



## Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Skills Assessment

Assessor's Guide

Multi-Paddler Field Grid

Single Paddler Field Grid

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## Assessor's Guide - Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Skills Assessment

### Delivering the L2 Essentials of Kayak Touring Skills Assessment

**Assessment Overview:** The L2 Essentials of Kayak Touring (EKT) Skills Assessment course is a benchmark of the paddler's ability at the entry-level of the ACA's Coastal Kayak development program. Paddlers may take an assessment course to measure their skills to recognized standards, for personal growth, or to prepare for instructor development or trip leader training. Therefore, assessors providing the course must strive to conduct it authentically.

**Paddler Competencies, Assessed Skills, and Developing Skills:** Each assessment category includes a paragraph describing the paddler's competency, a list of required Assessed Skills, and optional Developing Skills. You shall use the description of the paddler's competency as an overarching guideline for all skills. Assessed Skills are skills you must observe for the participant to pass the assessment. Developing Skills are optional, but success demonstrates that the participant is performing at a high level and progressing toward an L3 Coastal Kayak skill set.

**Core Skills:** L2 paddlers are exploring, learning, and playing in a wide variety of locations offering incredibly diverse and unique paddling environments. This assessment course focuses on the "Core Skills" that form the foundation of the paddler's ability and can be applied across different venues and conditions. As the course provider, you shall structure the course to allow participants to authentically demonstrate their skills and knowledge as they would be used in the L2 EKT environment. Participants shall demonstrate their skills to pass safely, effectively, and efficiently.

**Venue Specific Skills:** As L2 paddlers progress towards an L3 skill set, they can encounter more environmental factors. Three sets of "Venue Specific Skills" can be assessed so that instructors may provide feedback to participants paddling in these environments. **All are optional, have been determined to offer an equal level of challenge, and are listed as "Developing Skills"** for the L2 EKT assessment. Assessors may choose to incorporate any or all of these venue specific skills if their course location is conducive to providing an authentic evaluation of these skills.

**Assessor's Venue Choice and Environmental Conditions:** The choice of venue is critical to making an authentic assessment of your participant and is vital to the overall success of your course. For this course, you must select a location that "offers calm and protected waters with constant access to landing areas." Such locations include a protected bay or inlet, an inland lake, or a calm river where participants can paddle to shore and get out of their kayaks easily. The skills you are assessing do not require you to be offshore, and you shall keep your participants within "0.5 nautical miles of shore" at all times.

Parameters for acceptable conditions have been set to ensure a fair assessment of the participant's ability relative to the standard. The parameters for this assessment course are wind speeds less than 10 knots, waves or shore break no higher than 1 foot (0.3 meters), and current rated at less than 1 knot. If conditions exceed any of these parameters during the course, you must use your best judgment to decide whether operating on the water is safe. If a participant cannot meet the standard for a skill due to a momentary increase in conditions, you cannot assess that skill as "below" standard. Instead, you shall give the participant another opportunity to perform the skill once conditions are back within parameters.

**Determining Success:** This guide describes an outcome-based standard for Assessed skills and what "Exceeds," "Meets," and is "Below" this standard. The participant must meet or exceed the standard for all Assessed Skills. If a participant is below standard for any Assessed Skill, they are to be given an action plan that outlines areas for practice and a recommendation of when to return for the assessment. Assessors will enter either "Meets" or "Below" in the CMS Paddler Evaluation form and are to provide more detail in the comment fields.

Participants who plan to attend an L2 EKT Trip Leader Training or an Instructor Development/Certification Workshop should either pass the L2 Skills Assessment course or meet the standards outlined in this guide. Participants who largely exceed standards for Assessed Skills, and can successfully perform Developing Skills, are performing at the level expected to pass an L2 EKT Trip Leader Assessment or L2 EKT Instructor Certification Evaluation.

### L2 Paddler Core Competencies and Assessed Skills

Assessors shall evaluate the paddler for their overall competency in the following categories. Strokes, maneuvers, edging, and support are to be performed on both sides of the kayak but do not need to be equally effective to "meet" the standard at Level 2. Instead, the paddler shall demonstrate their ability to complete objectives using the stroke or maneuver, but some decrease in effectiveness or efficiency is allowed between sides of the kayak.

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### Core: Strokes

**L2 Competency:** The paddler displays connectivity between the paddle and kayak through safe and effective body movement. And a clean catch, power, and recovery of the blade at appropriate positions with correct blade orientation.

**Forward Paddling:** Moves the kayak 200 yards/meters in a reasonably straight line.

- Exceeds: Maintains a reasonably straight course with minimal deviation. There is evidence of core engagement. The paddler can vary their speed and accelerate smoothly.
- Meets: Some evidence of core involvement is observed, with minimal wobble and yaw.
- Below: Kayak wobbles or yaws significantly, and the paddler cannot maintain directional control.

**Reverse Paddling:** Moves the kayak 50 yards/meters in reverse with reasonable control.

- Exceeds: There is evidence of core engagement. Can paddle straight backwards at different speeds. Uses corrective strokes to maintain course without stopping or using forward strokes.
- Meets: Kayak runs straight backwards with limited wobble or loss of directional control.
- Below: Kayak shows significant wobble or yaw and does not go backwards reasonably straight.

**Stopping:** Stops the kayak forward and reverse from a good speed (2 to 2.5 knots).

- Exceeds: Stops from a good speed within one kayak length (5 yards/meters) while demonstrating good use of core muscles.
- Meets: Stops the kayak from a good speed within two kayak lengths (10 yards/meters), demonstrating good use of core muscles.
- Below: The kayak takes more than two kayak lengths (10 yards/meters) to stop, or the kayak capsizes when attempting to stop or displays unsafe body positioning.

**Forward and Reverse Sweep:** Turns the kayak smoothly while moving forward or in reverse without losing momentum.

- Exceeds: The paddler executes smooth sweep strokes using a consistent edge, extension of the blade, and core muscle involvement.
- Meets: The paddler can turn the kayak using sweep strokes. Some use of edging, the extension of the blade, and the use of core muscles are evident.
- Below: Kayak turns minimally, arms are used to apply force, and no edging is evident.

