



Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment

Assessor's Guide

Multi-Paddler Field Grid

Single Paddler Field Grid

Skills Only Field Grid

Contents

Delivering the L3 Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment	1
L3 Core Skills and Standards	
Strokes and Maneuvers	2
Edging and Support	3
Rescues and Towing	4
Awareness and Seamanship	5
Incident Prevention and Management	7
Trip Planning and Navigation	8
L3 Venue Specific Skills and Standards	
Tidal Currents	9
Wind, Waves and Surf	10
Rocky Shorelines	11
L3 Multi-Paddler Assessment Field Grid	
Core Skills	12
Venue Specific Skills	15
L3 Single Paddler Assessment Field Grid	
Core Skills	17
Venue Specific Skills	20
L3 Skills Only Assessment Field Grid	
Core Skills	22
Venue Specific Skills	23

Assessor's Guide - Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment

Delivering the L3 Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment

Assessment Overview: The L3 Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment course benchmarks the paddler's ability at the intermediate 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 meet prerequisites for L3 instructor development or trip leader training. Therefore, assessors providing the course must strive to conduct it in an authentic manner.

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 descriptions 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 towards an L4 Open Water skill set.

Core and Venue Specific Skills: L3 paddlers are exploring, learning, and playing in a wide variety of locations offering incredibly diverse and unique paddling environments. As L3 paddlers progress towards an L4 skill set, they encounter more environmental factors. This assessment course focuses on performing foundational "Core Skills" and applying those skills in L3 venues and conditions.

You will choose one set of Venue Specific skills to assess during the course. Your options are "Tidal Currents," "Wind, Waves and Surf," and "Rocky Shorelines." The venues and their associated skills have been set to an equivalent level of challenge, allowing for regional accessibility while maintaining the L3 standard. It is not required to assess your students in all three categories; only one is required.

All "Core Skills" categories and one "Venue Specific Skills" category must be assessed. As the assessor, you shall structure the course to allow participants to demonstrate skills and knowledge authentically, and participants shall demonstrate their skills to be safe, effective, and efficient to pass.

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 with "some exposure to conditions and regular access to landing areas." While a landing area need not be immediately accessible, it should be possible to paddle to a place where the participants can land quickly. The location you select shall be conducive to assessing all skills in the "Core Skills" categories and the skills in your chosen "Venue Specific" category.

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 between 10 and 15 knots, waves between 1 and 2 feet (0.3 - 0.6 meters), surf between 1 and 2 feet (0.3 - 0.6 meters), and tidal current between 1 and 2 knots. Any three of these four conditions must be experienced during the assessment to qualify for the course. If conditions exceed any of these parameters during the course, you must use your best judgment to decide if it is safe to operate on the water. 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 are to provide 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" the standard. The participant must meet or exceed the standard for all Assessed Skills to pass the assessment. If a participant is below standard for any Assessed Skill, they are to be provided 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 a Level 3 Coastal Kayak Trip Leader Training or Instructor Development/Certification Workshop must pass the L3 Skills Assessment to qualify for these courses. Participants who largely exceed standards for Assessed Skills, and can successfully perform Developing Skills, are performing at the level expected to pass an L3 Coastal Kayak Trip Leader Assessment or L3 Coastal Kayak Instructor Certification Evaluation/Workshop.

Assessor's Guide - Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment

L3 Paddler Core Competencies and Assessed Skills:

Assessors shall evaluate the paddler's overall competency in the following categories. Strokes and maneuvers are to be performed on both sides of the kayak but do not need to be equally effective to “meet” the standard at Level 3. Rather, the paddler is to 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.

Core: Strokes and Maneuvers

L3 Competency: Uses appropriate strokes and maneuvers to position for optimal performance and moves purposefully in L3 conditions. They increase efficiency by edging, keeping the blade fully submerged, being aware of blade angle, and effectively blending strokes. The paddler can effectively use both sides of the kayak, maneuvering both towards and away from the blade.

Forward Paddling: Moves the kayak 200 yards/meters maintaining a reasonably straight course.

- Exceeds: A straight course is maintained across wind and current. The paddler can vary their speed and accelerate to catch a wave or reach a target without losing form.
- Meets: The paddler maintains a straight course with a maximum of plus or minus 5 degrees of deviation. There is evidence of core engagement. The paddler can vary their speed and accelerate smoothly.
- Below: The paddler is unable to maintain directional control in wind and current. There is minimal use of core muscles. Acceleration is not smooth, and there is a significant loss of form.

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

- Exceeds: Can maintain their course in wind and current with minimal corrective strokes and using a range of speeds.
- Meets: Can paddle in reverse, demonstrating corrective strokes to maintain course without stopping or using forward strokes.
- Below: The paddler cannot paddle in reverse without using forward strokes to maintain a course.

Stopping: Stops the kayak from a good speed (2 to 3 knots), forward and reverse, within one kayak length.

- Exceeds: Stops from a high rate of speed (greater than 3 knots) smoothly and efficiently.
- Meets: Stop the kayak from a good speed demonstrating good use of core muscles.
- Below: Takes more than one kayak length to stop.

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

- Exceeds: The paddler executes smooth sweep strokes while maintaining a stable, appropriate edge in various wind and wave conditions. The paddler demonstrates the use of core muscles and looks through the turn.
- Meets: The paddler executes smooth sweep strokes using an appropriate edge. Wind and waves have a minimal effect on their ability to hold an edge. The paddler demonstrates the use of core muscles and not arms for power.
- Below: The paddler does not hold a consistent edge and uses their arms for power instead of the core muscles. Or the paddler is looking down at their blade.

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

- Exceeds: The kayak spins in place with a minimum number of strokes. The paddler demonstrates a consistent edge and distinct edge changes during the spin. The paddler demonstrates the use of core muscles and looks through the turn.
- Meets: Kayak spins with little or no forward or reverse momentum using a reasonable number of strokes (taking the length and hull shape of the kayak into account). There is appropriate edging, and the paddler looks through the stroke (i.e., where they are turning) throughout the execution of the spin.
- Below: The Kayak has significant forward and reverse momentum, or the edge is inconsistent, and the kayak wobbles. Or the paddler watches their blade during much of the execution.

Turning on the Move: Maneuvers the kayak smoothly around obstacles or to a target without losing momentum.

- Exceeds: The paddler smoothly blends forward and sweep strokes to maneuver the kayak while maintaining stable and consistent edging. Demonstrates turning into and away from the wind evenly.
- Meets: The Paddler uses sweep strokes with core muscle engagement and appropriate stable edging of the kayak to turn the kayak at least 30 degrees. Turns may vary into and away from the wind.
- Below: Edge is not used or is used ineffectively, or there is no evidence of core muscle engagement, or the kayak turns less than 30 degrees.

Assessor's Guide - Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment

Draw Sideways: Move the kayak sideways 15 feet (4.6 meters) from a static position.

- Exceeds: Strokes are equally smooth and effective on both sides. The paddle shaft is consistently as vertical as possible, and recoveries are clean. The paddler demonstrates a variety of draws, including sculling draw, and draw with an in-water and out-of-water recovery.
- Meets: Kayak effectively moves straight sideways, the paddle shaft is as vertical as possible, and recoveries are clean. There may be a slight difference between the paddler's strong and weaker sides.
- Below: Kayak does not move sideways or moves forwards, backward, or changes direction.

