



Level 5: Advanced Open Water Coastal Kayaking Trip Leader (AOWCKTL) Skills Assessment

Purpose: The purpose of the Level 5: Advanced Open Water Coastal Kayaking Trip Leader (L5: AOWCKTL) training and assessment is to prepare individuals who intend to lead other paddlers, either recreationally or professionally, in more advanced open water coastal environments. Successful completion of the assessment will provide evidence of the candidate's technical skills and confirm their knowledge, understanding and ability to plan and implement trips, for a wide variety of abilities, in environments up to and including L5: AOWCKTL conditions.

Training Overview: The L5: AOWCKTL training is designed to expose candidates to the skill-set required for leading paddlers in more advanced open water coastal environments.

Assessment Overview: For successful completion of the L5: AOWCKTL assessment an individual must demonstrate technical proficiency, trip planning, group management, and leadership skills in the L5: AOWCKTL venue. While this is not a teaching award, a L5: AOWCKTL must also be able to provide basic tips to paddlers, as appropriate, to help them through the environment.

Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC):

ACA courses are open to all individuals who acknowledge the ability to perform the following essential eligibility criteria.

1. Breathe independently (i.e., not require medical devices to sustain breathing)
2. Independently maintain sealed airway passages while under water
3. Independently hold head upright without neck / head support
4. Manage personal care independently or with assistance of a companion
5. Manage personal mobility independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance
6. Follow instructions and effectively communicate independently or with assistance of a companion
7. Independently turn from face-down to face-up and remain floating face up while wearing a properly fitted life jacket*
8. Get on / off or in / out of a paddlecraft independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
9. Independently get out and from under a capsized paddlecraft*
10. Remount or reenter the paddlecraft following deep water capsize independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
11. Maintain a safe body position while attempting skills, activities and rescues listed in the appropriate Course Outline, and have the ability to recognize and identify to others when such efforts would be unsafe given your personal situation*

** To participate in adaptive programs, participants must acknowledge only the first six EEC listed above. Entry-level adaptive programs will involve teaching and practicing EEC #7-11.*



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Prerequisites for Training:

- Be a current ACA member in good standing
- For a L5: AOWCKTL training course not immediately followed by an assessment, the prerequisites are L4: Open Water Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment, L4: Open Water Coastal Kayaking Trip Leader, or Level 4: Open Water Coastal Kayaking Instructor
- For a L5: AOWCKTL training course immediately followed by an assessment, the prerequisite is Level 5: Advanced Open Water Coastal Kayaking Instructor

Prerequisites for Assessment:

- Be 18 years or older
- Be a current ACA member in good standing
- Complete a L5: AOWCKTL training course
- Provide a summary of previous trip experience including leadership roles in a variety of sea states, environments and geographical locations
- Have and maintain First Aid and age appropriate CPR

Course Location/Venue: The assessment cannot be completed unless during some period each of the four conditions necessary for rough water assessment are present during some portion of the certification course. Specified conditions must all occur, but they do not have to be simultaneous. Area of escape from rough conditions must be accessible. The four L5: AOWCKTL criteria are:

- 3 - 5 foot seas
- 15 - 25 knot winds
- 3 - 4 foot surf break
- 4 - 5 knots of current

The assessment venue must provide a variety of leadership environments such as recreational and/or commercial boat traffic, river mouth surf zones, tidal races, headlands or other structures that divert or compress water and/or wind flow, diverse coastline with accessible landing areas within 3 nautical miles, launching and landing zones in surf, deadfall, current, rocks, ledge systems or other potential landing zone hazards.

Course Duration: A minimum of 3 days for training. A minimum of 2 days for assessment. This may include evening exercises and/or bivouac. At this level, training and assessment will likely not happen in conjunction. Candidates will be encouraged to take an appropriate amount of time between training and assessment to work on skills and experience. However, the training and assessment may be combined into a single 5 day course at the assessor's discretion based on candidates' experience and existing skill set.



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Assessor: Level 5: Advanced Open Water Coastal Kayaking Instructor Trainer (IT) or Instructor Trainer Educator (ITE). (This will be re-visited at the fall 2016 SEIC meeting.)

Class Ratio: 5 students : 1 Instructor Trainer; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 10 : 2

Succeeding Courses:

Level 5: Advanced Open Water Coastal Kayak Instructor Development Workshop

Equipment: Candidates shall possess all of the equipment appropriate for a trip leader in L5: AOWCKTL conditions, and demonstrate the judgment to carry equipment that is appropriate and responsive to various venues, climates, trip durations, and group characteristics. Candidates' gear selections shall cover the following categories:

- Kayak and personal equipment appropriate for coastal paddling
- Safety and emergency
- Signaling and communications
- Equipment repairs and human care
- Navigation

Candidates shall be able to explain why they selected/omitted certain items, for a particular venue. Candidates may borrow equipment for training and assessment.