### Core: Maneuvers

**L2 Competency:** The paddler can combine sweeps, forward, reverse, stopping, and stern rudder strokes to maneuver their kayak effectively.

**Rotate in place 360°:** Spins the kayak in place with minimal forward or reverse movement.

- Exceeds: The paddler combines forward and reverse sweep strokes smoothly using core muscles and a solid, stable, and appropriate edge. The paddler uses a reasonable number of strokes and minimal forward or reverse movement.
- Meets: The kayak spins with little or no forward or reverse momentum. Padder utilizes the core more and arms less. Some appropriate edging is evident.
- Below: The kayak has significant forward and reverse momentum and does not use appropriate edging.

**Turning on the Move:** Maneuvers the kayak smoothly around obstacles.

- Exceeds: Paddler uses a combination of strokes with core muscle engagement and appropriate stable edging of the kayak to turn around obstacles requiring a turn of 30 degrees or more.
- Meets: Paddler uses sweep strokes with core muscle engagement, with some evidence of edging of the kayak to turn at least 30 degrees.
- Below: Edge is not used or is used ineffectively. There is no evidence of core engagement, and the kayak turns less than 30 degrees.

**Draw Sideways:** Moves the kayak sideways 10 feet (3 meters).

- Exceeds: The kayak moves straight sideways, the paddle shaft is as vertical as possible, and recoveries are clean. Can move the kayak sideways while on the move (hanging draw).
- Meets: The kayak effectively moves straight sideways using at least one variation of draw strokes (sculling draw, standard draw with an in-water or out-of-water, recovery), and recoveries are clean.
- Below: The kayak does not move sideways or moves forwards, backwards, or direction changes.

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**Ruddering (Stern):** Holds the kayak on a straight course or turns to correct a course.

- Exceeds: The paddle is used as a rudder to keep the kayak on a straight course for at least two kayak lengths or to adjust the course as needed. There is evidence of the use of core muscles. The paddler can turn the kayak towards or away from the paddle.
- Meets: The paddle is used as a rudder to keep the kayak on a straight course for at least two kayak lengths (10 yards/meters) without yaw. There is evidence of the use of core muscles. The paddler can turn towards the paddle.
- Below: Kayak does not turn to the onside (towards the paddle). Or there is no evidence of the use of core muscles.

**Developing Skills:**

- **Sideslip:** With forward momentum, slips the kayak sideways with a mid-ship static rudder.
- **Bow Rudder:** Turns the kayak to the paddle side with the bow rudder without stopping the kayak.
- **Stern Rudder:** Turns away from the paddle side while stern ruddering.
- **Linked Maneuvers:** Paddles a course requiring various turning maneuvers safely, effectively, and efficiently.

### Core: Edging and Support

**L2 Competency:** The paddler applies consistent and purposeful edging to make turning strokes more effective and efficient. They can stabilize their kayak, with and without momentum, and prevent capsizing.

**Low Brace Recovery:** Prevents capsize when off balance.

- Exceeds: Paddler can recover after being off balance.
- Meets: Paddler must be sufficiently off balance that a brace is needed to avoid capsizing. Elbows are kept close to the body, using the blade's back face for support.
- Below: The paddler does not go off balance, or their attempt to recover results in a capsize.

**Low Brace Turn:** Makes a turn of at least 90 degrees.

- Exceeds: Kayak turns at least 90 degrees. The maneuver is initiated with an effective forward sweep, stable and effective edge, and stable low brace, which is required to prevent capsizing. The paddler can vary the arc of the turn and is equally competent on both sides.
- Meets: Kayak turns at least 90 degrees. The maneuver is initiated with an effective forward sweep, effective edge, and stable low brace.
- Below: Paddler capsizes, kayak turns less than 90 degrees, or significant wobble is evident.

**Edge Control:** Edges with purpose and consistency during strokes and maneuvers.

- Exceeds: The paddler uses appropriate edging to facilitate turns and maneuvers. Edging is stable and consistent.
- Meets: The paddler demonstrates appropriate edging to facilitate turns and maneuvers.
- Below: Edging is inconsistent or absent.

**Developing Skills:**

- **Turn Control:** Able to vary the radius of their turns.

### Core: Rescues and Towing

**L2 Competency:** The paddler can employ one technique for self-rescue and one for assisted rescue and then paddle to shore in L2 conditions. They can swim with their kayak to shore and move another person's kayak to shore.

**Capsize and Wet Exit:** Performs a wet exit in two ways.

- Exceeds: Hang time exceeds 5 seconds, maintains control of kayak and paddle.
- Meets: Calmly exits from the cockpit after completely capsizing. Releases the skirt from the grab loop and by another secondary method.
- Below: Does not release the spray skirt or, exhibits evidence of panic, or performs exit before full capsize.

**Assisted Rescues and Deep-Water Re-Entry:** Performs one or more of the following assisted re-entries as rescuer and swimmer: Side-by-Side, Sling, or T-Rescue.

- Exceeds: For kayaks with at least a stern bulkhead, less than 60 seconds from initial contact to the swimmer sitting in a dry kayak.
- Meets: Enough water is emptied from the kayak to make it paddleable upon re-entry.
- Below: Too much water is left in the kayak to make it paddleable, or the paddler does not re-enter their kayak.

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**Self-Rescue:** Performs one of the following: Scramble (aka cowboy), Paddle Float, Re-enter and Roll (with or without paddle float).

- Exceeds: Can self-rescue using two or more methods.
- Meets: Can self-rescue in less than three attempts or 3 minutes.
- Below: Is unable to self-rescue or is only successful in four or more attempts or takes more than 3 minutes.

**Swim Rescue:** Swims to shore (25 yards/meters) in full paddling gear and drains kayak.

- Exceeds: Swims to shore using a variety of techniques.
- Meets: Gets to shore in a reasonable amount of time using safe swimming methods.
- Below: Needs assistance to get to shore.

