



River Kayak Hand Paddling Endorsement 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 course content prior to presenting themselves for evaluation as an Endorsement Candidate.

This endorsement course provides the knowledge and skills needed for safe and effective use of hand paddles. The following are the endorsement criteria for currently certified instructors.

Note: *For Level 2 venues, this course is suitable for both spray skirted kayaks as well as non-spray skirted kayaks. Skills not applicable to non-spray skirted kayaks are followed by the notation: *. The use of non-spray skirted kayaks in conditions above Level 2 is not appropriate.*

Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgement of personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Be a currently certified ACA Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking Instructor (or higher) in good standing

Course Duration

Minimum of one day (8 hours) or more.

Course Location / Accessible Venues

For Level 2: Moving water on rivers up to and including class I sections.

For Level 3: Sections of rivers rated up to class I-II, where limited maneuvering in current may be required to avoid obstacles.

For Level 4: Moving water on rivers up to and including class II-III sections.

A rapid class includes rapids at the lower and upper ends of the difficulty range, designated “-” and “+” respectively.

Course Size

5 Endorsement Candidates : 1 Endorsed Instructor Trainer; with an additional rolling endorsed instructor or qualified assistant, the ratio can be 10 : 2. The maximum number of participants permitted is 10.

Instructor Trainer

This endorsement course may be offered by:

- Level 4: Whitewater Kayaking (or higher) Instructor Trainer with the Kayak Hand-Paddling Endorsement
- Level 2 or 3: River Kayaking Instructor Trainers with the Kayak Hand-Paddling Endorsement AND the Kayak Rolling Endorsement

All Instructor Trainers must operate within the venue corresponding to their level of IT certification.

The following is a list of the criteria used to evaluate Endorsement 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 Endorsement Candidates

- Be at least 18 years old
- Demonstrate general knowledge of ACA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives
- Successfully complete an Endorsement Workshop
- 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
- Maintain ACA Level 2: River Kayak Instructor (or higher) status through the following:

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 Kayak Hand-Paddling Endorsement Requirements

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
- Present information effectively, both prepared and impromptu

Demonstrate the following:

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

Demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively in an instructional team environment:

- Work well with students, including ability to effectively listen and respond to student concerns and desires
- Work well with other members of instructional teams
- Actively participate in discussions throughout the course

Demonstrate knowledge and skills to model and teach the effective use of hand-paddles in river kayaking:

- Knowledge of varying styles and skill sets as they pertain to hand-paddles
- Demonstrate the ability to select and fit hand-paddles based upon the desired use and student ability to wet exit* and remove paddles
- Ability to explain body position and how it differs from using a shafted paddle
- Ability to effectively perform, model, and teach basic kayak strokes with hand-paddles
 - Forward Stroke (alternating hands)
 - Back Stroke (alternating hands)
 - Draw (side, stationary, sculling, stern)
 - Sweep (forward, reverse)
 - Rudder
- Ability to effectively perform, model, and teach the following hand-paddle specific strokes
 - Power Forward Stroke (both hands)
 - Power Back Stroke (both hands)
 - Neutral Sweep (hands moving in opposite directions to create a boat rotation)
 - Brace
 - Single Brace (one-hand/one-side)
 - Double Brace (both hands on same side)
 - Wing Brace (both hands on opposite sides)

- Demonstrate knowledge of and ability to effectively teach and perform the following river kayak maneuvers with hand-paddle specific technique
 - Forward
 - Spins
 - Stopping
 - Front ferry with control
 - Eddy turns and peel outs
 - Moving abeam
 - *Additional requirements for Levels 3 and 4:*
 - *Back Ferry (downstream) to stop in current and move laterally to avoid hazards*
 - *Wave surfing with control*

Safety and Rescue

- 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
- Calmly exit the boat after a controlled capsize, using proper body position and contact with the craft and paddle
 - When exiting the kayak with a spray skirt* after capsize: must be modeled two ways: (1) utilizing the spray skirt grab loop and (2) releasing the skirt off the hip
- Advantages and disadvantages during rescues of various kayaks (i.e., sit-ins, sit-on-tops, recreational kayaks, etc.)
- Paddle recovery options
- Strategies and techniques for boat and paddle recovery including bumping, bulldozing, towing, or swimming boat and paddle to shore
- Self-rescue: swimming with equipment
- Swimmer towing options

- Self and assisted swimmer re-entry techniques (i.e., stern entry, heel hook, rescue sling, etc.)
- Assisted rescues: boat over boat or side by side or others appropriate to conditions
- Unresponsive paddler rescue
- Emptying water from the boat

Level 4: Whitewater Kayaking Instructors (or higher) and Level 2 or 3: River Kayaking Instructors holding the Kayak Rolling Endorsement must be able to demonstrate a reliable roll with hand-paddles

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

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