Skills: The following list of criteria is to be used in the training and assessment of L5: AOWCKTL candidates. The content covered and sequence of evaluation should be adjusted to fit the candidate's needs, class location, and time allowance.

Personal Paddling Skills: Candidates must be able to demonstrate safe, effective, and efficient boating (or) paddling skills in advanced sea states, wind conditions and tidal currents up to the L5: AOWCKTL course venue. The focus of the assessment will be on desired results rather than on specific individual technique. The assessed skills shall include:

- Propulsion: forward, reverse, and sideways movement of the craft
- Maneuvering: turning and maneuvering with good edge awareness to maintain directional control
- Handling: boat handling, preventing capsize with braces, sculling for support, and rolling

Note: The assessment context of technical skills shall include the necessary maneuvering for towing, quickly attaining the bow of a capsized boat, paddling on edge to maintain directional stability in a beam wind, using support strokes to prevent capsize, reverse paddling to assist in rescue rather than turning, or similar practical applications of personal skills.

Rescues and Tows: Candidates must be able to perform a variety of assisted rescues and self-rescues, as well as tows, in L5: AOWCKTL conditions to include:



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- Boat over rescue (T-rescue)
- Eskimo rescue (bow, stern and paddle presentations)
- Scoop rescue
- Unresponsive paddler, e.g. Hand-of-God
- Efficient self-rescue from a swimming start
- Roll
- Swimmer carries (bow, stern and back deck)
- Contact tow (forward and reverse)
- Tow – single boat and multiple boat inline
- Rafted tow

The assessor shall evaluate the candidate's situational awareness and ability to maintain group control during the performance of rescues and towing exercises. A variety of touring, sit-on-top and tandem kayaks may be used at the assessor's discretion.

Technical: Candidates must demonstrate the following technical skills:

- Navigation and limited visibility navigation – Candidates must demonstrate a knowledge of chart symbols, distance measurement, bearings, variation and ranges/transits. As a tabletop exercise, candidates must plot a course that considers the impact of tidal current drift and wind. These exercises can include international locations using tidal diamonds, tidal atlases, and extended open water crossings. While on the water, candidates must be able to determine a position using bearings and/or ranges/transits, navigate using shoreline features, buoys and other visible references, maintain a course using a compass heading, ranges/transits and time, navigate in fog and/or darkness, be able to develop an alternate/bailout plan while afloat, and using radio communication in limited visibility (where appropriate).
- Basic on water boat repair – Candidates must demonstrate basic field repair/management of either a small hole, compromised/missing hatch cover or a damaged skeg/rudder while on the water, and with repair lasting through the day.

Leadership: Leadership ability shall be assessed during a journey where each candidate is given the opportunity to make appropriate decisions, cognizant of conditions and the current performance capability of the group. Individual legs shall be debriefed to assess an understanding of leadership principles and to reveal the candidate's decision making process. Candidates must show leadership appropriate to the circumstances, the risk at hand, the individuals being led and the environmental challenges encountered.

- Group abilities – Candidates shall demonstrate the ability to assess individual and group performance capabilities (e.g. skills, experience, judgment, fitness, boats and equipment) and set goals appropriately.
- Environmental awareness - Candidates shall demonstrate the ability to assess conditions based on weather forecasts, observed wind, tidal current and sea state. Candidates shall



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also identify protected areas, potential hazards, early exit options, remoteness, and rescue resources. Based on these observations, candidates shall plan an appropriate journey and adapt their plan as conditions change.

- Group awareness – Candidates shall demonstrate group awareness throughout a trip to include assessing a group’s energy levels, hydration, confidence in conditions and readiness for upcoming challenges, and adjust their trip plans accordingly.
- Group management – Candidates shall demonstrate group management and control appropriate to the conditions, environment, and group readiness (e.g. spacing, pacing, formation and supporting roles) to include setting clear parameters and establishing emergency procedures.
- Risk assessment, incident avoidance and management – Candidates shall demonstrate on-going risk assessment relative to the readiness of the group, implement proactive strategies to avoid potential incidents, and manage incidents effectively if they do occur.
- Communication – Candidates shall demonstrate the use of effective and ongoing communication to manage a group, share plans, assess paddlers, adapt to environmental limitations (e.g. wind or swell) including where group communication may be difficult or impractical.
- Positioning – Candidates are expected to use various positions as appropriate to the situation, environment, and potential consequences. Leader positioning shall reflect an awareness of potential hazards, the need to maintain a line of sight, and preparedness to manage potential rescues/incidents.
- Launching and landing – Candidates must demonstrate proficiency launching and landing themselves and a group in L5: AOWCKTL conditions (3-4 foot surf required), including planning, communication, and positioning to maintain group control.