**Swimmer Tows:** Performs swimmer rescue via a bow, toggle, or back deck swimmer tow.

- Exceeds: Can utilize their kayak to perform a swimmer rescue using a bow, stern, toggle, or back deck swimmer tow without hesitation and move the swimmer to a safe area using all the methods of swimmer tow.
- Meets: Can move the swimmer to a safe area using one or two methods of swimmer tow.
- Below: Cannot provide a safe and effective swimmer rescue or capsizes attempting to execute.

**Move a kayak that has capsized to shore (3 kayak lengths, approximately 50 feet or 15 meters):** Performs one of the following techniques: Bulldozing, Shove and Chase, or Contact Tow.

- Exceeds: Can employ multiple techniques to get the kayak to shore.
- Meets: Can move the kayak three kayak lengths.
- Below: Cannot get the kayak to shore in a reasonable time.

### Developing Skills:

- **Scoop Rescue:** Able to assist a swimmer into their kayak.
- **Unresponsive Paddler Rescue:** Able to bring to the surface a capsized paddler.
- **Towing:** Using towlines and various towing configurations to move a kayak.

### Core: Awareness and Seamanship

**L2 Competency:** The paddler has a heightened awareness of the environment. They adapt plans accordingly and clearly communicate with the group to make necessary changes. They are properly equipped for the conditions and use equipment appropriately to maintain personal and group safety and comfort.

**Awareness:** Demonstrates awareness of self, group members, and environment.

- Exceeds: Helps others to stay aware of the environment and “connected” with the group.
- Meets: Paddles within limits of skills and experience, evaluates self and group both on and off the water. Communicates with the group, maintains paddler and group connectivity and understands additional risk if paddling alone.
- Below: Is disconnected from the group and is unaware of their abilities relative to the conditions.

**Leave No Trace (LNT):** Interacts appropriately with the ecosystem and wildlife.

- Exceeds: Unconsciously models best practices of LNT Principles and NOAA Marine Wildlife Viewing Guidelines and respectfully makes group members aware of best practices.
- Meets: Applies best practices of LNT Principles and NOAA Marine Wildlife Viewing Guidelines.
- Below: Is unaware of, or does not adhere to, LNT Principles and NOAA Marine Wildlife Viewing Guidelines

**Kayak:** Has a working knowledge of types of kayaks suitable for paddling in L2 conditions.

- Exceeds: Has a thorough understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of different styles of kayaks in different environments.
- Meets: Has a basic understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of different styles of kayaks in different environments.
- Below: The advantages and disadvantages of different kayaks for paddling in L2 venues are unclear.

**Equipment:** Has a working knowledge of paddling equipment.

- Exceeds: Has a solid rationale for everything they carry or do not carry.
- Meets: Has a rationale for most of what they carry and do not carry, as well as using the equipment they have chosen to carry.
- Below: Is unclear what gear they should carry, why they carry what they have, or how to use the equipment they have chosen to carry.

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**Cold-Water Shock:** Demonstrates an understanding of cold-water shock and the sudden onset of issues associated with immersion in cold-water.

- Exceeds: Has a solid understanding of cold-water shock and its prevention, recognition of, and proper treatment/response, and knows how to mitigate it.
- Meets: Understands the dangers of cold-water shock and its prevention, recognition of, and proper treatment/response, and knows how to mitigate it.
- Below: Is unclear what cold-water shock is or does not know how to prevent it, recognize it, or what the proper treatment/response is to mitigate it.

**Hypothermia and Hyperthermia:** Demonstrates a working knowledge of the issues associated with hypothermia and hyperthermia, including the prevention, recognition, and basic treatment of both.

- Exceeds: Has a solid understanding of hypothermia and hyperthermia and how to mitigate both with prevention, recognition, and the proper treatment/response.
- Meets: Understands the dangers of hypothermia and hyperthermia and how to mitigate both with prevention, recognition, and the proper treatment/response.
- Below: Is unclear what hypothermia and hyperthermia are, or does not know how to prevent, recognize, or what the proper treatment/response is.

### Core: Incident Prevention and Management

**L2 Competency:** The paddler demonstrates their preparedness to prevent incidents from occurring. Can manage an incident when it does happen by having the appropriate equipment for the environment and the knowledge to use it. Has prepared and shared an appropriate float plan and knows who to contact, as well as the proper way to do so in the case of an incident that requires outside assistance.

**Securing Kayak to Rack:** Properly secures their kayak to rack when storing or transporting.

- Exceeds: Can assist others with properly securing their kayaks for storage or transport.
- Meets: Properly secures their kayak with straps or ropes when storing or transporting, including bow and stern lines, when transporting on a vehicle rack.
- Below: Does not properly secure their kayak.

**Lifting and Carrying:** Lifts and carries their kayak safely and efficiently.

- Exceeds: Demonstrates multiple ways to carry their kayak safely. Maintains an awareness of the environment and potential hazards in which they are carrying their kayak. Uses a 2-person carry when available.
- Meets: Uses a safe lifting technique to carry their kayak, including 2-person carry. Causes minimal disruption to others.
- Below: Lifts in a less-than-safe manner or causes others to avoid them while carrying their kayak. (Note: An inability to carry one's kayak does not count against an otherwise passing assessment.)

**Launching and Landing:** Launches and lands at a dock or shore safely.

- Exceeds: Launches and lands forwards and backwards without loss of control. Is aware of the environment in which they are launching and landing, including the physical nature of the environment, as well as the presence of other users and wildlife, and exercises due regard so as not to present a hazard to them or disrupt their activity.
- Meets: Launches and lands with minimal wobbling or loss of control and without disrupting other users of the environment.
- Below: Capsizes while launching or landing or causes other users to avoid them while doing so.

**Signaling:** Carries and demonstrates proper use of an audible signaling device.

- Exceeds: Has more than one audible signaling device.
- Meets: Has an audible signaling device secured to their lifejacket.
- Below: Does not have an audible signaling device.

**Communication Device:** Has a reliable communication device readily available and knows proper device usage.

- Exceeds: Has multiple communication devices and knows proper usage of each.
- Meets: Has the appropriate communication device (cell phone, VHF radio, satellite device) and knows proper usage of their device.
- Below: Does not have a communication device or how to use the device they have.

