponsive paddler rescue

Demonstrate ability to teach these concepts effectively:

- Paddling environments pertinent to paddlers
 - Wind
 - Waves
 - Weather
 - Water
 - Water confidence and comfort including swimming ability
- Boat traffic awareness and safe practices
- Principles of Rescue
 - Use of safe rescue strategies such as T-RETHROG (Talk, Reach, Throw, Row, Go) including throwable buoyancy aids and throw bag use
 - Rescue Priorities: people, boat, paddle, gear
 - Responsibilities of the group, rescuer, swimmers
 - Appropriate use of rescue and safety gear
 - Bailer, pump, sling, lights, 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*
- 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
 - 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 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Instructor is expected to be able to demonstrate and teach everything on the Level 2: Skills Course and Level 2: Skills Assessment for their craft.

Successful candidates using a boat without a spray skirt during this course will be certified to teach non-spray skirted kayaks only.

© American Canoe Association

Date of last revision: 1/1/2023

<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](#).