Draw Sideways on the Move: Move the kayak sideways 10 feet (3.3 meters) with momentum.

- Exceeds: Strokes are equally smooth and effective on both sides. The paddle shaft is consistently as vertical as possible, and recoveries are clean. The paddler demonstrates both the sideslip (hanging draw) and draw with an out-of-water recovery.
- Meets: Kayak effectively moves straight sideways with a sideslip (hanging draw) or a draw with an out-of-water recovery. The paddle shaft is as vertical as possible, and recoveries are clean. There may be a slight difference between the paddler's strong and weaker side.
- Below: Kayak does not move sideways or moves forwards, backward, or changes direction.

Ruddering (Bow and Stern): Uses bow rudder to turn toward blade side of kayak. Uses stern rudders to turn both toward and away from blade side of kayak, and to maintain a straight course.

- Exceeds: The paddler incorporates rudders to effectively control the kayak using a combination of blade angle and edging. The rudders are equally effective in both directions. The paddler effectively uses rudders in reverse. The paddler demonstrates effective use of ruddering strokes to turn upwind and downwind.
- Meets: The paddler effectively uses bow rudder to turn toward blade side of kayak. They use stern rudders to turn both toward and away from blade side of kayak, and to maintain a straight course.
- Below: The paddler cannot use rudders to change or maintain their course effectively.

Linked Maneuvers: Paddles a course requiring various turning maneuvers safely, effectively, and efficiently.

- Exceeds: The paddler uses a range of stroke combinations smoothly linked to make precise turns.
- Meets: The paddler makes reasonably precise turns of varying arcs around fixed objects. This could be a figure 8 course, a course around buoys, or along a varied shoreline.
- Below: The paddler cannot control the kayak through varying arcs or utilizes only one method of turning.

Developing Skill - Equal effectiveness on both sides of the kayak: Demonstrates a high level of effectiveness and comfort working on both sides of their kayak in L3 conditions.

Core: Edging and Support

L3 Competency: Comfortably and effectively uses edging to facilitate maneuvering. They are consistent and stable when edging their kayak and use the blade effectively when stability is needed. They can recover when out of balance.

Low Brace Recovery: Prevents capsize when off balance.

- Exceeds: The paddler spontaneously and successfully recovers when almost capsized.
- Meets: The paddler must be sufficiently off balance that an actual brace is needed to remain upright, elbows kept close to the body, and uses the back face of the blade for support.
- Below: The paddler does not go off balance, or they capsize.

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

- Exceeds: The paddler demonstrates competence using a low brace to turn around their blade. The paddler can turn their kayak more than 90 degrees.
- Meets: Kayak turns at least 90 degrees around the blade. 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.
- Below: The paddler capsizes, or kayak turns less than 90 degrees.

Assessor's Guide - Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment

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

- Exceeds: The paddler uses edges to facilitate turns and maneuvers. There is a high degree of comfort with edging on both sides, and it is consistent and stable.
- Meets: The paddler uses appropriate edges to facilitate turns and maneuvers. The edges are generally stable and consistent.
- Below: The paddler appears uncomfortable holding an edge, or their kayak tends to wobble, or edges are not stable and consistent.

Developing Skills:

- **Rolling:** Rolls their kayak from a set-up position.
- **High Brace Recovery:** Prevents capsize when off balance.

Core: Rescues and Towing

L3 Competency: Demonstrates competent rescue and towing skills in L3 conditions. They choose rescues and towing configurations appropriate for the conditions (for example, what is most appropriate for a capsize in breaking waves or capsize in current). They also demonstrate the ability to be an active and safe swimmer when being rescued.

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 spray skirt from the grab loop and also by another secondary method.
- Below: Does not release the spray skirt, or exhibits evidence of panic, or performs exit before full capsize.

Assisted Rescue with an Able Swimmer: Performs one or more of the following assisted rescues with an able swimmer: Side-by-Side, T-Rescue, or Swimmer Deck Carry.

- Exceeds: The paddler demonstrates two or more situation-appropriate rescues, always moving rescue to a position of less risk when necessary.
- Meets: The paddler chooses the most appropriate rescue for the situation and moves the rescue to a position of less risk when necessary.
- Below: The paddler cannot rescue the swimmer or does not move the rescue to a position of less risk when necessary.

Impaired Swimmer Rescue: Performs one or more of the following assisted rescues of an impaired swimmer: Scoop, Sling, or Unresponsive Paddler Rescue.

- Exceeds: The paddler demonstrates two or more situation-appropriate rescues, always moving rescue to a position of less risk when necessary.
- Meets: The paddler chooses the most appropriate rescue for the situation and moves the rescue to a position of less risk when necessary.
- Below: The paddler cannot rescue the swimmer or does not move the rescue to a position of less risk when necessary.

Kayak (Bow or Stern) or Paddle Presentation Rescue: Able to assist another paddler's recovery from capsize by presenting their kayak or paddle.

- Exceeds: The paddler moves their kayak into position and maintains position to effectively assist another paddler's recovery with their kayak or paddle.
- Meets: The paddler moves their kayak into position and maintains or regains their position to effectively assist another paddler's recovery with their kayak or paddle.
- Below: The paddler is the cause of a failed recovery attempt due to their inability to position their kayak or maintain the position of their kayak.

Self-Rescue: Performs one or more of the following self-rescues: Re-enter and Roll (with or without a paddle float), Paddle Float rescue (with or without a sling), or Scramble.

- Exceeds: The paddler demonstrates two or more self-rescues and moves into a position of usefulness or less risk when necessary.
- Meets: The paddler demonstrates a self-rescue and moves into a position of less risk when necessary.
- Below: The paddler is unable to self-rescue.

Assessor's Guide - Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment

Active Swimmer: Demonstrates the role of an active and effective swimmer when rescued.

- Exceeds: Maintains contact with their kayak and gear during the rescue, flips kayak right-side up and holds decklines while maneuvering to the bow of their kayak, and stays clear of an approaching rescuer.
- Meets: Maintains contact with their kayak and gear during rescue and flips kayak right-side up while awaiting instructions from the rescuer.
- Below: Does not maintain contact with their kayak and gear during rescue or cannot re-enter their kayak.

Towing Using a Towline: Demonstrates one or more of the following towing strategies with a towline: In-Line Tow, Rafted In-Line Tow, or Anchor Tow.

- Exceeds: The paddler demonstrates the application of two or more situation-appropriate towing techniques, maintaining usefulness and always moving tow into a position of safety.
- Meets: The paddler chooses the most appropriate towing strategy for the situation, efficiently manages their towing system, and moves the tow to a position of less risk when necessary
- Below: The paddler chooses an unsafe towing strategy, connects the towline incorrectly, or does not manage the line.

Moves a Kayak Without a Towline: Demonstrates one or more of the following strategies: Contact Tow, Bulldozing, Toggle Tow, or Throw Bag Rescue.

- Exceeds: The paddler demonstrates applying two or more situation-appropriate techniques, maintaining usefulness, and always moving the tow into a position of less risk when necessary.
- Meets: The paddler chooses the most appropriate towing strategy for the situation and moves the tow to a position of less risk when necessary.
- Below: The paddler cannot move the kayak or moves the kayak in an unsafe manner.