Knowledge: The topics and concepts below provide a framework of knowledge necessary for trip planning, implementation, and leadership. All should be covered and assessed in the context of the L5: AOWCKTL environment and conditions. A candidate’s knowledge can be assessed using a variety of methods which may include observation, self-assessment, feedback, written assessment, and questioning.

- Weather – Candidates shall demonstrate knowledge of terminology typically found in marine forecasts, know multiple means of accessing appropriate forecasts, and interpret weather related data. Candidates shall recognize weather related changes and be able to explain their potential impact on a trip. Candidates must possess basic field forecasting skills, such as recognition of cumulonimbus clouds and the factors that can produce fog.
- Tides and currents – Candidates shall be familiar with tidal terms, timing, forecasts, and rules for determining tide height, current speed and drift.
- Conditions – Candidates shall be familiar with the terminology found in surf and sea state forecasts, know multiple sources for obtaining forecasts, know the upper limits of the L5:

CKC - 02/2016

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AOWCKTL environment, and understand the importance of keeping their trips within those parameters.

- Trip planning – Candidates must complete a tabletop exercise for an environment commensurate with the L5: AOWCKTL venue. Candidates shall demonstrate competency in planning a complex trip using a nautical chart, tidal information, current information, group profile, sea state, and weather conditions, and include remote locations where a group has to be self-sustaining for multiple days, and with alternate bail out options. Assessors should be prepared to provide the context of the journey as well as navigational tools needed to complete the exercise.
- Communication and signaling – Candidates shall demonstrate knowledge of communication and signaling tools and their appropriate use, including VHF radios, emergency signals, paddle and hand signals.
- Rules of the road – Candidates must understand the hazards posed by other boat traffic, know USCG night lighting requirements and basic rules of the road as they pertain to kayakers.
- Leave No Trace (LNT) skills and ethics – Candidates must have a general understanding of LNT best practices and follow LNT principles and practices at all times.
- Prevention and management of hypothermia and hyperthermia – Candidates must have knowledge of symptoms, prevention, and management of hypothermia and hyperthermia.



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Participant: _____ **ACA #** _____ **Date:** _____
Location and venue: _____

Rating: ✓ = *Passing* N = *Needs more practice*

<i>Personal Paddling Skills</i> —demonstrates safe, effective, and efficient boating (or) paddling skills in advanced sea states, wind conditions and tidal currents up to the L5: AOWCKTL course venue.	P/N	COMMENTS
Propulsion: forward, reverse, and sideways movement of the craft		
Maneuvering: turning and maneuvering with good edge awareness to maintain directional control		
Handling: boat handling, preventing capsize with braces, sculling for support, and rolling		

Note: The assessment context of personal paddling skills shall include the necessary maneuvering for towing, quickly attaining the bow of a capsized boat, paddling on edge to maintain directional stability in a beam wind, using support strokes to prevent capsize, reverse paddling to assist in rescue rather than turning, or similar practical applications of personal skills.



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Rescues and Tows —demonstrate a variety of assisted and self-rescues, as well as tows, in L5: AOWCKTL conditions	P/N	Comments
Boat over rescue (T-rescue)		
Eskimo rescue (bow, stern and paddle presentations)		
Scoop rescue		
Unresponsive paddler, e.g. Hand-of-God		
Efficient self-rescue from a swimming start		
Roll		
Swimmer carries (bow, stern and back deck)		
Contact tow (forward and reverse)		
Tow – single boat and multiple boat inline		
Rafted tow		

Note: The assessor shall evaluate the situational awareness and ability to maintain group control during the performance of rescues and towing exercises. A variety of touring, sit-on-top and tandem kayaks may be used at the assessor’s discretion.



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Technical —demonstrate the following technical skills:	P/N	Comments
<p>Navigation and limited visibility navigation—demonstrates a knowledge of chart symbols, distance measurement, bearings, variation and ranges/transits. As a tabletop exercise, plots a course that considers the impact of tidal current drift and wind. These exercises can include international locations using tidal diamonds, tidal atlases, and extended open water crossings. While on the water, must demonstrate ability to determine a position using bearings and/or ranges/transits, navigate using shoreline features, buoys and other visible references, maintain a course using a compass heading, ranges/transits and time, navigate in fog and/or darkness, be able to develop an alternate/bailout plan while afloat, and using radio communication in limited visibility (where appropriate).</p>		
<p>Basic on water boat repair—demonstrates basic field repair/management of either a small hole, compromised/missing hatch cover or a damaged skeg/rudder while on the water, and with repair lasting through the day.</p>		



