



# Level 3: River Packrafting

## Skills Assessment

### Course Overview:

Assessment Overview: This ACA Assessment Course is designed to evaluate a participant's ability to perform all of the skills listed along with demonstrating an appropriate level of knowledge. This assessment course provides the participant with the opportunity to receive documentation of having achieved a certain level of paddling ability.

*Note: This course outline may be used for packrafts with or without thigh straps and/or spray skirts.*

### Course Prerequisites:

- All participants must acknowledge personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#)
- Be a current ACA Member

**Course Duration:** 1 day (8 hours)

**Course Location / Accessible Venues:** Sections of rivers rated up to Class I-II. *A rapid class includes rapids at the lower and upper ends of the difficulty range, designated “-“ and “+” respectively.*

**Course Ratios:** 5 Participants : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 10 : 2.

**Assessor:** ACA Level 3: River Packrafting Instructor

The sequence of assessment should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location, time allowance, and craft being used.

### Introduction, Expectations, & Logistics:

- Welcome, introductions, paperwork
- Student & instructor course expectations and limitations
- Explain assessment procedure
- Course itinerary & site logistics
- Review waiver, assumption of risk, challenge by choice, medical disclosure
- About the ACA
- PFD policy (always wear on water)
- Appropriate personal behavior
- No alcohol / substance abuse
- Proper etiquette on & off the water
- Respect private property
- Practice Leave No Trace ethics

### Conclusion & Wrap Up

- Group debrief / Individual feedback



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- Course limitations
- Importance of First Aid & CPR
- Importance of additional instruction, practice, experience
- Importance of appropriate level of safety & rescue training
- Life sport / Paddling options
- Local paddling groups / Clubs
- Handouts / Reference materials
- ACA Membership forms
- Course evaluation

**Participant:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ACA #** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location and venue:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rating:** ✓ - *Passing* N - *Needs more practice.*

Participant must be able to perform all strokes, maneuvers, rescues, and skills in the appropriate venue. In addition, the participant must demonstrate the appropriate level of knowledge for this skill assessment level.

EQUIPMENT	P / N	COMMENTS
Demonstrate knowledge of packraft designs, configurations, features, accessories		
Demonstrate knowledge of proper rigging and outfitting, and awareness of potential entrapment/entanglement hazards		
Demonstrate proper rigging, fit and release of thigh straps <sup>1</sup>		
Best practices for storing, packing, inflating, tempering, deflating and transporting a packraft		
Best practices for securing gear on/in boats for downriver travel		
Packraft materials, maintenance and repair techniques		
Demonstrate an understanding of paddling equipment, including personal protective equipment and additional personal and group equipment		

<sup>1</sup>Skills not required for those participants paddling a packraft without thigh straps



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TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE	P / N	COMMENTS
Demonstrate water comfort and confidence		
Demonstrate an understanding of river reading and the identification of obstacles (up to Class II rivers)		
Demonstrate an understanding of the fundamentals of river currents and hydrology, including the identification of river features (up to Class II rivers)		
River running strategies, including group organization, spacing, scouting and portaging		
Safety: understand the dangers of packrafting and how to plan an appropriate course to avoid potential hazardous situations		
Avoid cold water shock, hypothermia and hyperthermia by choosing proper clothing and other safety gear		
Demonstrate knowledge of a float plan (components and filing)		
Communication and signaling with hand, paddle, whistle (Universal River Signals System)		

SAFETY AND RESCUE	P / N	COMMENTS
Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of rescue, including order of priorities		
Model wet exit w/spray skirt in at least two ways: <sup>2</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize the spray skirt grab loop</li> <li>• Hands on hull tubes, push boat hard away from body</li> <li>• Drive knee up through spray skirt</li> </ul>		
Swim to shore in moving water using defensive and offensive techniques		



CANOE · KAYAK · SUP · RAFT · RESCUE

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Demonstrate ability to manage gear while swimming in moving water		
Demonstrate ability to self-rescue by emptying packraft and performing an unassisted deep-water reentry		
Demonstrate assisted deep-water re-entry, both as victim and as rescuer		
Bulldoze boat to shore		
Bow and stern towing for a tired swimmer		
Throw Rope: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rescue rope throw across a 4 foot (1.2m) wide target from 30 feet (9m) within 1 minute</li> <li>Proper rope technique as a swimming victim</li> </ul>		
Demonstrate knowledge of one- and two-person wading techniques, and describe foot entrapment considerations		

<sup>2</sup>Skills not required for those participants paddling a packraft without a spray skirt

STROKES & MANEUVERS	P / N	COMMENTS
Demonstrate safe and efficient techniques for lifting and carrying the packraft		
Launching: Low dock or bank for entering boat in a safe manner		
Efficient forward paddling: 50 yards (45m) in a reasonably straight line		
Stop the packraft from a good speed, forward and reverse		
Reverse: 10-yard (9m) paddle with reasonable control		
Rotate 360° on the spot using forward and reverse sweeps		



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Turning on the move: sweep strokes while underway		
Figure of 8: paddle a figure of 8 course using a variety of strokes		
Landing: Return to dock / shore and exit boat in a safe manner		
Draw sideways: Move the boat sideways 10 feet (3m) on both sides		
Ruddering		
Preventing capsizes: Low brace and High brace		
Edging the boat for carved turns		
Eddy Turns & Peel Outs, including bow draw		
Ferrying (Forward and Back)		
C-Turn		
S-Turn		
Packraft tripping: One moving water day trip of 5 or more river miles (8+ km)		
Developing Skills (not required to pass) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boof</li> <li>• Sidesurf</li> <li>• Roll</li> </ul>		

FINAL ASSESSMENT		COMMENTS
PASS	NEEDS MORE WORK	
<b>ASSESSOR</b>		
<i>Assessor must be a currently certified ACA Instructor at or above this level.</i>		
IT or Instructor: _____		
Signature: _____		



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ACA #: _____ Date: _____	
Assisting IT or Instructor: _____	
ACA #: _____	