Paddler Separated from Kayak: Can rescue a swimmer separated from their kayak and reconnect the swimmer to their kayak.

- Exceeds: The paddler makes the most efficient choice of rescue priority for the situation and reconnects the swimming paddler to their kayak with or without a towline.
- Meets: The paddler reconnects the swimming paddler to their kayak.
- Below: The paddler cannot reconnect the swimming paddler to their kayak.

Developing Skill: Deploys multiple techniques and strategies for each of the above rescues.

Core: Awareness and Seamanship

L3 Competency: Has a heightened awareness of the environment and paddler performance, adapts plans accordingly, and clearly communicates with the group to make necessary changes. They are properly equipped for the conditions and use equipment appropriately to maintain personal and group comfort.

Awareness: Understands personal and group capabilities relative to the environment.

- Exceeds: Makes route choices and decisions that keep the group within the remit for L3. Demonstrates awareness of hazards and keeps members of the paddling group in positions to avoid hazards, communicates effectively and maintains line of sight with others, and positions themselves to be of most usefulness to the group at all times.
- Meets: Makes route choices and decisions that keep themselves within the remit for L3. Establishes a safe position while maintaining communication and line of sight to other group members and maintains a position of usefulness to the group as a whole.
- Below: Makes route choices and decisions that take themselves outside the remit for L3, or is unaware of hazards, or loses communication or line of sight with group members.

Leave No Trace (LNT): Demonstrates appropriate interactions with ecosystems 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 or NOAA Marine Wildlife Viewing Guidelines.

Assessor's Guide - Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment

Kayak: Has a working knowledge of types of kayaks suitable for paddling in L3 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: Is unclear about the advantages and disadvantages of styles of kayaks in different environments.

Equipment: Maintains a properly outfitted kayak and has a working knowledge of paddling equipment.

- Exceeds: The kayak is properly outfitted for conditions, and the paddler uses equipment for taking care of the group and themselves. The paddler maintains contact with their kayak and gear during rescues and can help other group members gather gear if contact is lost.
- Meets: The kayak is outfitted for conditions, and the paddler demonstrates access to and proper use of equipment needed for tasks given in the assessment. The paddler maintains contact with their kayak and gear during rescues.
- Below: The kayak does not have proper floatation and rigging, or the paddler is ill-equipped or not appropriately dressed for the conditions, or the paddler cannot access equipment when needed.

Packing the Kayak: Demonstrates the knowledge of how to pack and properly trim their kayak.

- Exceeds: Their kayak is packed with equipment needed to take care of group members with quick access.
- Meet: Their kayak is packed, so they have access to personally needed equipment, and is properly trimmed.
- Below: The paddler cannot access equipment needed on the water, or their kayak is constantly lee-cocking or weather cocking due to improper kayak trim.

Kayak Repair: Can perform “field” repairs on the water or at a remote shore location, allowing for a safe paddle to an accessible area.

- Exceeds: Carries the equipment necessary to perform emergency “field” repairs on the water, or at a remote shore location, for self and other group members and demonstrates knowledge of performing likely repairs.
- Meets: Carries the equipment necessary to perform emergency “field” repairs on the water, or at a remote shore location, on their kayak and demonstrates knowledge of likely repairs.
- Below: Does not carry the equipment necessary to repair their kayak in an emergency.

Hypothermia and Cold-Water Shock: Understands causes, prevention, recognition, and treatment of cold-water shock and hypothermia.

- Exceeds: Properly prepared and takes necessary preventative action for self and group. Recognizes signs and symptoms of hypothermia as well as treatment for cold-related issues. Knows when to call for Emergency Medical Services.
- Meets: Properly prepared and takes necessary preventative action to prevent cold-water shock and hypothermia for self. Recognizes signs, symptoms, treatment, and when to call for Emergency Medical Services.
- Below: The paddler is unprepared for paddling conditions or does not recognize signs and symptoms of hypothermia. Or does not take action to improve the situation.

Hyperthermia: Understands causes, prevention, recognition, and treatment of heat-related issues and hyperthermia.

- Exceeds: Properly prepared and takes necessary preventative action for self and group. Recognizes signs and symptoms of hyperthermia as well as treatment for heat-related issues. Knows when to call for Emergency Medical Services.
- Meets: Properly prepared and takes necessary preventative action to prevent heat-related issues and hyperthermia for self. Recognizes signs and symptoms, treatment, and when to call for Emergency Medical Services.
- Below: The paddler is unprepared for paddling conditions or does not recognize signs and symptoms of hyperthermia and other heat-related issues, or does not take action to improve the situation.

Knots: Can tie Bowline, Clove Hitch, Figure 8, and Trucker's Hitch knots.

- Exceeds: Demonstrates the ability to teach and troubleshoot other group members' knot work. Knows more knots than these four, as well as their proper usage.
- Meets: Can tie the required knots and knows their proper usage.
- Below: Cannot tie the required knots or does not know their proper usage.

Assessor's Guide - Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment

Core: Incident Prevention and Management

L3 Competency: Has an incident prevention mindset on and off the water. They make good choices and demonstrate competent decision-making. They can lead and assist with incidents in L3 conditions, identify areas of less risk, and work with other paddlers to move the group into safety.

Kayak Transport: Safely transports, unloads, and carries kayaks at the launch site.

- Exceeds: The paddler recognizes unsafe transport and carrying of the kayaks and steps in to assist others when loading, unloading, and carrying the kayaks.
- Meets: The kayak is properly secured to an appropriately anchored roof rack or trailer. The method by which the kayak is unloaded and moved from one location to another minimizes the risk of injury to themselves and others.
- Below: Method by which paddler transports or moves a kayak is a hazard to other vehicles, self, or others.

Pre and Post-Trip Discussion: Actively participates in pre-trip and post-trip debriefing sessions.

- Exceeds: Helps facilitate effective briefing and debriefing sessions and provides “leader level” insight during these sessions.
- Meets: Is actively engaged in briefing and debriefing sessions, demonstrates an understanding of the plan for the day, and is helpful in processing lessons learned from the debriefing.
- Below: Does not engage in pre-trip briefing or post-trip debriefing sessions.

Launching and Landing: Launches and lands in a safe manner.

- Exceeds: Performs leadership in launching or landing the group in L3 conditions.
- Meets: Demonstrates ability to launch and land their kayak successfully in L3 conditions.
- Below: Cannot launch or land successfully in L3 conditions.

Teamwork: Works with others to perform rescues and other important team maneuvers and tasks. Can move the group to an area of less risk.

- Exceeds: Can adapt and follow the lead of others and the environment even when different from their preferred methods (except where absolute safety is contradicted). Facilitates a meaningful debrief and lessons learned session post-incident.
- Meets: Actively engages in the solution regardless of role. Demonstrates flexibility in adapting to changing leadership and environment.
- Below: Disregards input and direction from others in the group and forces solutions or does not participate in post-incident learning.

Communication: Communicates clearly and effectively. Directs others calmly, such as when called to execute a rescue.

- Exceeds: Communication is clear, concise, and accurate. Word choice is relevant, intentional, and impactful.
- Meets: Communication is clear, concise, and accurate. Directions are well received, and teammates respond appropriately in all matters.
- Below: The group is unresponsive to directions, or an atmosphere of stress is escalated, or rescues are not executed in a safe, effective, or efficient manner.

