



Endorsement Criteria

Level 4: Whitewater Kayak Hand-Paddling

Course Overview: Designed for currently certified ACA Instructors, the **L4: Whitewater Kayak Hand-Paddling Endorsement** course provides instructors with the knowledge and skills for instruction on the safe and effective use of hand-paddles. Per the ACA, “By taking and passing the specified course, a certified ACA Instructor can become endorsed to teach *additional, specialized courses.*”

Current ACA Level 4 or Level 5 Whitewater Kayak Instructors will earn the Level 4: Whitewater Kayak Hand-Paddling Endorsement upon successful completion of the course.

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.*

Course Prerequisites: Be a currently certified ACA instructor in good standing at Level L4: River Kayaking (or higher).

Course Duration: 1 day (8 hours)

Course Location / Venue: Course should be conducted on moving water venues, up to and including class III sections



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Class Ratio: 5 Endorsement Candidates: 1 Instructor Trainer; with an additional Hand-Paddling Endorsed Instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 10:2

Preceding courses:

- Level 2: Essentials of River Kayak Hand-Paddling Endorsement
- Level 3: River Kayak Hand-Paddling Endorsement

Maintenance Requirements:

- Maintain ACA River Kayak Instructor status, ACA membership, and SEIC registration

The following is a list of the criteria used to evaluate Instructor Candidates. The content covered and sequence of evaluation should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance.

Hand-Paddling Instructor Endorsement Criteria:

1. Demonstrate understanding of core ACA Instructional skills:
 - Teaching theory
 - Learning theory
 - Effective methods of providing feedback
2. Demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively in an instructional team environment
 - Work well with students, including ability to listen and respond to student concerns and desires
 - Work well with other members of instructional teams
 - Actively participate in discussions through the workshop
3. Demonstrate knowledge and skills to instruct on the effective use of hand-paddles in whitewater 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



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- 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 (upstream) in class III rapids to move laterally with effective boat control.
 - Back Ferry (downstream) in class II rapids to stop in current and move laterally to avoid hazards
 - Eddy Turns and Peel Outs
 - Moving Abeam
 - Maneuvering on Class II-III water using various techniques, including, but not limited to surfing and playing the river with comfort and control.
- 4. Be able to teach and model basic rescue techniques effectively:
 - Capsize and controlled wet exit kayak with a spray skirt¹
 - Wet exits in two ways: (1) utilizing the sprayskirt grab loop and (2) releasing the skirt off the hip (with and without maintaining possession of hand-paddles)
 - Perform standard rescues efficiently and comfortably, while maintaining appropriate situational awareness and group management
 - Boat-to-boat (e.g., bow, stern, side)
 - Bull doze empty boat to shore
 - Towing boats and swimmers
 - Unresponsive paddler rescue *e.g., Hand of God*
- 5. L4 Whitewater Kayaking Certified Instructors (or higher) should be able to perform, model, and teach techniques for a safe and effective roll with hand-paddles.
- 6. Demonstrate leadership, group management skills, experience and judgment necessary for proper risk management and effective instruction.