



Flatwater Kayak Safety & Rescue for Anglers

Sample Skills Course

Course Overview: The **Flatwater Kayak Safety & Rescue for Anglers** course is designed as a short program emphasizing essential flatwater safety practices and rescue techniques for entry level individuals in public, private, and commercial settings.

This Kayak Fishing curriculum does not specifically pertain to pedal drive fishing kayaks. For the purposes of this course, paddles will be used.

Course Objectives:

- Understand that planning and prevention are the keys to a safe trip
- Understand how to avoid waterway hazards
- Develop and practice key self-rescue skills
- Learn to focus on fast, simple, low-risk rescue techniques
- Develop the skills to manage minor in-water incidents
- Adapt the [Flatwater Safety & Rescue](#) curriculum specifically for paddlesports anglers

Course Prerequisites: All participants must acknowledge personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).

Course Duration: 4 hours or more at the instructor's discretion.

Minimum Personal Equipment for the Course: Appropriately fitted life jacket designed for paddling, protective clothing suitable for extended swims, appropriate footwear, boat, paddle, and whistle. Typically, a Sit-On-Top Fishing Kayak is most appropriate for this course, but recreational, whitewater, or coastal kayaks may be used at the instructor's discretion.

Course Location / Venue: Flat water, protected from waves and outside boat traffic, with current less than 1 knot, wind less than 10 knots, and within swimming distance of shore.

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

Instructor: ACA Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring (or higher) with Paddlesports Angler Endorsement or Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking Instructor (or higher) with Paddlesports Angler Endorsement.

Succeeding courses:

- Level 2: Essentials of River Kayak Fishing
- Level 2: Essentials of Coastal Kayak Fishing

The following is a general summary of course content for the **Flatwater Kayak Safety & Rescue for Anglers** course. The content covered, and sequence of instruction should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance.



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Note: Instructor should refer to the published ACA curriculum Flatwater Kayak Safety & Rescue sample skills course and combine with the Kayak Fishing curriculum included below.

Introduction, Expectations, & Logistics

- Welcome, introductions, paperwork
- Student and instructor course expectations and limitations
- Course itinerary and 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 and off the water
- Respect private property
- Practice “Leave No Trace” ethics
- Promotion of an angling “Culture of Safety”
- Importance of Fishing Licenses and other related regulations

Safety and Rescue:

- Demonstrate awareness of rescue priorities: people, kayak, paddle, and gear while kayak is loaded with fishing gear
- Discuss the propensity for anglers to paddle alone, at night, or in cold water and weather conditions
- Describe recommended guidelines for the use of tethers and leashes; discuss entanglement hazards
 - Fishing line
 - Tethers/leashes
 - Gear on deck
- Anchor line management
- Describe the responsibilities of: the group, rescuer, swimmers when the kayak is loaded with fishing gear
- Identify and demonstrate the use of appropriate rescue and safety gear for the craft and planned activity when the kayak is loaded with fishing gear
- Exit the craft after capsize, using proper body position and contact with the craft and paddle
- Rescue self and the kayak using an effective self-rescue technique (e.g., swim self and boat to shore, or deep-water reentry).
- Rescue a person in the water and capsized fishing kayak using appropriate techniques and equipment for the craft (bailers, pumps, paddle floats, tow lines, etc)
- Techniques for bulldozing or towing a kayak or swimmer to shore
- Wearing and use of waders when fishing from paddlecraft or when wading in water



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- Discuss safety and rescue concerns when wearing waders, emphasizing the neutral buoyancy factors (demonstrate then allow students to participate if they desire)

Conclusion and Wrap Up:

- Group debrief or individual feedback
- Course limitations
- Importance of First Aid and CPR
- Importance of additional instruction, practice, experience
- Importance of appropriate level of safety and rescue training
- Life sport and paddling options
- Local paddling groups and clubs
- Handouts and reference materials
- ACA membership