VHF Radio: Demonstrates proper use of a VHF radio.

- Exceeds: Demonstrates the ability to instruct others on properly using a VHF radio.
- Meets: Demonstrates ability to use VHF radio to hail Coast Guard and other resources/services, find weather information, and communicate with group members. Uses proper radio call etiquette and knows key terminology (Securite, Pan Pan, Mayday).
- Below: Does not carry a VHF radio, does not know how to use the VHF radio, or uses inappropriate radio etiquette.

Distress Calls: Demonstrates knowledge and ability to request appropriate resources when needed.

- Exceeds: Demonstrates the ability to instruct others on calling for the Coast Guard or other emergency services.
- Meets: Demonstrates ability to use VHF radio or cell phone to call for emergency assistance.
- Below: Does not carry a VHF radio or cell phone or know how to communicate with emergency services.

Assessor's Guide - Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment

Signaling Devices: Carries appropriate visual and auditory signaling devices and understands their use and limitations.

- Exceeds: The paddler carries a variety of signaling devices and can demonstrate and explain their use and the pros and cons of each to other paddlers.
- Meets: The paddler carries at least one signaling device and can use it effectively.
- Below: The paddler does not have appropriate signaling devices or cannot use them effectively.

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

- Exceeds: Demonstrates the knowledge of where to obtain a float plan form, how to complete it for themselves and the group, and the “filing” of such with an appropriate party.
- Meets: Demonstrates the ability to complete a float plan appropriately for themselves and the “filing” of such with an appropriate party.
- Below: Does not know where to find, or how to complete, or “files” with an inappropriate party.

Core: Trip Planning and Navigation

L3 Competency: Successfully plans and executes routes in L3 conditions and venues, considering basic safety and location-specific issues. Their planning includes considering tides, currents, weather and marine forecasts, and the makeup of their group and group members' equipment. They carry a compass and an appropriate map or chart for the area and use them to navigate from point to point in L3 venues effectively.

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

- Exceeds: Comes prepared with all relevant forecast data and can assist others in finding and analyzing data for the area.
- Meets: Can provide all relevant forecast data for the day and provides an accurate analysis when the assessor requests.
- Below: Is unsuccessful in obtaining or properly analyzing the relevant forecast data for the day.

Trip Planning: Demonstrates use of charts, forecasts, and knowledge of the paddling group when route planning.

- Exceeds: Demonstrates high level of interpretation and application of charts, forecasts, and knowledge of the group when route planning and can assist others in doing so as well.
- Meets: Successfully completes a tabletop/“decktop” navigation exercise that incorporates forecasts (weather, surf, current, and tidal data/information, and predictions).
- Below: Is unsuccessful in completing the tabletop/“decktop” navigation exercise.

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

- Exceeds: Gathers forecasts and understands how wave and swell characteristics (size, direction, period) can be influenced by wind conditions. Applies a more in-depth understanding of wind forecasts (strength, trend, 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 or fails to adjust the trip plan to deal with adverse conditions when necessary.

Tidal Planning: Demonstrates ability to calculate stages of tide, depth, and current over time and incorporate this knowledge into route plans and trip choices.

- Exceeds: Able to calculate the depth and current of tidal waters in relation to chart symbols using a nautical chart and tide chart or log upon the assessor's request. Tide tables and marine charts can be used to determine water depth and current flow (direction and speed) due to tide at any position or time along the route. Applies calculations to route plans and decisions on the water and can explain concepts to others in a clear and understandable manner.
- Meets: Able to calculate the depth and current of tidal waters in relation to chart symbols using a nautical chart and tide chart or log when given a task ahead of time. Tide tables and marine charts can be used to determine water depth and current flow due to tide at any position or time along the route. Applies calculations to route plans and decisions on the water when given the task.
- Unfamiliar with or unable to calculate tidal waters' depth or current flow in relation to chart symbols and tide tables.

Assessor's Guide - Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment

Chart Use and Route Finding: Demonstrates the ability to always identify their location.

- Exceeds: The paddler consistently demonstrates an understanding of their location and where they are going. They are aware of factors (for example, wind or current drift) that will impact arrival time at a destination.
- Meets: The paddler can navigate by chart on the water and show the assessor their location upon request.
- Below: The paddler is not able to determine their location within 10 seconds of request from the assessor.

Compass Use: Demonstrates the use of handheld and deck-mounted compasses to take bearings, determine location, and maintain a course

- Exceeds: Demonstrates taking bearings and using this information to determine their location on a chart. Easily maintains a course using a compass with a map/chart. Can explain to fellow paddlers how to effectively combine a map/chart and compass for reliable navigation.
- Meets: Demonstrates taking bearings and using this information to determine their location on a chart. Easily maintains a course using a compass.
- Below: Not able to use a compass or can only take a bearing.

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 rules. Leads a connected group safely through an area of active boating, positioned appropriately to aids to navigation. Effectively organizes the group when crossing shipping channels.
- Meets: Understands a wide variety of rules. Paddles a safe and effective route through active boating areas, positioned appropriately to aids to navigation.
- Below: Has limited knowledge of the Nautical Rules of the Road or paddles a haphazard route through areas of boat traffic and aids to navigation.

Navigate from Point to Point: Understands drift caused by wind or current and can compensate for drift using ranges and ferry angles in L3 conditions.

- Exceeds: The paddler maintains a straight course using a combination of compass headings, ferry angles, and ranges when paddling from point to point in wind or current.
- Meets: The paddler maintains a relatively straight course when paddling from point to point in wind or current.
- Below: The paddler is moved significantly off course when paddling from point to point in wind or current.

L3 Paddler Venue Specific Competencies and Assessed Skills

Assessors shall evaluate the paddler for their overall competency in one of the following "Venue Specific" categories. The choice of assessment venue shall enable the assessor to see all of the assessed skills for the chosen category.

Venue Specific: Tidal Currents

L3 Competency: Demonstrates an understanding of tidal currents with L3 conditions in a variety of settings. They can paddle through currents in control. The paddler understands the challenges of paddling in areas of current and positions themselves appropriately. They can identify eddy lines, understand ferry angles, and demonstrate rescues and towing to move into a safe area.

Awareness: Demonstrates an understanding of tides and currents.

- Exceeds: Has a thorough understanding of the specific challenges of paddling in current in L3 conditions and can do so safely while leading a group or on their own. Demonstrates the ability to calculate the rate of tidal flow, tidal drift, and stages of tide, and incorporate results into a route plan.
- Meets: Understands the specific challenges of paddling in current in L3 conditions and can do so safely on their own.
- Below: Is unclear as to the specific challenges of paddling in current in L3 conditions, or they 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 direction, and enters and exits eddies under control.
- Meets: Understands direction and speed of flow and utilizes current to make progress efficiently. They can enter and exit eddies under control and ferry across the current from one eddy to the next.
- Below: Cannot identify the flow direction or consistently paddles against the flow direction.

Assessor's Guide - Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment

Hazards: Identifies hazards and positions themselves to avoid 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, immovable objects such as piers and bridge abutments or 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, Waves, and Surf

L3 Competency: Understands the "why" behind increasing sea state (fetch, direction, duration, intensity) and how onshore and offshore winds affect paddling conditions. They can launch, land, and paddle under control through L3 wind, waves, and surf. They can self-rescue in the surf zone, perform assisted rescues, and tow where and when appropriate.