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**Float Plan:** Files a complete and accurate float plan with an appropriate point of contact.

- Exceeds: Understands float plans as a trip planning tool and a “safety net.”
- Meets: The paddler understands the proper float plan to use, who to file it with, and the purpose and application of a float plan. Paddler understands where a float plan may be obtained for filing with the proper authorities and contact personnel.
- Below: Does not submit a float plan or does not include appropriate information for their outing.

### Core: Trip Planning and Navigation

**L2 Competency:** The paddler successfully plans and executes routes in L2 conditions and venues, considering basic safety and location-specific issues. Planning includes consideration of weather forecasts, currents, the makeup of the paddling group, and group members' equipment.

**Forecasts:** Gathers, understands, and utilizes appropriate weather and marine forecasts.

- Exceeds: Comes prepared with all pertinent forecast data and can assist others in finding data for the area.
- Meets: Can provide all pertinent forecast data for the day when the assessor requests.
- Below: Has not gathered weather forecasts or is unaware of weather conditions on the day of the assessment.

**Chart Use:** Demonstrates use of charts, aerial images, weather and marine forecasts, and knowledge of their paddling group when route planning.

- Exceeds: Demonstrates a high level of understanding of these materials when trip planning to make route, launching and landing, emergency evacuation, rest stop, and shuttle decisions.
- Meets: Successfully completes a tabletop/“decktop” navigation exercise incorporating weather and marine forecasts.
- Below: Is unsuccessful in completing the tabletop/“decktop” navigation exercise.

**Trip Planning:** Incorporates wind, waves, and currents into route plans and trip choices.

- Exceeds: Gathers forecasts and understands how wave characteristics (size, direction) can be influenced by wind conditions. Applies a more in-depth understanding of wind forecasts (strength, trend, fetch, duration, and direction) and can infer the effect on the group's plan from relief maps and headlands.
- Meets: Uses forecasts to determine if the route is feasible and adjusts the trip plan to deal with adverse conditions when necessary.
- Below: Unable to gather and use forecast data on wind, wave, and swell conditions to determine if the route is feasible and fails to adjust the trip plan to deal with adverse conditions when necessary.

**Trip Planning:** Incorporates direction of flow into route plans and trip choices.

- Exceeds: Gathers river or tidal current data and understands how it will affect the progress on a trip. Applies a more in-depth understanding of the current and can infer from maps and charts the current's effect on the group's plan. Uses this information to choose suitable launching and landing locations and timing to present adequate water depth. Able to explain concepts to others clearly and understandably.
- Meets: Gathers and uses current data to determine a feasible route and adjusts the trip plan to deal with adverse conditions when necessary. Uses this information to choose suitable launching and landing locations and timing to present adequate water depth.
- Below: Unable to gather and use current data to determine if a route is feasible or fails to adjust the trip plan to deal with adverse conditions when necessary.

**Route Finding:** Uses appropriate map or chart to know where they are and where they are going.

- Exceeds: Can assist others in identifying their location on a map or chart. They help keep the group on their intended route.
- Meets: Can identify on a map or chart where they are and where they are going and can identify launch points and take-outs. Can navigate to points identified.
- Below: Is unsure where they are and where they are going on a map or chart.

**Compass Use:** The paddler demonstrates using handheld and deck-mounted compasses to take bearings.

- Exceeds: Demonstrates taking bearings and using this information to determine their location on a chart. The paddler easily maintains a course using a compass.
- Meets: Can discuss parts and functions of a compass and its use. The paddler can take a bearing.
- Below: Cannot discuss parts and functions of a compass and its use or cannot use a compass.

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**Nautical Rules of the Road:** Understands the Nautical Rules of the Road and demonstrates safe paddling in relation to boat traffic.

- Exceeds: Understands a wide variety of nautical rules of the road. Leads a group safely through an area of active boating traffic, positioned appropriately to aids to navigation. Effectively organizes the group when crossing shipping channels.
- Meets: Understands a wide variety of nautical rules of the road. Paddles a safe and effective route through active boating traffic areas, positioned appropriately to aids to navigation.
- Below: Knows some rules or no rules. Paddles a haphazard route through areas of boating traffic and aids to navigation.

**Developing Skill:** Demonstrates ability to calculate stages of tide and tidal drift and incorporate results into a trip plan.

### L2 Paddler Venue Specific Competencies and Skills (Developing)

At L2, exposure to the environment is a “developing” skill, meaning a higher level than required to pass the assessment. Three sets of “Venue Specific Skills” may be assessed in addition to “Core Skills” so that instructors may provide feedback to students paddling in these environments.

#### Venue Specific: Currents

The paddler can paddle safely, effectively, and efficiently L2 in currents while maintaining control of their kayak.

**Awareness:** Demonstrates an understanding of currents (tidal or river) in L2 venues.

- Exceeds: Has a thorough understanding of the specific challenges of paddling in current with L2 characteristics and can do so safely while leading a group or on their own. Demonstrates the ability to calculate the river flow rate, or tide and tidal drift stages, and incorporate results into a route plan.
- Meets: Understands the specific challenges of paddling in current with L2 characteristics and can do so safely on their own.
- Below: Is unclear as to the specific challenges of paddling in current with L2 characteristics and cannot do so safely on their own or in a group.

**Reading Water and Boat Control:** Identifies direction of flow and eddies. Paddles through currents in control.

- Exceeds: Maximizes drift for making progress, utilizes eddies to make progress against the flow, and enters and exits eddies under control.
- Meets: Paddles with the flow and can enter and exit eddies under control.
- Below: Cannot identify the direction of flow or consistently paddles against the flow.

**Hazards:** Identifies hazards and positions themselves to avoid the hazards.

- Exceeds: Identifies paddling hazards in current and can inform others of such while leading the group in the safest route possible to avoid the hazards.
- Meets: Identifies paddling hazards in current (for example, low-head dams, larger rapids, bridge abutments, strainers, drift into boat traffic or open water) and avoids such hazards to the extent possible.
- Below: Does not identify hazards in a timely fashion to avoid them.

