



Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Trip Leader Skills Course

Course Overview

This course is designed as a short program emphasizing safety, enjoyment, and skill development. The skills and knowledge gained through this course can set the stage for a lifetime of exploration, adventures, a healthy lifestyle, appreciation of water and the natural world, lasting memories with family and friends, and a rewarding experience for all - we paddle because it is fun.

If you're a student who would like a resource to prepare for this course, ACA is pleased to provide a free online paddling safety course, [here](#). A certificate of completion is included!

The purpose of the Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Trip Leader (L2: EKTTTL) training course is to prepare individuals who intend to lead other paddlers, either recreationally or professionally, in protected waterways. The emphasis of the training is on leadership. While this is not a teaching award, candidates awarded this credential must be able to provide basic tips to paddlers, as appropriate, to help them through the environment and overall experience. This training course is intended to be followed by the Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Trip Leader assessment course.

Skills Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgment of personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Previously completed the Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Skills Assessment and/or demonstration of equivalent skills

Course Duration

One day (8 hours) or more.

Course Location / Accessible Venues

Protected water with constant access to safe landing and within .5 nautical miles from shore:

- Winds less than 10 knots
- Waves less than 1 foot (0.3 meters)
- Current less than 1 knot

Course Size

5 Participants : 1 Instructor; with an additional qualified assistant, the ratio can be 10 : 2.

Instructor

This course may be offered by:

- Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Instructor Trainer (or higher), or
- Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Instructor with the L2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Trip Leading (EKTTL) Endorsement, or
- Level 4: Open Water Coastal Kayaking Instructor (or higher)

Succeeding Courses

- Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Trip Leader Assessment Course
- Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Skills, Assessment, Trip Leader, or Certification Course

Course Outline

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

Introduction, Logistics, and Expectations

Learning objectives - students should have a basic understanding of the ACA and its policies, how and where this course is being conducted, and acceptable student

behavior.

- Welcome! We're so glad that you've chosen to further your paddling experience and education by attending this course! Let's review a few highlights about the ACA
- Let's talk about the course itinerary, expectations, and limitations
- Lay of the land (and water): the logistics of this venue
- Review liability waiver, assumption of risk, challenge by choice, and medical disclosure
- Life jacket policy: always wear while on the water
- Describe and follow safe boating practices (behavior, substance abuse, on water and land etiquette, respecting private property, and Leave No Trace ethics)

Personal Preparation & Getting Started

Learning objectives - students should understand the critical components of trip planning, including how to prepare their equipment and craft for a safe departure and return.

Equipment

Learning objectives - Participants shall possess all the equipment appropriate for a trip leader in Level 2: EKTTL conditions and demonstrate the judgement to carry equipment that is appropriate for day trips and various group characteristics. Participants' gear selections shall cover the following categories:

- Kayak (single sit-on-top or sit-inside, or tandem sit-on-top or sit-inside with fixed flotation sufficient to allow deep-water self-rescue) and personal equipment appropriate for kayak touring. Neither sit-on-top or tandems are required for the assessment. However, if sit-on-top kayaks are used, at least some of the kayaks in the course must be sit-inside to allow demonstration skills and knowledge of both types of boats; and, if tandem kayaks are used, at least some of the kayaks in the course must be singles to allow demonstration of skills and knowledge in both types of boats.
- Safety and emergency
- Signaling and communications

- First aid and equipment repair kits
- Navigation

Skills

Learning objectives - the skills assessment (succeeding course) is to focus on desired results rather than on specific technique. The objective of this training course is to prepare candidate's paddling skills for evaluation.

Assessment candidates must be able to demonstrate safe, effective, and efficient maneuvering. The course context shall include maneuvering for towing, quickly attaining the bow of a capsized kayak, paddling on edge to maintain directional stability, using support strokes to prevent capsize, reverse paddling to assist in rescue rather than turning, or similar practical applications of personal skills. 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.

Maneuvering

Learning objectives - Participants must be able to demonstrate safe, effective, and efficient maneuvering in Level 2: EKTTL conditions.