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. Can use forecasting tools to predict areas of surf or breaking waves and takes proactive action to ensure high reward and low risk to the paddling group and other people (for example, other boaters or swimmers).
- Meets: Recognizes increasing sea state (fetch, direction, duration, intensity) and takes appropriate actions. For example, sets an accurate heading angle to the wind to minimize drift, paddles in the shoreline's lee, or uses following seas. Familiarizes themselves with surf zones and proper surf etiquette and acts accordingly.
- Below: Does not recognize the increasing sea state or has difficulty paddling in the increasing conditions. Or is unable to take the necessary action to protect themselves from the increasing conditions.

Tactics: Applies strategies for paddling at various angles to the direction of the wind, waves, and surf.

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

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

- Exceeds: Unconsciously applies edging to maintain directional control before needing to make less efficient correction strokes. Maintains their stability in headwinds, beam winds, and tailwinds.
- Meets: Able to make progress with forward strokes and upwind and downwind turns. Controls direction with edging and appropriately placed and timed strokes. Maintains stability without losing progress or being driven off course.
- Below: Cannot maintain directional control or stability in wind.

Boat Control in Waves: Can control direction and maintain stability in waves.

- Exceeds: Unconsciously applies edging to maintain directional control before needing to make less efficient correction strokes. Maintains stability in oncoming, beam, and following seas.
- Meets: Can control their direction and maintain stability in waves that meet the kayak from various angles. Maintains direction in following seas without being broached and proactively paddles through waves by reaching over wave crests with their paddle.
- Below: Cannot maintain directional control or stability in waves.

Boat Control in Surf: Can control direction and maintain stability in the surf.

- Exceeds: Unconsciously applies edging to maintain directional control before needing to make less efficient correction strokes. Maintains stability paddling through the surf and while sideways to the wave.
- Meets: Understands and can identify areas of the surf zone. Can launch and land independently. Maintains control when paddling through the surf zone and stability when sideways to the wave face.
- Below: Is not able to maintain directional control or stability in the surf.

Assessor's Guide - Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment

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: Able to perform an assisted rescue, a self-rescue, and a contact tow, in wind and waves. Reaches their “target” within two “corrective” strokes when approaching for a rescue or contact towing.
- Below: Struggles to attain the “target,” or cannot perform rescues (both self and assisted), or cannot execute contact towing in wind or waves.

Venue Specific: Rocky Shorelines

L3 Competency: The paddler understands the interaction of wind, waves, and current on immovable objects, hard surfaces, caves, and rocky shorelines and can assess associated risks. They maneuver around immovable objects (arches, buoys, pilings) in forward and reverse in L3 conditions. They choose appropriate landings in rocky environments and perform appropriate rescues.

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 own capability and helps group members make choices with a high level of reward and a low level of risk.
- Below: Does not understand why risk level is heightened or makes choices that have a high level of risk.

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

- Exceeds: Thoroughly understands the movement of water along rocky shorelines and can seamlessly link various strokes into maneuvers while working with the water movement.
- Meets: Can maneuver along rocky shorelines and around immovable objects in forward and reverse.
- 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, or is unable to perform a rescue, or does not move to a safer area when appropriate to do so.

L3 Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment - Multi-Paddler Field Grid

Assessor 1 _____	ACA # _____	Assessor 2 _____	ACA # _____
Paddler 1 _____	ACA # _____	Paddler 2 _____	ACA # _____
Paddler 3 _____	ACA # _____	Paddler 4 _____	ACA # _____
Paddler 5 _____	ACA # _____		

Location _____ **Was the venue within requirements? Y / N**

L3 Paddling Venue Specific Skills (choose one): Tidal Currents Wind, Waves and Surf Rocky Shorelines

Conditions Winds 10-15 knots **Actual** _____ Waves 1-2 feet **Actual** _____
 Surf 1-2 feet **Actual** _____ Current 1-2 knots **Actual** _____

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

Core: Strokes and Maneuvers - The paddler uses appropriate strokes and maneuvers to position for optimal performance and moves purposefully in L3 conditions. They increase efficiency by edging, keeping the blade fully submerged, being aware of blade angle, and effectively blending strokes. The paddler can effectively use both sides of the kayak, maneuvering both towards and away from the blade.

Assessed Skills	P1		P2		P3		P4		P5	
	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R
Forward Paddling: Moves their kayak 200 yards/meters maintaining a reasonably straight course.										
Reverse Paddling: Moves the kayak 50 yards/meters paddle with reasonable control.										
Stopping: Stops the kayak from a good speed (2 to 3 knots), forward and reverse, within one kayak length.										
Forward and Reverse Sweep: Turns the kayak smoothly while moving forward or in reverse without losing momentum.										
Rotate in Place 360°: Spins the kayak in place smoothly with minimal forward or reverse movement.										
Turning on the Move: Maneuvers the kayak smoothly around obstacles or to a target without losing momentum.										
Draw Sideways: Moves the kayak sideways 15 feet (4.6 meters) from a static position.										
Draw Sideways on the Move: Moves the kayak sideways 10 feet (3.3 meters) with momentum.										
Ruddering (Bow and Stern): Uses bow rudder to turn toward blade side of kayak. Uses stern rudders to turn both toward and away from blade side of kayak, and to maintain a straight course.										
Linked Maneuvers: Paddles a course requiring various turning maneuvers safely, effectively, and efficiently.										
Developing Skill	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R
Equal effectiveness on both sides of the kayak: Demonstrates a high level of effectiveness and comfort working on both sides of their kayak in L3 conditions.										

Notes:

Core: Edging and Support - The paddler comfortably and effectively uses edging to facilitate maneuvering. They are consistent and stable when edging their kayak and use the blade effectively when needed. They can recover when out of balance.

Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Low Brace Recovery: Prevents capsizes when off balance.					
Low Brace Turn: Makes a turn of at least 90 degrees.					
Edge Control: Edges with purpose and consistency during strokes and maneuvers.					
Developing Skills					
Rolling: Rolls their kayak from a set-up position.					
High Brace Recovery: Prevents capsizes when off balance.					
Notes:					

Core: Rescues and Towing - The paddler demonstrates competent rescue and towing skills in L3 conditions. They choose rescues and towing configurations appropriate for the conditions (for example, what is most appropriate for capsizes in breaking waves or in current). They also demonstrate the ability to be an active and safe swimmer when being rescued.

Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Capsize and Wet Exit: Performs a wet exit in two ways.					
Assisted Rescue with an Able Swimmer: Performs one or more of the following assisted rescues with an able swimmer: Side-by-Side, T-Rescue, or Swimmer Carry.					
Impaired Swimmer Rescue: Performs one or more of the following assisted rescues of an impaired swimmer: Scoop, Sling, or Unresponsive Paddler Rescue.					
Kayak (Bow or Stern) or Paddle Presentation Rescue: Able to assist another paddler's recovery from capsizes by presenting their kayak or paddle.					
Self-Rescue: Performs one or more self-rescues: Re-enter and Roll (with or without a paddle float), Paddle Float rescue (with or without a sling), or Scramble.					
Active Swimmer: Demonstrates the role of an active and effective swimmer when rescued.					
Towing Using a Towline: Demonstrates one or more towing strategies with a towline: In-Line Tow, Rafted In-Line Tow, or Anchor Tow.					
Moves a Kayak Without a Towline: Demonstrates one or more strategies: Contact Tow, Bulldozing, Toggle Tow, or Throw Bag Rescue.					
Paddler Separated from Kayak: Can rescue a swimmer separated from their kayak and reconnect the swimmer to their kayak.					
Developing Skill					
Deploys multiple techniques and strategies for the above rescues.					
Notes:					

Core: Awareness and Seamanship - The paddler has a heightened awareness of the environment and paddler performance, adapts plans accordingly, and communicates clearly 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
Awareness: Understands personal and group capabilities relative to the environment.					
Leave No Trace (LNT): Demonstrates appropriate interactions with ecosystems and wildlife.					
Kayak: Has a working knowledge of types of kayaks suitable for paddling in L3 conditions.					
Equipment: Maintains a properly outfitted kayak and has a working knowledge of paddling equipment.					
Packing the Kayak: Demonstrates the knowledge of how to pack and properly trim their kayak.					
Kayak Repair: Can perform field repairs allowing for a safe paddle to an accessible area.					
Hypothermia and Cold-Water Shock: Understands the causes, prevention, recognition, and treatment of cold-water shock and hypothermia.					
Hyperthermia: Understands causes, prevention, recognition, and treatment of heat-related issues and hyperthermia.					
Notes:					

Core: Incident Prevention and Management - The paddler has an incident prevention mindset on and off the water. They make good choices and demonstrate competent decision-making. They can lead and assist with incidents in L3 conditions, identify areas of less risk, and work with other paddlers to move the group into safety.

Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Kayak Transport: Safely transports, unloads, and carries kayaks at the launch site.					
Pre and Post-Trip Discussion: Actively participates in pre-trip and post-trip debriefing sessions.					
Launching and Landing: Launches and lands in a safe manner.					
Teamwork: Works with others to perform rescues and other essential team maneuvers and tasks. Can move the group to an area of less risk.					
Communication: Communicates clearly and effectively. Can direct others calmly, such as when called to execute a rescue.					
VHF Radio: Demonstrates proper use of a VHF radio.					
Distress Calls: Demonstrates knowledge and ability to request appropriate resources when needed.					
Signaling Devices: Carries appropriate visual and auditory signaling devices and understands their use and limitations.					
Float Plan: Files a complete and accurate float plan with an appropriate point of contact.					
Notes:					

Core: Trip Planning and Navigation - The paddler successfully plans and executes routes in L3 conditions and venues, considering basic safety and location-specific issues. Their planning includes considering tides, currents, weather and marine forecasts, and the makeup of their group and group members' equipment. They carry a compass and an appropriate map or chart for the area and use them to navigate from point to point in L3 venues effectively.

Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Forecasts: Gathers, understands, and utilizes appropriate weather and marine forecasts.					
Trip Planning: Demonstrates use of charts, forecasts, and knowledge of the paddling group when route planning.					
Trip Planning: Incorporates wind, waves, and swell into route plans and trip choices.					
Tidal Planning: Demonstrates ability to calculate stages of tide, depth, and current over time and incorporate this knowledge into route plans and trip choices.					
Chart Use and Route Finding: Demonstrates the ability to always identify their location.					
Compass Use: Demonstrates using handheld and deck-mounted compasses to take bearings, determine location, and maintain a course.					
Nautical Rules of the Road: Understands the Nautical Rules of the Road and demonstrates safe paddling in relation to boat traffic.					
Navigate from Point to Point: Understands drift caused by wind or current and can compensate for drift using ranges and ferry angles in L3 conditions.					
Notes:					

Venue Specific: Fill out at least one of the following Venue Specific assessment categories

Venue Specific: Tidal Currents - The paddler demonstrates an understanding of tidal currents with L3 conditions in a variety of settings. They can paddle through currents in control. The paddler understands the challenges of paddling in areas of current and positions themselves appropriately. They can identify eddy lines, understand ferry angles, and demonstrate rescues and towing to move into a safe area.

Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Awareness: Demonstrates an understanding of tides and currents.					
Reading Water and Boat Control: Identifies direction of flow and eddies. Paddles through currents in control.					
Hazards: Identifies hazards and positions himself to avoid hazards.					
Rescues: Performs a self-rescue, an assisted rescue, and contact towing in current.					
Notes:					

Venue Specific: Wind, Waves and Surf - The paddler understands the "why" behind increasing sea state (fetch, direction, duration, intensity) and how onshore and offshore winds affect paddling conditions. They can launch, land, and paddle under control through L3 wind, waves, and surf. They can self-rescue in the surf zone, perform assisted rescues, and tow where and when appropriate.

Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Awareness: Understands how onshore and offshore winds affect paddling conditions.					
Tactics: Applies strategies for paddling at various angles to the direction of the wind, waves, and surf.					
Boat Control in Wind: Can control their direction and maintain stability in wind.					
Boat Control in Waves: Can control the direction and maintain stability in waves.					
Boat Control in Surf: Can control their direction and maintain stability in the surf.					
Rescues: Performs a self-rescue, an assisted rescue, and contact towing in wind and waves.					
Notes:					

Venue Specific: Rocky Shorelines - The paddler understands the interaction of wind, waves, and current on immovable objects, hard surfaces, caves, and rocky shorelines and can assess associated risks. They maneuver around immovable objects (arches, buoys, pilings) in forward and reverse in L3 Conditions. They choose appropriate landings in rocky environments and perform appropriate rescues.

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

L3 Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment - Single Paddler Field Grid

Assessor _____ ACA # _____ Paddler _____ ACA # _____

Location _____ Was the venue within requirements? Y / N

L3 Paddling Venue Specific Skills (choose one): Tidal Currents Wind, Waves and Surf Rocky Shorelines

Conditions Winds 10-15 knots Actual _____ Waves 1-2 feet Actual _____

Surf 1-2 feet Actual _____ Current 1-2 knots Actual _____

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

Core: Strokes & Maneuvers - The paddler uses appropriate strokes and maneuvers to position for optimal performance and moves purposefully in L3 conditions. They increase efficiency by edging, keeping the blade fully submerged, being aware of blade angle, and effectively blending strokes. The paddler can effectively use both sides of the kayak, maneuvering both towards and away from the blade.

Assessed Skills	B/M/E		Note
	L	R	
Forward Paddling: Moves their kayak 200 yards/meters maintaining a reasonably straight course.			
Reverse Paddling: Moves the kayak 50 yards/meters paddle with reasonable control.			
Stopping: Stops the kayak from a good speed (2 to 3 knots), forward and reverse, within one kayak length.			
Forward and Reverse Sweep: Turns the kayak smoothly while moving forward or in reverse without losing momentum.			
Rotate in Place 360°: Spins the kayak in place smoothly with minimal forward or reverse movement.			
Turning on the Move: Maneuvers the kayak smoothly around obstacles or to a target without losing momentum.			
Draw Sideways: Moves the kayak sideways 15 feet (4.6 meters) from a static position.			
Draw Sideways on the Move: Moves the kayak sideways 10 feet (3.3 meters) with momentum.			
Ruddering (Bow and Stern): Uses bow rudder to turn toward blade side of kayak. Uses stern rudders to turn both toward and away from blade side of kayak, and to maintain a straight course.			
Linked Maneuvers: Paddles a course requiring various turning maneuvers safely, effectively, and efficiently.			
Developing Skill	L	R	
Equal effectiveness on both sides of the kayak: Demonstrates a high level of effectiveness and comfort working on both sides of their kayak in L3 conditions.			