**Rescues:** Performs a self-rescue, an assisted rescue, and contact towing in current.

- Exceeds: Effortlessly and unconsciously performs the “Core: Rescues and Towing” skills in current.
- Meets: Performs the “Assessed Skills” from the “Core: Rescues and Towing” section in moving water.
- Below: Cannot perform “Core: Rescues and Towing” section skills in current.

#### Venue Specific: Wind and Waves

The paddler can paddle safely, effectively, and efficiently in L2 wind and waves while maintaining control of their kayak.

**Awareness:** Understands how onshore and offshore winds affect paddling conditions.

- Exceeds: Recognizes and understands the "why" behind increasing sea state (fetch, direction, duration, intensity) and how onshore and offshore winds affect paddling conditions and can paddle safely, effectively, and efficiently in such conditions.
- Meets: Recognizes increasing sea state (fetch, direction, duration, intensity) and can paddle safely, effectively, and efficiently in such conditions and can take appropriate action.
- Below: Does not recognize the increasing sea state or has difficulty paddling in the increasing conditions. Is unable to take the necessary action to protect from the increasing conditions.



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**Tactics:** Applies strategies for paddling at various angles to the direction of the wind.

- Exceeds: Understands the effects of paddling in the wind on the kayaker and how to work with the wind to increase paddling efficiency.
- Meets: Chooses a route that minimizes the effect of wind on their kayak. Can paddle effectively in the wind by choosing to paddle at an angle to the wind to increase efficiency rather than directly into it.
- Below: Does not alter their route or angle to the wind when it would be more efficient to do so.

**Boat Control:** Can control their direction and maintain stability in wind and waves.

- Exceeds: Unconsciously applies edging to maintain direction control before needing to make less efficient strokes to make direction corrections. Unconsciously maintains stability in wind and waves.
- Meets: Controls direction by using a stroke or maneuver. Maintains stability by applying a support stroke.
- Below: Cannot maintain directional control or stability in wind and waves.

**Rescues:** Performs a self-rescue, an assisted rescue, and contact towing in wind and waves.

- Exceeds: Applies numerous rescues and contact towing techniques and is effortlessly able to attain the “target” in wind and waves.
- Meets: Can attain the “target” with the use of a final “corrective” stroke or maneuver and can perform an assisted rescue, a self-rescue, and a contact tow, in wind and waves.
- Below: Struggles to attain the “target” or cannot perform rescues (both self and assisted) or contact towing in wind and waves.

### Venue Specific: Rocky Shorelines

The paddler can paddle safely, effectively, and efficiently along rocky shorelines in L2 conditions while maintaining control of their kayak. The paddler can identify safe zones and danger zones. They can self-rescue close to rock features and perform assisted rescues, and contact towing where and when appropriate.

**Awareness:** Identifies hazards and landing areas on a map or chart.

- Exceeds: Has a thorough understanding of the additional challenges of paddling in rocky environments.
- Meets: Understands the additional challenges of paddling in rocky environments.
- Below: Is unclear as to the additional challenges of paddling in rocky environments.

**Tactics:** Chooses appropriate landings and areas to play in the rocks.

- Exceeds: Chooses to paddle rocky shorelines and explore caves and arches with a firm understanding of risk vs. reward. Keeps the group in areas with a high level of reward and a low level of risk.
- Meets: Chooses to paddle rocky shorelines and explore caves and arches with a firm understanding of risk vs. reward. Stays within their capability and helps group members make choices with a high level of reward and a low level of risk. Chooses safe and appropriate landings.
- Below: Does not understand why risk level is heightened or makes choices with a high-risk level.

**Boat Control:** Maneuvers along rocky shorelines safely, effectively, and efficiently.

- Exceeds: Thoroughly understands water movement along rocky shorelines and can seamlessly link various strokes into maneuvers while working with the water movement.
- Meets: Can maneuver along rocky shorelines.
- Below: Is unable to maneuver along rocky shorelines.

**Rescues:** Performs a self-rescue, an assisted rescue, and contact towing close to rock features.

- Exceeds: Has a thorough understanding of the importance of performing rescues and the need to move to areas of less risk when paddling close to rock features. Can react unconsciously to apply an appropriate rescue or to move to a safer area to do so.
- Meets: Understands the need to act quickly when close to rock features and can perform effective rescues. Recognizes the need to move to a safer area and can do so.
- Below: Is unable to decide what rescue to do, is unable to perform a rescue, or does not move to a safer area when appropriate.

## L2 Essentials of Kayak Touring Skills Assessment - Multi-Paddler Field Grid

<b>Assessor 1</b> _____	ACA # _____	<b>Assessor 2</b> _____	ACA # _____
<b>Paddler 1</b> _____	ACA # _____	<b>Paddler 2</b> _____	ACA # _____
<b>Paddler 3</b> _____	ACA # _____	<b>Paddler 4</b> _____	ACA # _____
<b>Paddler 5</b> _____	ACA # _____		

**Location** \_\_\_\_\_ **Was the venue within requirements?** Y / N

**Conditions** Winds < 10 knots    **Actual** \_\_\_\_\_ Waves < 1 foot    **Actual** \_\_\_\_\_

Shore Break < 1 ft    **Actual** \_\_\_\_\_ Current < 1 kt.    **Actual** \_\_\_\_\_

**L2 Paddling Venue (not required):**     Currents     Wind and Waves     Rocky Shorelines

**Key:** “E” Exceeds Standard / ”M” Meets Standard / “B” Below Standard / “L” Left Side of Kayak / “R” Right Side of Kayak

**Core: Strokes** - The paddler displays connectivity between the paddle and kayak through safe and effective body movement. And a clean catch, power, and recovery of the blade at appropriate positions with correct blade orientation.

<b>Assessed Skills</b>	P1		P2		P3		P4		P5	
	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R
<b>Forward Paddling:</b> Moves the kayak 200 yards/meters in a reasonably straight line.										
<b>Reverse Paddling:</b> Moves the kayak 50 yards/meters with reasonable control.										
<b>Stopping:</b> Stops the kayak from a good speed (2 to 2.5 knots), in forward and reverse.										
<b>Forward and Reverse Sweep:</b> Turns the kayak smoothly while moving forward or in reverse without losing momentum.										

