



Level 1: Introduction to Kayaking

Instructor Criteria

Overview: Fundamentally, participants are expected to have the paddling skills, technical knowledge, rescue ability, teaching ability, group management, and interpersonal skills commensurate with this level of certification prior to presenting themselves for evaluation as Instructor Candidates at an Instructor Certification Course (IDW, ICE, or ICW).

Course Prerequisites:

- All participants must acknowledge personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#)
- Be a current ACA Member
- Completion of the appropriate level skills course, assessment course, or equivalent skills

Instructor Trainer: This certification course may be offered by Level 1: Introduction to Kayaking (or higher) ACA Instructor Trainers or Instructor Trainer Educators.

Course Duration: Combined IDW and ICE - Minimum 2 days (16 hours).

Course Location / Venue: Flat water, protected from wind, waves, and outside boat traffic, with current less than 0.5 knots, and within swimming distance of shore.

Class Ratio:

5 Instructor Candidates : 1 Instructor Trainer; with an additional instructor the ratio can be 10:2. The maximum number of candidates permitted is 10.

Succeeding courses: Level 2 Skills, Assessment, or Certification course.

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

General Requirements for all Instructor Certifications:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Demonstrate general knowledge of [ACA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) initiatives](#)
- Successfully complete an Instructor Certification Workshop (IDW and ICE)
- Upon successful completion, register with the [Safety Education and Instruction Council](#)
- Have and maintain first aid and age appropriate CPR
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of paddlesports and the ACA
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform, model, and teach all of the following material, unassisted, in the appropriate venue

Maintenance Requirements:

- Teach at least two courses that meet ACA standards within the four-year certification



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- period and properly report the courses using the ACA [Course Management System \(CMS\)](#)
- Complete an Instructor Update, at the highest level of certification, during the four-year certification period
- Maintain ACA membership and SEIC registration annually
- Maintain appropriate CPR and first aid certification for the duration of certification

Level 1: Introduction to Canoeing Instructor Requirements:

- 1) Demonstrate a knowledge of ACA Paperwork:
 - How to register and report a course (with and without insurance)
 - An understanding of the ACA Waiver and Release of Liability
- 2) Demonstrate a knowledge of teaching and learning theory:
 - Understand multiple modalities of teaching and how they impact different learners
 - Differentiate instruction targeting different learners
 - Use effective teaching methods
 - Present information effectively (both prepared and impromptu)
 - Effectively make documented skill assessments
- 3) Demonstrate the following:
 - Positive interpersonal skills
 - Appropriate group management skills (including leadership and judgment)
 - Ability to choose an appropriate venue /class site
- 4) Demonstrate ability to paddle efficiently and comfortably, in flat water.
 - Boat stability (trim, stance, etc.)
 - Efficient and effective paddle placement for intended maneuver
 - Safe and effective body usage: Bio-Mechanics (Body, Linkage, and Rotation)
 - Parts of strokes: CPR (Catch, Power, Recovery), static and dynamic
- 5) The ability to teach and model:
 - Forward
 - Back
 - Sweeps (forward, reverse)
 - Draws (out of water and in water recovery)
 - Stern Rudder
 - Low Brace
- 6) The ability to teach and model these basic maneuvers effectively:



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- Enter and launch kayak from shore in a controlled manner, checking for clear departure
 - Propel the kayak forward in a straight line 15-20 boat lengths
 - Stop the kayak within two boat lengths
 - Move the kayak backwards 3-4 boat lengths
 - Turn the kayak from a stationary position 180° to the right and left
 - Move the kayak sideways 10 feet (3 meters) to each side
 - Propel the kayak in a figure of 8 course around markers 3-4 boat lengths apart
 - Turn the kayak while maintaining forward motion 90° to the right and left
 - Arrive at destination point, checking for clear approach, and exit the kayak in a controlled and safe manner.
- 7) Demonstrate the ability to teach and model basic rescue techniques and concepts effectively, **and as appropriate to craft:**
- Awareness of rescue priorities : people, kayak, paddle, gear
 - Use of safe progressions T-RETHROG (Talk, Reach, THrow, ROw, Go) - including throwable floating aid or throw bag use.
 - Responsibilities of: the group, rescuer, swimmers
 - Demonstrate the use of appropriate rescue and safety gear for the kayak and planned activity
 - Exit the craft after capsize, using proper body position and contact with the craft and paddle.
 - Rescue self and the kayak using multiple effective self rescue techniques (e.g., swim self and boat to shore, and deep water re-entry).
 - Rescue a person in the water and capsized kayak using appropriate techniques and equipment for the craft (bailers, pumps, paddle floats, rescue slings, tow lines, etc.)
 - Perform assisted rescues: boat over boat or side by side or T-rescue or others appropriate to conditions
 - Perform assisted re-entry: heel hook or stern entry or others appropriate to conditions
 - Techniques for bulldozing or towing a kayak and/or swimmer to shore
- 8) Demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to teach, the following knowledge and skills effectively:
- Weather conditions, forecasts, and other environmental hazards (wind, water, weather, waves)
 - Evaluating hazards to navigation
 - Importance of developing good judgment and group responsibility for a trip
 - Evaluating ability, water comfort, and confidence of participants prior to trip
 - Warm ups, conditioning, physical training to reduce injury
 - Securing kayak for transport using proper tie downs, straps, or knots.
 - Proper techniques to safely lift and carry the kayak on shore



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- Life jackets appropriate for the individual's size, kayak, and activity, assuring all others in the group are properly wearing their life jacket
 - Inspect the kayak and all safety equipment to meet state, federal, and local requirements for the vessel and activity
 - Safe boating practices (behavior, substance abuse, on water and land etiquette, leave no trace ethics)
 - Elements of a float plan (Who, What, When, Where, filing practices)
 - Review personal equipment needed for the craft, activity and environment
 - Prepare kayak for departure: stowing gear securely, and ensuring it is balanced
 - Review paddling equipment, terminology (kayak and paddle), and care of gear
 - How to hold the paddle in correct orientation and grip for effective paddling
 - Personal and group gear including, but not limited to:
 - Environmental supplies (food, water, appropriate clothing, sunscreen, etc.)
 - Navigational and signaling tools (maps, charts, whistle, etc.)
 - Safety and rescue tools
 - Repair kit
 - First aid kit (appropriate to training)
 - Review the dangers of paddle sports and how to plan an appropriate course to avoid potential hazardous situations.
 - How to avoid and prevent cold water shock, hypothermia and hyperthermia by choosing proper clothing; recognizing and treating early symptoms; 1-10-1 rule.
 - Recognize the importance of hydration
 - Appropriately use communication (paddle and whistle) signals
 - Basic navigational rules for inland waterways
 - Awareness of the group and effective on water management techniques; minimum/maximum standards
 - Secure the kayak and equipment before leaving unattended, with attention paid to environment and conditions
- 9) Demonstrate leadership, group management skills, experience and judgment necessary to be a safe, effective instructor.

Note: A Level 1: Introduction to Kayaking Instructor is expected to be able to demonstrate and teach everything on the Level 1 Skills Course and Level 1 Skills Assessment for their craft.

Note: This course content meets the [National On Water Standards for human powered craft \(https://www.usnows.org/assess-and-update\)](https://www.usnows.org/assess-and-update).

The [National On Water Standards for human powered craft](https://www.usnows.org/assess-and-update) (NOWS) can be used to:

- Evaluate other paddlers and provide effective feedback
- Effectively make documented skill assessments