Notes:

Core: Edging and Support - The paddler comfortably and effectively uses edging to facilitate maneuvering. They are consistent and stable when edging their kayak and use the blade effectively when needed. They can recover when out of balance.

Assessed Skills	B/M/E		Note
	L	R	
Low Brace Recovery: Prevents capsize when off balance.			
Low Brace Turn: Makes a turn of at least 90 degrees.			
Edge Control: Edges with purpose and consistency during strokes and maneuvers.			
Developing Skills	L	R	
Rolling: Rolls their kayak from a set-up position.			
High Brace Recovery: Prevents capsize when off balance.			
Notes:			

Core: Rescues and Towing - The paddler demonstrates competent rescue and towing skills in L3 conditions. They choose rescues and towing configurations appropriate for the conditions (for example, what is most appropriate for capsize in breaking waves or in current). They also demonstrate the ability to be an active and safe swimmer when being rescued.

Assessed Skills	B/M/E	Note
Capsize and Wet Exit: Performs a wet exit in two ways.		
Assisted Rescue with an Able Swimmer: Performs one or more of the following assisted rescues with an able swimmer: Side-by-Side, T-Rescue, or Swimmer Carry.		
Impaired Swimmer Rescue: Performs one or more of the following assisted rescues of an impaired swimmer: Scoop, Sling, or Unresponsive Paddler Rescue.		
Kayak (Bow or Stern) or Paddle Presentation Rescue: Able to assist another paddler's recovery from capsize by presenting their kayak or paddle.		
Self-Rescue: Performs one or more self-rescues: Re-enter and Roll (with or without a paddle float), Paddle Float rescue (with or without a sling), or Scramble.		
Active Swimmer: Demonstrates the role of an active and effective swimmer when rescued.		
Towing Using a Towline: Demonstrates one or more towing strategies with a towline: In-Line Tow, Rafted In-Line Tow, or Anchor Tow.		
Moves a Kayak Without a Towline: Demonstrates one or more strategies: Contact Tow, Bulldozing, Toggle Tow, or Throw Bag Rescue.		
Paddler Separated from Kayak: Can rescue a swimmer separated from their kayak and reconnect the swimmer to their kayak.		
Developing Skill		
Deploys multiple techniques and strategies for the above rescues.		
Notes:		

Core: Awareness and Seamanship - The paddler has a heightened awareness of the environment and paddler performance, adapts plans accordingly, and communicates clearly 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	B/M/E	Note
Awareness: Understands personal and group capabilities relative to the environment.		
Leave No Trace (LNT): Demonstrates appropriate interactions with ecosystems and wildlife.		
Kayak: Has a working knowledge of types of kayaks suitable for paddling in L3 conditions.		
Equipment: Maintains a properly outfitted kayak and has a working knowledge of paddling equipment.		
Packing the Kayak: Demonstrates the knowledge of how to pack and properly trim their kayak.		
Kayak Repair: Can perform field repairs allowing for a safe paddle to an accessible area.		
Hypothermia and Cold-Water Shock: Understands the causes, prevention, recognition, and treatment of cold-water shock and hypothermia.		
Hyperthermia: Understands causes, prevention, recognition, and treatment of heat-related issues and hyperthermia.		
Notes:		

Core: Incident Prevention and Management - The paddler has an incident prevention mindset on and off the water. They make good choices and demonstrate competent decision-making. They can lead and assist with incidents in L3 conditions, identify areas of less risk, and work with other paddlers to move the group into safety.

Assessed Skills	B/M/E	Note
Kayak Transport: Safely transports, unloads, and carries kayaks at the launch site.		
Pre and Post-Trip Discussion: Actively participates in pre-trip and post-trip debriefing sessions.		
Launching and Landing: Launches and lands in a safe manner.		
Teamwork: Works with others to perform rescues and other essential team maneuvers and tasks. Can move the group to an area of less risk.		
Communication: Communicates clearly and effectively. Can direct others calmly, such as when called to execute a rescue.		
VHF Radio: Demonstrates proper use of a VHF radio.		
Distress Calls: Demonstrates knowledge and ability to request appropriate resources when needed.		
Signaling Devices: Carries appropriate visual and auditory signaling devices and understands their use and limitations.		
Float Plan: Files a complete and accurate float plan with an appropriate point of contact.		
Notes:		

Core: Trip Planning and Navigation - The paddler successfully plans and executes routes in L3 conditions and venues, considering basic safety and location-specific issues. Their planning includes considering tides, currents, weather and marine forecasts, and the makeup of their group and group members' equipment. They carry a compass and an appropriate map or chart for the area and use them to navigate from point to point in L3 venues effectively.

Assessed Skills	B/M/E	Note
Forecasts: Gathers, understands, and utilizes appropriate weather and marine forecasts.		
Trip Planning: Demonstrates use of charts, forecasts, and knowledge of the paddling group when route planning.		
Trip Planning: Incorporates wind, waves, and swell into route plans and trip choices.		
Tidal Planning: Demonstrates ability to calculate stages of tide, depth, and current over time and incorporate this knowledge into route plans and trip choices.		
Chart Use and Route Finding: Demonstrates the ability to always identify their location.		
Compass Use: Demonstrates using handheld and deck-mounted compasses to take bearings, determine location, and maintain a course.		
Nautical Rules of the Road: Understands the Nautical Rules of the Road and demonstrates safe paddling in relation to boat traffic.		
Navigate from Point to Point: Understands drift caused by wind or current and can compensate for drift using ranges and ferry angles in L3 conditions.		
Notes:		

Venue Specific: Fill out at least one of the following Venue Specific assessment categories.

Venue Specific: Tidal Currents - The paddler demonstrates an understanding of tidal currents with L3 conditions in a variety of settings. They can paddle through currents in control. The paddler understands the challenges of paddling in areas of current and positions themselves appropriately. They can identify eddy lines, understand ferry angles, and demonstrate rescues and towing to move into a safe area.

Assessed Skills	B/M/E	Note
Awareness: Demonstrates an understanding of tides and currents.		
Reading Water and Boat Control: Identifies direction of flow and eddies. Paddles through currents in control.		
Hazards: Identifies hazards and positions self to avoid hazards.		
Rescues: Performs a self-rescue, an assisted rescue, and contact towing in current.		
Notes:		

Venue Specific: Wind, Waves and Surf - The paddler understands the "why" behind increasing sea state (fetch, direction, duration, intensity) and how onshore and offshore winds affect paddling conditions. They can launch, land, and paddle under control through L3 wind, waves, and surf. They can self-rescue in the surf zone, perform assisted rescues, and tow where and when appropriate.