**Notes:**

**Core: Maneuvers** - The paddler can combine sweeps, forward, reverse, stopping, and stern rudder strokes to maneuver their kayak effectively.

Assessed Skills	P1		P2		P3		P4		P5	
	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R
<b>Rotate in place 360°:</b> Spins the kayak in place with minimal forward or reverse movement.										
<b>Turning on the Move:</b> Maneuvers the kayak smoothly around obstacles.										
<b>Draw Sideways:</b> Moves the kayak sideways 10 feet (3.3 meters).										
<b>Ruddering (Stern):</b> Holds the kayak on a straight course or turns toward the paddle side to correct a course.										
Developing Skills	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R
<b>Sideslip:</b> With forward momentum, slips the kayak sideways with a mid-ship static rudder.										
<b>Bow Rudder:</b> Turns the kayak to the paddle side with the bow rudder without stopping the kayak.										
<b>Stern Rudder:</b> Turns away from the paddle side while stern ruddering.										
<b>Linked Maneuvers:</b> Paddles a course requiring a variety of turning maneuvers safely, effectively, and efficiently.										
<b>Notes:</b>										

**Core: Edging and Support** - The paddler applies consistent and purposeful edging to make turning strokes more effective and efficient. They can stabilize their kayak, with and without momentum, and prevent capsizing

Assessed Skills	P1		P2		P3		P4		P5	
	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R
<b>Low Brace Recovery:</b> Prevents capsizing when off balance.										
<b>Low Brace Turn:</b> Makes a turn of at least 90 degrees.										
<b>Edge Control:</b> Edges with purpose and consistency during strokes and maneuvers.										
Developing Skills	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R
<b>Turn Control:</b> Able to vary the radius of their turns.										
<b>Notes:</b>										

**Core: Rescues and Towing** - The paddler can employ one technique for self-rescue and one for assisted rescue and then paddle to shore in L2 conditions. They can swim with their kayak to shore and move another person's kayak to shore.

Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
<b>Capsize and Wet Exit:</b> Performs a wet exit in two ways.					
<b>Assisted Rescues and Deep-Water Re-Entry:</b> Performs one or more of the following assisted re-entries as rescuer and swimmer: Side-by-Side, Sling, or T-Rescue.					
<b>Self-Rescue:</b> Performs one of the following: Scramble (aka cowboy), Paddle Float, or Re-enter and Roll (with or without paddle float).					
<b>Swim Rescue:</b> Swims to shore (25 yards/meters) in full paddling gear and drains kayak.					
<b>Move a kayak that has capsized to shore (3 kayak lengths, approximately 50 feet or 15 meters):</b> Perform one of the following techniques: Bulldozing, Shove and Chase, or Contact Tow.					
Developing Skills					
<b>Scoop Rescue:</b> Able to assist a swimmer into their kayak.					
<b>Unresponsive Paddler Rescue:</b> Able to bring to the surface a capsized paddler.					
<b>Towing:</b> Able to use towlines and various towing configurations to move a kayak.					
<b>Notes:</b>					

**Core: Awareness and Seamanship** - The paddler has a heightened awareness of the environment. They adapt plans accordingly and clearly communicate with the group to make necessary changes. They are properly equipped for the conditions and use equipment appropriately to maintain personal and group comfort.

Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
<b>Awareness:</b> Demonstrates awareness of self, group members, and environment.					
<b>Leave No Trace (LNT):</b> Interacts appropriately with the ecosystem and wildlife.					
<b>Kayak:</b> Has a working knowledge of types of kayaks suitable for paddling in L2 conditions.					
<b>Equipment:</b> Has a working knowledge of paddling equipment.					
<b>Cold-Water Shock:</b> Demonstrates an understanding of cold-water shock and the sudden onset of issues associated with immersion in cold water.					
<b>Hypothermia and Hyperthermia:</b> Demonstrates a working knowledge of the issues associated with hypothermia and hyperthermia, including the prevention, recognition, and basic treatment of both.					
<b>Notes:</b>					

**Core: Incident Prevention and Management** - The paddler demonstrates their preparedness to prevent incidents from occurring. Can manage an incident when it does happen by having the appropriate equipment for the environment and the knowledge to use it. Has prepared and shared an appropriate float plan and knows who to contact, as well as the proper way to do so in the case of an incident that requires outside assistance.

Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
<b>Securing Kayak to Rack:</b> Properly secures their kayak to rack when storing or transporting.					
<b>Lifting and Carrying:</b> Lifts and carries their kayak safely and efficiently.					
<b>Launching and Landing:</b> Launches and lands at a dock or shore safely.					
<b>Signaling:</b> Carries and demonstrates proper use of an audible signaling device.					
<b>Communication Device:</b> Has a reliable communication device readily available and knows proper device usage.					
<b>Float Plan:</b> Files a complete and accurate float plan with an appropriate point of contact.					
<b>Notes:</b>					

**Core: Trip Planning and Navigation** - The paddler successfully plans and executes routes in L2 conditions and venues, considering basic safety and location-specific issues. Their planning includes consideration of weather forecasts, currents, the makeup of the paddling group, and group members' equipment.

Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P	P4	P5
<b>Forecasts:</b> Gathers, understands, and utilizes appropriate weather and marine forecasts.					
<b>Trip Planning:</b> Demonstrates use of charts, aerial images, weather and marine forecasts, and knowledge of their paddling group when route planning.					
<b>Trip Planning:</b> Incorporates wind, waves, and currents into route plan and trip choices.					
<b>Trip Planning:</b> Incorporates direction of flow into route plan and trip choices.					
<b>Route Finding:</b> Uses appropriate map or chart to know where they are and where they are going.					
<b>Compass Use:</b> The paddler demonstrates using handheld and deck-mounted compasses to take bearings.					
<b>Nautical Rules of the Road:</b> Understands the Nautical Rules of the Road and demonstrates safe paddling in relation to boat traffic.					
<b>Developing Skill</b>					
<b>Tidal Planning:</b> Demonstrates their ability to calculate tide and tidal drift stages and incorporate results into a trip plan.					
<b>Notes:</b>					

**Venue Specific: Currents** - The paddler can paddle safely, effectively, and efficiently in L2 currents while maintaining control of their kayak.