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<p>Leadership— assessed during a journey where the participant is given the opportunity to make appropriate decisions, cognizant of conditions and the current performance capability of the group. Individual legs shall be debriefed to assess an understanding of leadership principles and to reveal the participant’s decision making process. Participants must show leadership appropriate to the circumstances, the risk at hand, the individuals being led and the environmental challenges encountered.</p>	<p>P/N</p>	<p>COMMENTS</p>
<p>Group abilities—demonstrates the ability to assess individual and group performance capabilities (e.g. skills, experience, judgement, fitness, boats and equipment) and set goals appropriately.</p>		
<p>Environmental awareness— demonstrates the ability to assess conditions based on weather forecasts, observed wind, tidal current and sea state. Shall also identify protected areas, hazards, early exit options, remoteness and rescue resources. Based on these observations, participants shall plan an appropriate journey and adapt their plan as conditions change.</p>		



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<p>Group awareness—demonstrates group awareness throughout a trip to include assessing a group’s energy levels, hydration, confidence in conditions and readiness for upcoming challenges, and adjusts their trip plans accordingly.</p>		
<p>Group management—demonstrates group management and control appropriate to the conditions, environment, and group readiness (e.g. spacing, pacing, formation and supporting roles) to include setting clear parameters and establishing emergency procedures.</p>		
<p>Risk assessment, incident avoidance and management—demonstrates on-going risk assessment relative to the readiness of the group, implement proactive strategies to avoid potential incidents, and manage incidents effectively if they do occur.</p>		
<p>Communication—demonstrates the use of effective and ongoing communication to manage a group, share plans, assess paddlers, adapt to environmental limitations (e.g. wind or swell) including where group communication may be difficult or impractical.</p>		



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<p>Positioning—demonstrates the ability to use various positions as appropriate to the situation, environment and potential consequences. Leader positioning shall reflect an awareness of potential hazards, the need to maintain a line of sight, and preparedness to manage potential rescues/incidents.</p>		
<p>Launching and landing—demonstrates proficiency launching and landing themselves and a group in L5: AOWCKTL conditions (3-4 foot surf required), including planning, communication and positioning to maintain group control.</p>		

Knowledge —the topics and concepts below provide a framework of knowledge necessary for trip planning, implementation, and leadership. All should be covered and assessed in the context of the L5: AOWCKTL environment and conditions. A participant’s knowledge can be assessed using a variety of methods which may include observation, self-assessment, feedback, written assessment and questioning.	P/N	Comments
<p>Weather—demonstrates knowledge of terminology typically found in marine forecasts, know multiple means of accessing appropriate forecasts, and interpret weather related data. Recognizes weather related changes and is able to explain their potential impact</p>		



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<p>on a trip. Demonstrates basic field forecasting skills, such as recognition of cumulonimbus clouds and the factors that can produce fog</p>		
<p>Tides and currents—demonstrates familiarity with tidal terms, timing, forecasts and rules for determining tide height, current speed and drift.</p>		
<p>Conditions—demonstrates familiarity with the terminology found in surf and sea state forecasts, knows multiple sources for obtaining forecasts, knows the upper limits of the L5: environment, and understands the importance of keeping their trips within those parameters.</p>		
<p>Trip planning—completes a tabletop exercise for a venue appropriate to the L5: AOWCKTL venue. Demonstrates competency in planning a complex multi-day trip using nautical chart, tidal information, current information, group profile, sea state, weather conditions, and include remote locations where a group has to be self-sustaining for multiple days, and with alternate bail out options. Assessors should be prepared to provide the context of the journey as well as navigational tools needed to complete the exercise.</p>		



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<p>Communication and signaling—demonstrates knowledge of communication and signaling tools and their appropriate use, including VHF radios, emergency signals, paddle, and hand signals.</p>		
<p>Rules of the road—demonstrates an understanding of the hazards posed by other boat traffic, knows USCG night lighting requirements and basic rules of the road as they pertain to kayakers.</p>		
<p>Leave No Trace (LNT) skills and ethics—demonstrates a general understanding of LNT best practices and follows LNT principles and practices at all times.</p>		
<p>Prevention and management of hypothermia—demonstrates knowledge of symptoms, prevention, and management of hypothermia.</p>		
<p>Prevention and management of hyperthermia—demonstrates knowledge of symptoms, prevention, and management of hyperthermia.</p>		



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FINAL ASSESSMENT		COMMENTS
PASS	NEEDS MORE WORK	
ASSESSOR		
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Assessor must be a currently certified ACA Instructor at or above this level.</i></p> <p>Assessor: _____</p> <p>Signature: _____</p> <p>ACA #: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>Assisting IT or Instructor: _____</p> <p>ACA #: _____</p>		