



Level 3: Coastal Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) 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 Level 2: Essentials of SUP Instructor in good standing
- 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 2 days (16 hours).

Course Location / Accessible Venues

Level 3: Coastal SUP certification cannot be completed unless three of the four conditions necessary for rough water assessment are present during some portion of the certification 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 include:

- 10-15 knot winds
- 2-3 foot/0.6-0.9 meters seas
- 1-2 foot/0.3-0.6 meters breaking waves (required)
- 2-3 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 SUP ACA Instructor Trainers or Instructor Trainer Educators.

Complementary Courses

- Level 3: Surf Stand Up Paddleboarding Skills, Assessment, or Certification Course
- Level 3: River Stand Up Paddleboarding Skills, Assessment, or Certification Course

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 SUP 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:

- Board 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

All board control, strokes, and maneuvers listed below, unless otherwise specified, are to be performed in regular and goofy stance. Only the dominant stance must be performed at demonstration quality. Non-dominant stance should be evaluated to the standard of the candidate being comfortable and confident during execution.

Demonstrate ability to teach and model these SUP board control techniques effectively:

- Ability to move from kneeling to standing and back to kneeling while maintaining hand placement on paddle
- Edging and board tilt – paddle a circle while edging both toe and heel
- Controlled surf launch and landing (dominant stance only)
- Crossing, entering, and exiting moderate eddy lines
- Use of ranges
- Linking downwind waves
- Surfing forward with control in swell (dominant stance only)

- All strokes and maneuvering in a variety of sea states, wind conditions, wind directions and tidal current up to this course venue

Demonstrate ability to teach and model these SUP strokes effectively:

- Forward & canted forward (touring and power)
- Cross forward
- Reverse and stopping
- Sweeps (forward / reverse)
- Draw (standard / sculling)
- Draws to nose, cross nose draw, & draw to tail (static and dynamic)
- Nose and cross nose pry, tail pry
- Bracing (low and high, sculling & slap, cross tail heel side low brace)
- Gliding low brace to steer and control the SUP while in motion
- Use of static tail pry & draw for tracking and turning (rudder)
- Forward Paddling: paddle 200 yards (183 meters) in a reasonably straight line (beam wind, head wind, and tail wind)
- Stop: stop the SUP from a good speed

Demonstrate ability to teach and model these maneuvers in venue effectively:

- Launching and landing: beach, dock, shoreline
- Spinning: spin SUP using forward and reverse sweeps or draws in neutral and staggered stances (on and off side)
- Paddle a figure of 8 course: using reasonable control in neutral and staggered stances
- Lateral Movement: use draws to travel sideways 20 feet (6 meters) in neutral and staggered stances

- Turning on the move: sweep strokes, draws and pries while underway to turn board in neutral and staggered stances
- Maneuvering: practicing weight transfers from nose to tail and rail to rail
- Side slip (static shift onside and offside / pry and draw) (neutral and staggered)
- Pivot turn (dominant stance only)
- Moving pivot turn with submerged tail (dominant stance only)
- Cross stepping (dominant stance only)
- Endurance: to maintain 2-3 mph/3-5 kph pace for a minimum of 1 hour

Demonstrate ability to teach these concepts effectively:

- Paddling environments pertinent to coastal SUP paddlers
 - Wind
 - Weather
 - Waves
 - Water
 - Water confidence and comfort including swimming ability
 - Nautical rules of the road
 - Able to interpret basic chart datum, plot a course, and adjust for variation/declination
 - Down winders
- Information gathering (i.e. forecast for swell, tide, wind speed and direction, weather)
- Principles of Rescue
 - Use of safe rescue strategies such as
 - T-RETHROG (Talk, Reach, Throw, Row, Go)
 - SAFER (Stop, Assess, Formulate, Execute, Review/Reflect)
 - Rescue priorities: people, board, paddle, gear

- Responsibilities of the group, rescuer, swimmers
- Appropriate use of rescue and safety gear
- Emergency procedures
- Communication
 - Paddle, hand, and whistle signals
 - Cell phone, radios, AIS systems, VHF/pyrotechnics/smoke/EPIRBs as appropriate
- Paddling etiquette and Leave No Trace (LNT) principles and application to coastal 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 ability to teach and model these safety and rescue techniques in venue effectively:

- Techniques for falling
- Recoveries
- Board remount
- Assisted remounts
 - Side-by-side
 - Board flip rescue
 - Or other effective means
- Methods for board and gear recovery
- Unresponsive paddler rescue
- Towing
 - Tow rigs: bags, belts, tow ropes
 - Towing board and rider with a variety of rigs for a variety of board types

- Contact tow
- Leash tow
- Tow line
- Or other effective means

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

- History of SUP in coastal venues
 - Indigenous roots to modern day SUP
- SUP: types, parts, materials, nomenclature, and design
 - Design (all-around, touring, racing, surf, whitewater)
 - Construction (composite, plastic, inflatable, foam board)
 - Parts
 - How to carry: 2-person, solo handle, solo overhead or other effective means
- Equipment selection / packing
- Deck: attachment points, tie down types, rigging for rider and application, weight distribution including trim
- Paddle: types, parts, materials, fit
 - Design (intended use, blade angle, blade size, shape)
 - Construction (composite, plastic, aluminum, foam core blade, wood)
 - Parts
 - Sizing (fixed and adjustable paddles)
 - Effective hand placement on the paddle
- Fin set ups for different styles, locations, constructions, and application in coastal SUP
- Life jackets: types, usage, fitting, regulations
 - Inflatable

- Inherently buoyant
- SUP leash
 - Types (coiled, straight, combo, quick release)
 - Parts
 - When and how to use
- Securing board for transport on car or trailer using proper tie downs, straps, or knots
 - Knots: Figure-8, bowline, truckers hitch, and 2 half hitches
- 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, sweep, 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
- Pre-trip communications
- Put-in safety briefing
- On-water communications
- Debrief/reflections/check for retention

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