<b>Developing Skills</b>	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
<b>Awareness:</b> Demonstrates an understanding of currents (tidal or river) in L2 venues.					
<b>Reading Water and Boat Control:</b> Identifies direction of flow and eddies. Paddles through currents in control.					
<b>Hazards:</b> Identifies hazards and positions themselves to avoid the hazards.					
<b>Rescues:</b> Performs a self-rescue, an assisted rescue, and contact towing in current.					
<b>Notes:</b>					

**Venue Specific: Wind and Waves** - The paddler can paddle safely, effectively, and efficiently in L2 wind and waves while maintaining control of their kayak.

<b>Developing Skills</b>	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
<b>Awareness:</b> Understands how onshore and offshore winds affect paddling conditions.					
<b>Tactics:</b> Applies strategies for paddling at a variety of angles to the direction of the wind.					
<b>Boat Control:</b> Can control direction and maintain stability in wind and waves.					
<b>Rescues:</b> Performs a self-rescue, an assisted rescue, and contact towing in wind and waves.					
<b>Awareness:</b> Understands how onshore and offshore winds affect paddling conditions.					
<b>Notes:</b>					

**Venue Specific: Rocky Shorelines** - The paddler can paddle safely, effectively, and efficiently along rocky shorelines in L2 conditions while maintaining control of their kayak. The paddler can identify safe zones and danger zones. They can self-rescue close to rock features, perform assisted rescues, and contact towing where and when appropriate.

<b>Developing Skills</b>	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
<b>Awareness:</b> Identifies hazards and landing areas on a map or chart.					
<b>Tactics:</b> Chooses appropriate landings and areas to play in the rocks.					
<b>Boat Control:</b> Maneuvers along rocky shorelines safely, effectively, and efficiently.					
<b>Rescues:</b> Performs a self-rescue, an assisted rescue, and contact towing close to rock features.					
<b>Notes:</b>					

## L2 Essentials of Kayak Touring Skills Assessment - Single Paddler Field Grid

Assessor \_\_\_\_\_ ACA # \_\_\_\_\_ Paddler \_\_\_\_\_ ACA # \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Conditions Winds < 10 knots      **Actual** \_\_\_\_\_ Waves < 1 foot      **Actual** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Shore Break < 1 ft      **Actual** \_\_\_\_\_ Current < 1 kt.      **Actual** \_\_\_\_\_

L2 Paddling Venue (not required):     Currents     Wind and Waves     Rocky Shorelines

**Key:** “E” Exceeds Standard / ”M” Meets Standard / “B” Below Standard / “L” Left Side of Kayak / “R” Right Side of Kayak

**Core: Strokes** - The paddler displays connectivity between the paddle and kayak through safe and effective body movement. And a clean catch, power, and recovery of the blade at appropriate positions with correct blade orientation.

Assessed Skills	B/M/E		Note
	L	R	
<b>Forward Paddling:</b> Moves the kayak 200 yards/meters in a reasonably straight line.			
<b>Reverse Paddling:</b> Moves the kayak 50 yards/meters with reasonable control.			
<b>Stopping:</b> Stops the kayak from a good speed (2 to 2.5 knots), in forward and reverse.			
<b>Forward and Reverse Sweep:</b> Turns the kayak smoothly while moving forward or in reverse without losing momentum.			
<b>Notes:</b>			

**Core: Maneuvers** - The paddler can combine sweeps, forward, reverse, stopping, and stern rudder strokes to maneuver their kayak effectively.

Assessed Skills	B/M/E		Note
	L	R	
<b>Rotate in place 360°:</b> Spins the kayak in place with minimal forward or reverse movement.			
<b>Turning on the Move:</b> Maneuvers the kayak smoothly around obstacles.			
<b>Draw Sideways:</b> Moves the kayak sideways 10 feet (3.3 meters).			
<b>Ruddering (Stern):</b> Holds the kayak on a straight course or turns toward the paddle side to correct a course.			
<b>Notes:</b>			

**Core: Maneuvers (continued)** - The paddler can combine sweeps, forward, reverse, stopping, and stern rudder strokes to maneuver their kayak effectively.

Developing Skills	B/M/E		Note
	L	R	
<b>Sideslip:</b> With forward momentum, slips the kayak sideways with a mid-ship static rudder.			
<b>Bow Rudder:</b> Turns the kayak to the paddle side with the bow rudder without stopping the kayak.			
<b>Stern Rudder:</b> Turns away from the paddle side while stern ruddering.			
<b>Linked Maneuvers:</b> Paddles a course requiring a variety of turning maneuvers safely, effectively, and efficiently.			
<b>Notes:</b>			

**Core: Edging and Support** - The paddler applies consistent and purposeful edging to make turning strokes more effective and efficient. They can stabilize their kayak, with and without momentum, and prevent capsizing

Assessed Skills	B/M/E		Note
	L	R	
<b>Low Brace Recovery:</b> Prevents capsize when off balance.			
<b>Low Brace Turn:</b> Makes a turn of at least 90 degrees.			
<b>Edge Control:</b> Edges with purpose and consistency during strokes and maneuvers.			
Developing Skills	L	R	Note
<b>Turn Control:</b> Able to vary the radius of their turns.			
<b>Notes:</b>			

**Core: Rescues and Towing** - The paddler can employ one technique for self-rescue and one for assisted rescue and then paddle to shore in L2 conditions. They can swim with their kayak to shore and move another person's kayak to shore.

Assessed Skills	B/M/E	Note
<b>Capsize and Wet Exit:</b> Performs a wet exit in two ways.		
<b>Assisted Rescues and Deep-Water Re-Entry:</b> Performs one or more of the following assisted re-entries as rescuer and swimmer: Side-by-Side, Sling, or T-Rescue.		
<b>Self-Rescue:</b> Performs one of the following: Scramble (aka cowboy), Paddle Float, or Re-enter and Roll (with or without paddle float).		



