



Level 2: Essentials of River Canoeing 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.

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

Moving water on rivers up to and including class I sections. *A rapid class includes rapids at the lower and upper ends of the difficulty range, designated “-“ and “+” respectively.*

Course Size

Tandem: 6 participants : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor, the ratio can be 12 : 2. The maximum number of participants permitted is 12.

Solo: 5 participants : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor, 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 River Canoeing (or higher) ACA Instructors, Instructor Trainers, or Instructor Trainer Educators.

Succeeding Courses

- Level 2: Essentials of River Canoeing Certification Course
 - Level 3: River Canoeing 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

Strokes and Maneuvers	Pass? Y/N/DNO
Maneuver a raft 50 yards in a reasonably straight line. Demonstrate both forward and backward	
Stop raft momentum	
Spin the raft and stop at a specific point. Demonstrate both left and right spins. Demonstrate both single and double oar techniques.	
Turn the raft while maintaining momentum	
Catch and maintain position in a relatively small eddy in maximum course venue	
Demonstrate the ability to surf a raft in a hole or on a wave while maintaining proper body position (position of power) and explain when surfing is appropriate	
Demonstrate efficient catch, power and recovery phases of oar strokes while maintaining proper body position in maximum course venue	
Demonstrate efficient draw, sweep, pry, and rafting-J strokes	
Demonstrate experience and reasonable endurance of captaining on maximum course venue	
With the assistance of a paddle team, demonstrate ability to obtain, hold, correct, and change raft angle while in a rapid	
Without the assistance of a paddle team, demonstrate ability to obtain, hold, correct, and change raft angle while in a rapid	

Strokes	Pass? Y/N
Demonstrate how to hold the paddle in correct orientation and grip for effective paddling	
Forward	
Forward (with stern pry, rudder and J stroke corrections)	
Back	
Sweeps (forward, reverse)	
Draws (out of water and in water recovery)	
Bow Draw (stationary/dynamic)	
Cross Bow Draw (stationary/dynamic)	

Strokes	Pass? Y/N
Pry/Push Away	
Stern Draw	

Flatwater Maneuvers	Pass? Y/N
Establish canoe trim, posture, rocking, and balance	
Launching and landing: low dock or bank to enter and exit safely	
Propel the boat forward in a straight line 15-20 boat lengths	
Stop the boat within 2 boat lengths	
Move the boat backwards in a reasonably straight line 3-4 boat lengths	
Abeam: move the boat sideways 20 feet (6 meters) to each side	
Propel the boat in a figure of 8 course around markers 3-4 boat lengths apart	
Turn the boat while maintaining forward motion 90° to the right and left	

Maneuvers to be performed in venue	Pass? Y/N
Front ferries: to a fixed point	
Eddy turns with boat leans into wide eddies	
Peel outs	
C-turns	
S-turns	

Safety & Rescue	Pass? Y/N
Knowledge of river hydrology features and the associated risks	
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	

Safety & Rescue	Pass? Y/N
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	

Boat Based Rescues	Pass? Y/N
Deep water exits: vault and slide performed in flat water	
Calmly exit the boat in deep moving water after a capsize, using proper body position and contact with the craft and paddle	
Swim a boat 20 feet (6 meters) to shore	
Demonstrate a successful self-rescue: swimming with equipment using both defensive and offensive techniques	
Strategies and techniques for boat and paddle recovery including bumping, bulldozing, towing, or swimming equipment to shore	
Swimmer tow options	
Demonstrate a successful swimmer re-entry (i.e., heel hook, rescue sling, etc.)	
Perform successful assisted rescues: boat over boat or side by side or others appropriate to conditions	
Perform a successful unresponsive paddler rescue	
Successfully empty water from the boat (on shore, sponges, pumps, etc.)	
Scouting and techniques for portaging	
Basic wading with a paddle	

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

Date of last revision: 4/14/2023

<https://americancanoe.org>

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