



Community Paddlesport Leader

Leader Certification Criteria

Course Overview:

Candidates will explore and develop solutions to “big picture” paddling challenges including venue selection, group management, participant competency, and rescues across a variety of paddlecraft. This award is intended for short paddling outings* and is not a Trip Leader award. The content included here is criteria for evaluation and leader certification, not guidance on how to deliver the course. The content delivery structure and methodology will be at the discretion of the provider; selected methods shall be in alignment with current SEIC policies and best practices.

Course Objective:

To train leaders that engage with the broader paddling community to provide safe, fun, paddling experiences at the entry level, that are not craft specific. These outings* will occur in a protected, mild water environment with minimal power boat traffic. Targeted applications could include community outreach programs, local clubs, parks, scouting programs, etc.

*For the purposes of this curriculum, *outings* are defined as paddling experiences of not more than 4 hours, within a defined space where the start and finish are the same place, and emergency services are readily available.

Course Prerequisites:

- All participants must acknowledge personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#)
- Be a current ACA Member
- Hold a current ACA Level 1 Skills Assessment and Paddlesport Safety Facilitator (PSF) certification in chosen craft. To lead mixed craft experiences, PSF certification is required for those additional craft.

Course Duration: Minimum 16 hours (8 of which can be virtual at the discretion of provider)

Certification Venue: Protected water with constant access to safe landing, within .25 nm from shore, and minimal power boat traffic. Successful Leader candidates will demonstrate the ability to competently perform at the top of this range:

- Winds less than 10 knots
- Waves less than 1 foot
- Current less than 1 knot

Course Ratio: 5 Candidates : 1 Assessor; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant, the ratio can be 10 : 2.

Assessor: All three of the following requirements are needed to provide this course:

- ACA Level 2 Instructor Trainer and above OR Level 2 Instructor and above with Community Paddlesport Leader certification
- Credentials to deliver the PSF in at least 2 of 3 disciplines.



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- Familiarity with the content and mechanics of the Paddlesport Safety Facilitator award prior to offering the CPL assessment.

General Requirements for all Leader Certifications:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Meet the appropriate [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#)
- Successfully complete a Community Paddlesport Leader certification course
- Be a full ACA member
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of paddlesports and the ACA
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform all of the following material unassisted in the appropriate venue

Maintenance Requirements:

- Maintain ACA membership annually

Succeeding Courses:

- ACA Level 1 Instructor
- ACA Level 2 Skills Assessment
- ACA Trip Leader Assessment

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Prior Competencies: Candidates are responsible for ALL knowledge and skills included in the PSF and Level 1 Skills Assessment outlines; those curricula form the foundation for the Community Paddlesport Leader (CPL). This course builds upon those previously evaluated competencies and takes them to an on-water leadership setting in a mild, protected environment.

Demonstrate the following:

1) Knowledge of the ACA:

- Course Management System basics (user dashboard, course listings, etc)
- Certification limitations: i.e., not an instructor, not eligible for ACA insurance coverage
- ACA's Education, Stewardship, and Competition programs

2) Leadership skills:

- Positive interpersonal skills
- Ability to calmly strategize and problem solve under pressure
- Ability to collaborate with others and recognize available resources
- Ability to seek advice, set boundaries, and learn from mistakes
- Situational awareness to include time management
- Meeting people where they are, not where you want them to be
- Effective communication pre-outing, during outing, post outing
- Modeling joy and appreciation for the paddling community as a whole

3) Demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to perform the following skills:



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Pre-Outing:

- Venue selection with alternatives (accessible, parking, restrooms, access to emergency services, cell coverage, use permits, etc)
- Pre-outing participant communication with outing description, expectations, gear lists, back up plans, alternate routes, etc
- Use of thorough float plan(s)
- Marketing and outreach

During Outing:

- Venue viability assessment prior to group's arrival to include: weather, wind, water, other users, potential challenges or hazards
- Create a welcoming environment for every participant
- Assess gear choices and paddler to craft compatibility
- Determine participant goals, capabilities, and in-water comfort prior to launch
- Assess the **group's** ability to respond to unexpected situations and rescues, make adjustments accordingly
- Know when to go and when to say no / Engage participants in these decisions
- Establish on-water communication methods
- Group management (structured or unstructured) and group connectivity methods
- Create games, challenges, or activities to maintain connectivity
- Challenge by choice
- Continually re-evaluate venue and group participation
- Basic Navigation – basics of maps and charts; knowing where you are and where you are headed

Post Outing:

- Participant feedback and recap
- Post outing reflections and “lessons learned”

4) Safety and Rescue:

- Boat handling to effectively complete rescues and manage group connectivity
- Assisted rescue solutions with mixed craft
- Self-rescue in craft of choice
- Direct others in completing assisted rescues
- Contact towing strategies with mixed craft
- Communicate outside of your group
- Incident management strategies

5) Demonstrate an understanding of:

- Relevance of appropriate First Aid and CPR training
- Leave no Trace
- Weather apps that include radar and lightning data