**Core: Rescues and Towing (continued)**- The paddler can employ one technique for self-rescue and one for assisted rescue and then paddle to shore in L2 conditions. They can swim with their kayak to shore and move another person's kayak to shore.

<b>Assessed Skills (continued)</b>	<b>B/M/E</b>	<b>Note</b>
<b>Swim Rescue:</b> Swims to shore (25 yards/meters) in full paddling gear and drains kayak.		
<b>Move a kayak that has capsized to shore (3 kayak lengths, approximately 50 feet or 15 meters):</b> Perform one of the following techniques: Bulldozing, Shove and Chase, or Contact Tow.		
<b>Developing Skills</b>	<b>B/M/E</b>	<b>Note</b>
<b>Scoop Rescue:</b> Able to assist a swimmer into their kayak.		
<b>Unresponsive Paddler Rescue:</b> Able to bring to the surface a capsized paddler.		
<b>Towing:</b> Able to use towlines and various towing configurations to move a kayak.		
<b>Notes:</b>		

**Core: Awareness and Seamanship** - The paddler has a heightened awareness of the environment. They adapt plans accordingly and clearly communicate with the group to make necessary changes. They are properly equipped for the conditions and use equipment appropriately to maintain personal and group comfort.

<b>Assessed Skills</b>	<b>B/M/E</b>	<b>Note</b>
<b>Awareness:</b> Demonstrates awareness of self, group members, and environment.		
<b>Leave No Trace (LNT):</b> Interacts appropriately with the ecosystem and wildlife.		
<b>Kayak:</b> Has a working knowledge of types of kayaks suitable for paddling in L2 conditions.		
<b>Equipment:</b> Has a working knowledge of paddling equipment.		
<b>Cold Water Shock:</b> Demonstrates an understanding of cold-water shock and the sudden onset of issues associated with immersion in cold water.		
<b>Hypothermia and Hyperthermia:</b> Demonstrates a working knowledge of the issues associated with hypothermia and hyperthermia, including the prevention, recognition, and basic treatment of both.		
<b>Notes:</b>		

**Core: Incident Prevention and Management** - The paddler demonstrates their preparedness to prevent incidents from occurring. Can manage an incident when it does happen by having the appropriate equipment for the environment and the knowledge to use it. Has prepared and shared an appropriate float plan and knows who to contact, as well as the proper way to do so in the case of an incident that requires outside assistance.

Assessed Skills	B/M/E	Note
<b>Securing Kayak to Rack:</b> Properly secures their kayak to rack when storing or transporting.		
<b>Lifting and Carrying:</b> Lifts and carries their kayak safely and efficiently.		
<b>Launching and Landing:</b> Launches and lands at a dock or shore safely.		
<b>Signaling:</b> Carries and demonstrates proper use of an audible signaling device.		
<b>Communication Device:</b> Has a reliable communication device readily available and knows proper device usage.		
<b>Float Plan:</b> Files a complete and accurate float plan with an appropriate point of contact.		
<b>Notes:</b>		

**Core: Trip Planning and Navigation** - The paddler successfully plans and executes routes in L2 conditions and venues, considering basic safety and location-specific issues. Their planning includes consideration of weather forecasts, currents, the makeup of the paddling group, and group members' equipment.

Assessed Skills	B/M/E	Note
<b>Forecasts:</b> Gathers, understands, and utilizes appropriate weather and marine forecasts.		
<b>Trip Planning:</b> Demonstrates use of charts, aerial images, weather and marine forecasts, and knowledge of their paddling group when route planning.		
<b>Trip Planning:</b> Incorporates wind, waves, and currents into route plan and trip choices.		
<b>Trip Planning:</b> Incorporates direction of flow into route plan and trip choices.		
<b>Route Finding:</b> Uses appropriate map or chart to know where they are and where they are going.		
<b>Compass Use:</b> The paddler demonstrates using handheld and deck-mounted compasses to take bearings.		
<b>Nautical Rules of the Road:</b> Understands the Nautical Rules of the Road and demonstrates safe paddling in relation to boat traffic.		
<b>Developing Skill</b>		
<b>Tidal Planning:</b> Demonstrates their ability to calculate tide and tidal drift stages and incorporate results into a trip plan.		
<b>Notes:</b>		

**Venue Specific: Currents** - The paddler can paddle safely, effectively, and efficiently in L2 currents while maintaining control of their kayak.

Developing Skills	B/M/E	Note
<b>Awareness:</b> Demonstrates an understanding of currents (tidal or river) in L2 venues.		
<b>Reading Water and Boat Control:</b> Identifies direction of flow and eddies. Paddles through currents in control.		
<b>Hazards:</b> Identifies hazards and positions themselves to avoid the hazards.		
<b>Rescues:</b> Performs a self-rescue, an assisted rescue, and contact towing in current.		
<b>Notes:</b>		

**Venue Specific: Wind and Waves** - The paddler can paddle safely, effectively, and efficiently in L2 wind and waves while maintaining control of their kayak.

Developing Skills	B/M/E	Note
<b>Awareness:</b> Understands how onshore and offshore winds affect paddling conditions.		
<b>Tactics:</b> Applies strategies for paddling at a variety of angles to the direction of the wind.		
<b>Boat Control:</b> <a href="#">Can</a> control their direction and maintain stability in wind and waves.		
<b>Rescues:</b> Performs a self-rescue, an assisted rescue, and contact towing in wind and waves.		
<b>Notes:</b>		

**Venue Specific: Rocky Shorelines** - The paddler can paddle safely, effectively, and efficiently along rocky shorelines in L2 conditions while maintaining control of their kayak. The paddler can identify safe zones and danger zones. They can self-rescue close to rock features, perform assisted rescues, and contact towing where and when appropriate.

Developing Skills	B/M/E	Note
<b>Awareness:</b> Identifies hazards and landing areas on a map or chart.		
<b>Tactics:</b> Chooses appropriate landings and areas to play in the rocks.		
<b>Boat Control:</b> Maneuvers along rocky shorelines safely, effectively, and efficiently.		
<b>Rescues:</b> Performs a self-rescue, an assisted rescue, and contact towing close to rock features.		
<b>Notes:</b>		