The focus of the training will be on desired results rather than on specific technique. The skills shall include:

- Forward and reverse paddling
- Turning with forward and reverse momentum
- Static turns and 360 rotation with forward and reverse strokes
- Sideways movement – static and with forward momentum
- Preventing capsize with braces

Note: The training context shall include maneuvering for towing, quickly attaining the bow of a capsized boat, paddling on edge to maintain directional stability, 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

Learning objectives - Participants be able to perform a variety of assisted rescues and self-rescues, as well as tows in Level 2: EKTTL conditions to include:

For sit-inside kayaks, the following skills:

- T-rescue
- Scoop rescue

If sit-on-top kayaks are available, the following optional skills:

- Side by side with stabilization assisted rescue
- Cross kayak PFD grab assisted rescue

For both types of kayaks, the following skills:

- Stirrup rescue
- Efficient self-rescue from a swimming start
- Swimmer carries (bow, stern, and back deck)
- Contact tow (forward and reverse)
- Tows: single boat and multiple boat inline
- Rafted tow
- Unresponsive paddler rescue, i.e., Hand of God

The lead instructor 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 their discretion.

Technical

Learning objectives - participants successfully demonstrate the following technical skills:

- Navigation – Candidates must demonstrate a knowledge of symbols, distance measurement, bearings, and variation for inland and marine charts. While on the water, candidates must be able to determine a position using bearings, navigate using shoreline features and other visible references, and maintain a course using a compass heading and time
- Basic boat repair – Candidates will demonstrate basic field repair/management of either a small hole, compromised/missing hatch cover or a damaged skeg/rudder.

At the trainer's discretion, the repair may occur on the water

Leadership

Learning objectives - leadership ability shall be evaluated 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 evaluate 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 – demonstrate the ability to assess individual and group performance capabilities (i.e., skills, experience, judgement, fitness, boats, and equipment) and set goals
- Environmental awareness – demonstrate the ability to assess conditions based on weather forecasts, observed wind, current and swell. Candidates shall 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
- Group awareness – 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
- Group management – demonstrate group management and control appropriate to the conditions, environment, and group readiness (for example, spacing, pacing, formation and supporting roles) to include setting clear parameters and establishing emergency procedures
- Risk assessment, incident avoidance and management – demonstrate on-going risk assessment relative to the readiness of the group, implement proactive strategies to avoid potential incidents, and manage incidents effectively if incidents occur
- Communication – demonstrate the use of effective and ongoing communication to manage the group, share plans, assess paddlers, adapt to environmental limitations (i.e., wind or swell) and proactively prepare for potential emergencies

- Positioning – 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 – demonstrate proficiency launching and landing themselves and a group in Level 2: EKTTL conditions, including planning, communication, and positioning to maintain group control

Knowledge

Learning objectives - students should thoroughly understand the following material.

The topics and concepts below provide a framework of knowledge necessary for trip planning, implementation, and leadership. All will be covered and evaluated in the context of the Level 2: EKTTL environment and conditions. A candidate's knowledge can be evaluated using a variety of methods which may include observation, self-assessment, feedback, written assessment, questioning and pre-assigned and/or ad-hoc presentations.

- Weather – be familiar with the terminology typically found in inland and marine forecasts, know multiple sources for obtaining forecasts and be able to assess the impact of forecasts on trip
- Tides and currents – be familiar with tidal terms, timing, forecast tables and the concept of drift
- Conditions – be familiar with the terminology found in marine and weather forecasts, know multiple sources for obtaining forecasts, know the upper limits of the Level 2: EKTTL environment, and understand the importance of keeping their trips within those parameters
- Trip planning – As a tabletop exercise, prepare a trip plan that demonstrates an understanding of chart data, simple course plots, weather, tides, currents, and group abilities
- Communication and signaling – demonstrate knowledge of communication and signaling tools and their appropriate use, including VHF radios, emergency signals, paddle, and hand signals

- Rules of the road – understand the hazards posed by other boat traffic, know USCG night lighting requirements and basic rules of the road as they pertain to paddlers
- Leave No Trace (LNT) skills and ethics – have a general understanding of LNT best practices and always follow LNT principles and practices
- Prevention and management of cold-water shock, hypothermia, and hyperthermia – knowledge of symptoms, prevention, and management of cold-water shock, hypothermia, and hyperthermia

Conclusion and Wrap Up

Learning objectives - students should understand the importance of continuing education and practice. The instructor should debrief the course and hand out any pertinent materials.

- This has been a great class! Let's talk through what we've learned with a group debrief and/or individual feedback
- Course limitations: there is always more to learn, and the skills and concepts we discussed require more practice and experience
- First aid and CPR training is a very valuable tool and could make the difference between a "near miss" and an emergency requiring outside rescue / first responders
- Paddling is a lifetime sport - there are local organizations, clubs, events, competitions, and classes through which you can continue your learning and build community. Get connected!
- Handouts and reference materials (if applicable)

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This curriculum is managed by the ACA Coastal Kayaking Committee. To connect with the leadership of this committee, please view the SEIC Committee rosters on [the ACA website](#).