



Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Skills Assessment

Course Overview

This ACA Assessment Course is designed to evaluate your ability to perform all of the skills listed and demonstrate an appropriate level of paddling knowledge. This assessment course provides the opportunity for you to receive documentation of having achieved this level of paddling ability.

Note: These criteria may be used for both spray skirted kayaks, as well as non-spray skirted kayaks. Criteria/skills not applicable to non-spray skirted kayaks are followed by the notation: *.

Bulkheads are not required; however, some form of flotation must be present to keep the kayak from sinking.

Assessment Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgment of personal compliance with the ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC).
- Be a current ACA Member

Course Duration

One day (8 hours) or more.

Course Location / Accessible Venues

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

- Winds less than 10 knots

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

Course Size

5 Participants : 1 Instructor; with an additional qualified assistant, the ratio can be 10 : 2.
The maximum number of participants permitted is 10.

Assessor

This assessment course may be offered by Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring (or higher) ACA Instructors, Instructor Trainers, or Instructor Trainer Educators.

Succeeding Courses

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

The sequence of assessment should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location, time allowance, and craft being used. Participants must be able to perform all strokes, maneuvers, rescues, and skills in the appropriate venue. In addition, the participant must demonstrate the appropriate level of knowledge for this level of skill assessment.

Introduction, Logistics, and Expectations

- Welcome! We're so glad that you've chosen to further your paddling experience and education by attending this course! Let's review a few highlights about the ACA
- Let's talk about the course itinerary, expectations, and limitations
- Lay of the land (and water): the logistics of this venue
- Explain the process of assessment and evaluation
- Review liability waiver (if applicable), assumption of risk, challenge by choice, and medical disclosure

Assessment Criteria Checklist

Participant Name: _____

Participant ACA Membership #: _____

Course Venue: _____

Course Date(s): _____

P = Pass, N = Not Pass, DNO = Did Not Observe

| Preparing to Depart | Pass? Y/N |
|---|-----------|
| Elements of a float plan (who, what, when, where, filing practices) | |
| Securing boat for transport using proper tie downs, straps, or knots (figure 8 or bowline, truckers hitch, and 2 half hitches) | |
| Proper techniques to safely lift and carry the boat on shore | |
| Put on and secure a life jacket appropriate for the individual's size and activity, assuring all others in the group are properly wearing their life jacket | |
| Explain safe boating practices including behavior, substance abuse, on water and land etiquette, and Leave No Trace ethics | |
| Communication protocol ◦ Paddle, hand, and whistle signals ◦ Cell phone and VHF radios when appropriate | |
| Federal, state, and local laws and regulations that apply to trip venue or route | |
| Self care and care of other group members ◦ Importance of fueling, hydration, clothing/insulation, and sun protection ◦ Cold shock, hypothermia, and hyperthermia: prevention and treatment | |
| Discuss paddling environments pertinent to paddlers ◦ Water ◦ Weather ◦ Wind ◦ Waves | |
| Launching and landing: low dock or bank to enter and exit safely | |

| Strokes and Maneuvers | Pass? Y/N |
|---|-----------|
| Demonstrate how to hold the paddle in correct orientation and grip for effective paddling | |
| Paddle forward 200 yards/meters in a reasonably straight line | |
| Stop the kayak from a good speed, forward and reverse within 4 strokes | |
| Reverse 50 yards/meters paddle with reasonable control | |

| Strokes and Maneuvers | Pass? Y/N |
|---|-----------|
| Rotate 360° on the spot using forward and reverse sweeps | |
| Turning on the move: sweep strokes while underway | |
| Figure of 8: paddle a figure of 8 course using a variety of strokes | |
| Draw sideways: Move the boat sideways 15 feet (4.6 meters) on both sides | |
| Ruddering (stern) to glide straight and turn to paddle side | |
| Preventing capsize: low brace | |
| Use edging for bracing, stability in waves, and to enhance turns | |
| Low brace turn: a sweep stroke followed by a low brace with on-side edge to assist efficiency | |

| Safety & Rescue Concepts | Pass? Y/N |
|--|-----------|
| Demonstrate and describe the principles of rescue: ◦ Rescue priorities: people, boat, paddle, gear ◦ Responsibilities of the group, rescuer, swimmers | |
| Identify and demonstrate the use of appropriate rescue and safety protocol for the boat and planned activity: assessing objective hazards, choosing routes/lines, options for setting safety | |
| Group organization, trip planning, and travel strategies ◦ Lead boat, sweep boat, safety boats, spacing, group members with repair kits, first aid kits, and first aid and CPR training | |
| Self care and care of other group members ◦ Importance of fueling, hydration, clothing/insulation, and sun protection ◦ Cold shock, hypothermia, and hyperthermia: prevention and treatment | |
| Advantages and disadvantages during rescues of various kayaks | |

| Boat Based Rescues | Pass? Y/N |
|--|-----------|
| Calmly exit the kayak after capsize, using proper body position and contact with the kayak and paddle. When exiting the kayak with a spray skirt* after capsize: must be modeled two ways: (1) utilizing the spray skirt grab loop and (2) releasing the skirt off the hip | |
| Deep water rescue: boat over boat rescue and deep water re-entry | |

| Boat Based Rescues | Pass? Y/N |
|--|------------------|
| Self-rescue—demonstrate the ability to successfully self-rescue in conditions using the technique of choice such as cowboy, scramble, paddle float, etc. If a device is required, such as a paddle float, then must be able to access, deploy, and re-store the device in a timely fashion | |
| Towing—demonstrate proficiency in a variety of towing techniques to include: contact tows, rafted tows, inline tows, towing/carrying a swimmer, etc (solo and assisted) | |
| Bow, stern, and paddle recovery | |
| Swimmer rescue: stern toggle tow / bow push / back-deck | |
| Perform a successful unresponsive paddler rescue (i.e., Hand of God rescue) | |
| Successfully empty water from the boat (on shore, bailers, pumps, sponges, etc.) | |

| Technical Knowledge | Pass? Y/N |
|---|------------------|
| • Life jackets: types, usage, fitting, regulations • Boat: types, parts, materials, nomenclature, and design • Paddle: types, parts, materials, fit | |
| Display awareness of the group and effective on-water management techniques | |
| Trip planning | |

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|--------------------------------------|
| Final Assessment |
| Pass or Needs More Work (circle one) |
| Assessor Name: |
| Assessor Signature: |
| Assessor ACA Number: |
| Course Conclusion Date: |
| Comments: |

Successful participants using a boat without a spray skirt during this course will be assessed for non-spray skirted kayaks only.

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