



Level 4: Coastal Kayaking

Skills Assessment

Assessment Overview: This ACA Assessment Course is designed to evaluate a participant's ability to perform all of the skills listed along with demonstrating an appropriate level of knowledge. This assessment course provides the participant with the opportunity to receive documentation of having achieved a certain level of paddling ability.

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: Must be an ACA Member

Course Duration: 1 day

Course Location / Venue: The selected venue must provide access to open water and at least three of the four conditions within the following ranges, with constant access to safe landing and within 2 nm from shore:

- 15 - 20 knot winds
- 2 - 4 foot waves (chop) (0.6 – 1.2 meters)
- 2 - 4 foot surf (0.6 – 1.2 meter) required
- 2 - 4 knots of current



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Conditions do not need to be simultaneously present.

Assessor: Level 4: Open Water Coastal Kayaking Instructor (or higher)

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

Succeeding courses:

Level 3 or 4 Coastal Kayak Trip Leading Training & Assessment

The sequence of assessment should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance.

Introduction, Expectations, & Logistics:

- Welcome, introductions, paperwork
- Student & instructor course expectations and limitations
- Explain assessment procedure
- Course itinerary & 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 & off the water
- Respect private property
- Practice Leave No Trace ethics

Conclusion & Wrap Up:

- Group debrief / Individual feedback
- Course limitations
- Importance of First Aid & CPR
- Importance of additional instruction, practice, experience
- Importance of appropriate level of safety & rescue training
- Life sport / Paddling options
- Local paddling groups / Clubs
- Handouts / Reference materials
- ACA Membership forms
- Course evaluation
- Assessment cards (if applicable)



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Participant: _____ **ACA #** _____ **Date:** _____

Location and venue: _____

Rating: ✓ - *Passing* N - *Needs more practice.*

Participant must be able to perform all strokes, maneuvers, rescues, and skills in the appropriate venue. In addition the participant must demonstrate the appropriate level of knowledge for this skill assessment level.

STROKES & MANEUVERS	P / N	COMMENTS
Lifting & Carrying: Good, safe technique		
Launching: Low dock or bank for entering boat in a safe manner		
Efficient Forward Paddling: 500 yards in a reasonably straight line		
Stop: Stop the kayak from a good speed, forward and reverse		
Reverse: efficient reverse paddling over a figure of 8 course with good boat control, using correct strokes and edging		
Rotate 360° on the spot using forward & reverse sweeps		
Edging / Boat Tilt: edging to assist turning in a circle. Forward & reverse		
Turning on the move: turn with minimum speed loss, initiate with a forward sweep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low brace with onside tilt - High brace turn with onside tilt - Bow rudder with tilt 		
Figure of 8: paddle a figure of 8 course using a variety of strokes		
Landing: return to dock / shore and exit boat in a safe manner		
Draw sideways: Move the boat sideways 15 feet (both sides) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draw to hip - Sculling draw - Draw on the move (forward & rev) - Side-slip (forward & reverse) 		
Ruddering		
Preventing capsizes: Low & High brace		
Negotiate Moderate Wind & Sea Conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paddling comfort in moderate seas - Ability to paddle in a head sea / beam sea / quartering sea / following sea - Ability to turn up and down wind efficiently - Ability to hold position 		
Negotiate Moderate Surf		



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launch & land forward - Launch & land backward - Hold position - Surf, broach and side surf 		
Negotiate Moderate Current <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish ferry-angle (forward & reverse) - Control peeling out / eddy turns 		
Kayak Tripping: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Day Trips: show evidence of at least three or more day-trips of at least 12-15 nautical miles in various conditions - Multi-Day Trips: Show evidence of at least one multi-day journey involving overnight camping 		

RESCUE/SAFETY	P / N	COMMENTS
Effective wet exit—demonstrate a controlled wet exit with spray deck in L4 conditions. Skirted wet exits must be modeled two ways: (1) utilizing the spray skirt grab loop and (2) releasing the skirt off the hip.		
Self-Rescue: using technique such as re-enter & roll / paddlefloat re-entry / cowboy - scramble		
Boat over Boat rescue & deep water re-entry		
Towing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solo - Assisted 		
Contact rescues: tow / push another kayaker without the use of a towline		
Swimmer Rescue: Stern toggle tow / bow push / back-deck		
Bow, Stern & Paddle Recovery		
Kayak Roll		
Re-enter & Roll		
Leadership		

TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE	P / N	COMMENTS
Equipment: working knowledge of paddling equipment		
Safety: understand the dangers of kayaking and how to avoid trouble		
Cold Water Shock / Hypo / Hyperthermia		
Environmental Issues		
Trip Planning		



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Group Awareness		
Group Leadership		
Marine Environment: effects of wind, tide, land masses and current		
Knots: bowline / figure 8 / clove hitch / round turn / two-half-hitches / trucker's hitch		
Repairs in the Field		
Packing / Trimming of the boat		
Navigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Charts - Compass use 		
Rescue Aides <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visual - Auditory 		
Nautical Rules of the Road		
Securing boats to rack		

FINAL ASSESSMENT		COMMENTS
PASS	NEEDS MORE WORK	
ASSESSOR		
<i>Assessor must be a currently certified ACA Instructor at or above this level.</i>		
IT or Instructor: _____		
Signature: _____		
ACA #: _____ Date: _____		
Assisting IT or Instructor: _____		
ACA #: _____		