Assessed Skills	B/M/E	Note
Awareness: Understands how onshore and offshore winds affect paddling conditions.		
Tactics: Applies strategies for paddling at various angles to the direction of the wind, waves, and surf.		
Boat Control in Wind: Can control their direction and maintain stability in wind.		
Boat Control in Waves: Can control the direction and maintain stability in waves.		
Boat Control in Surf: Can control their direction and maintain stability in the surf.		
Rescues: Performs a self-rescue, an assisted rescue, and contact towing in wind and waves.		
Notes:		

Venue Specific: Rocky Shorelines - The paddler understands the interaction of wind, waves, and current on immovable objects, hard surfaces, caves, and rocky shorelines and can assess associated risks. They maneuver around immovable objects (arches, buoys, pilings) in forward and reverse in L3 Conditions. They choose appropriate landings in rocky environments and perform appropriate rescues.

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

L3 Coastal Kayaking Skills Assessment – Skills Only Field Grid

Core: Strokes and Maneuvers - Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Forward Paddling: Moves their kayak 200 yards/meters maintaining a reasonably straight course.					
Reverse Paddling: Moves the kayak 50 yards/meters paddle with reasonable control.					
Stopping: Stops the kayak from a good speed (2 to 3 knots), forward and reverse, within one kayak length.					
Forward and Reverse Sweep: Turns the kayak smoothly while moving forward or in reverse without losing momentum.					
Rotate in Place 360°: Spins the kayak in place smoothly with minimal forward or reverse movement.					
Turning on the Move: Maneuvers the kayak smoothly around obstacles or to a target without losing momentum.					
Draw Sideways: Moves the kayak sideways 15 feet (4.6 meters) from a static position.					
Draw Sideways on the Move: Moves the kayak sideways 10 feet (3.3 meters) with momentum.					
Ruddering (Bow and Stern): Uses bow rudder to turn toward blade side of kayak. Uses stern rudders to turn both toward and away from blade side of kayak, and to maintain a straight course.					
Linked Maneuvers: Paddles a course requiring various turning maneuvers safely, effectively, and efficiently.					
Core: Strokes and Maneuvers – Developing Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Equal effectiveness on both sides of the kayak: Demonstrates a high level of effectiveness and comfort working on both sides of their kayak in L3 conditions.					
Core: Edging and Support – Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Low Brace Recovery: Prevents capsize when off balance.					
Low Brace Turn: Makes a turn of at least 90 degrees.					
Edge Control: Edges with purpose and consistency during strokes and maneuvers.					
Core: Edging and Support – Developing Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Rolling: Rolls their kayak from a set-up position.					
High Brace Recovery: Prevents capsize when off balance.					
Core: Rescues and Towing – Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Capsize and Wet Exit: Performs a wet exit in two ways.					
Assisted Rescue with an Able Swimmer: Performs one or more of the following assisted rescues with an able swimmer: Side-by-Side, T-Rescue, or Swimmer Carry.					
Impaired Swimmer Rescue: Performs one or more of the following assisted rescues of an impaired swimmer: Scoop, Sling, or Unresponsive Paddler Rescue.					
Kayak (Bow or Stern) or Paddle Presentation Rescue: Able to assist another paddler’s recovery from capsize by presenting their kayak or paddle.					
Self-Rescue: Performs one or more self-rescues: Re-enter and Roll (with or without a paddle float), Paddle Float rescue (with or without a sling), or Scramble.					
Active Swimmer: Demonstrates the role of an active and effective swimmer when rescued.					
Towing Using a Towline: Demonstrates one or more towing strategies with a towline: In-Line Tow, Rafted In-Line Tow, or Anchor Tow.					
Moves a Kayak Without a Towline: Demonstrates one or more strategies: Contact Tow, Bulldozing, Toggle Tow, or Throw Bag Rescue.					
Paddler Separated from Kayak: Can rescue a swimmer separated from their kayak and reconnect the swimmer to their kayak.					
Core: Rescues and Towing – Developing Skill	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Deploys multiple techniques and strategies for the above rescues.					
Core: Awareness and Seamanship - Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Awareness: Understands personal and group capabilities relative to the environment.					
Leave No Trace (LNT): Demonstrates appropriate interactions with ecosystems and wildlife.					
Kayak: Has a working knowledge of types of kayaks suitable for paddling in L3 conditions.					
Equipment: Maintains a properly outfitted kayak and has a working knowledge of paddling equipment.					
Packing the Kayak: Demonstrates the knowledge of how to pack and properly trim their kayak.					
Kayak Repair: Can perform field repairs allowing for a safe paddle to an accessible area.					

Core: Awareness and Seamanship - Assessed Skills (continued)	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Hypothermia and Cold-Water Shock: Understands the causes, prevention, recognition, and treatment of cold-water shock and hypothermia.					
Hyperthermia Understands causes, prevention, recognition, and treatment of heat-related issues and hyperthermia.					
Core: Incident Prevention and Management - Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Kayak Transport: Safely transports, unloads, and carries kayaks at the launch site.					
Pre and Post-Trip Discussion: Actively participates in pre-trip and post-trip debriefing sessions.					
Launching and Landing: Launches and lands in a safe manner.					
Teamwork: Works with others to perform rescues and other essential team maneuvers and tasks. Can move the group to an area of less risk.					
Communication: Communicates clearly and effectively. Can direct others calmly, such as when called to execute a rescue.					
VHF Radio: Demonstrates proper use of a VHF radio.					
Distress Calls: Demonstrates knowledge and ability to request appropriate resources when needed.					
Signaling Devices: Carries appropriate visual and auditory signaling devices and understands their use and limitations.					
Float Plan: Files a complete and accurate float plan with an appropriate point of contact.					
Core: Trip Planning and Navigation - Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Forecasts: Gathers, understands, and utilizes appropriate weather and marine forecasts.					
Trip Planning Demonstrates use of charts, forecasts, knowledge of the paddling group when route planning.					
Trip Planning: Incorporates wind, waves, and swell into route plans and trip choices.					
Tidal Planning: Demonstrates ability to calculate stages of tide, depth, and current over time and incorporate this knowledge into route plans and trip choices.					
Chart Use and Route Finding: Demonstrates the ability to always identify their location.					
Compass Use: Demonstrates using handheld and deck-mounted compasses to take bearings, determine location, and maintain a course.					
Nautical Rules of the Road: Understands the Nautical Rules of the Road and demonstrates safe paddling in relation to boat traffic.					
Navigate from Point to Point: Understands drift caused by wind or current and can compensate for drift using ranges and ferry angles in L3 conditions.					
Venue Specific: Tidal Currents - Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Awareness: Demonstrates an understanding of tides and currents.					
Reading Water and Boat Control Identifies direction of flow and eddies. Paddles through currents in control.					
Hazards: Identifies hazards and positions themselves to avoid hazards.					
Rescues: Performs a self-rescue, an assisted rescue, and contact towing in current.					
Venue Specific: Wind, Waves and Surf - Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Awareness: Understands how onshore and offshore winds affect paddling conditions.					
Tactics: Applies strategies for paddling at various angles to the direction of the wind, waves, and surf.					
Boat Control in Wind: Can control their direction and maintain stability in wind.					
Boat Control in Waves: Can control the direction and maintain stability in waves.					
Boat Control in Surf: Can control their direction and maintain stability in the surf.					
Venue Specific: Rocky Shorelines - Assessed Skills	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Awareness: Identifies hazards and landing areas on a map or chart.					
Tactics: Chooses appropriate landings and areas to play in the rocks.					
Boat Control: Maneuvers along rocky shorelines safely, effectively, and efficiently.					
Rescues: Performs a self-rescue, an assisted rescue, and contact towing close to rock features.					