



Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking Instructor Criteria

Overview

Fundamentally, participants are expected to have the paddling skills, technical knowledge, rescue ability, teaching ability, group management, and interpersonal skills commensurate with this level of certification prior to presenting themselves for evaluation as Instructor Candidates at an Instructor Certification Course (IDW, ICE, or ICW).

Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgement of personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Be a current ACA member
- Completion of the appropriate level skills course, assessment course, or equivalent skills

Course Duration

Combined Instructor Development Workshop (IDW) and Instructor Certification Exam (ICE) - Minimum 3 days (24 hours).

Course Location / Accessible Venues

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

Course Size

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

For additional details, see SEIC Policy Manual Chapter 6.

Instructor Trainer

This certification course may be offered by Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking (or higher) ACA Instructor Trainers or Instructor Trainer Educators.

Succeeding Courses

- Level 3: River Kayaking Skills, Assessment, Trip Leader, or Certification Course

***Note:** The use of non-spray skirted kayaks in conditions above Level 2 is not appropriate*

The following is a list of the criteria used to evaluate Instructor Candidates. The content and sequence of evaluation is to be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location, time allowance, and be craft appropriate.

General Requirements for all ACA Certification Candidates

- Be at least 18 years old
- Demonstrate general knowledge of ACA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives
- Successfully complete an Instructor Certification Workshop (IDW and ICE)
- Upon successful completion, register with the Safety Education and Instruction Council
- Have and maintain first aid and age appropriate CPR
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of paddlesports and the ACA
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform and teach all of the following material, unassisted, in the appropriate venue

Certification Maintenance Requirements

- Teach at least two courses that meet ACA standards within the four-year certification period and properly report the courses using the ACA Course Management System (CMS).
- Complete an Instructor Update, at the highest level of certification, during the four-year certification period
- Maintain ACA membership and SEIC registration annually
- Maintain appropriate CPR and first aid certification for the duration of certification

ACA Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking Instructor Requirements

Demonstrate a knowledge of ACA administrative processes:

- How to register and report a course (with and without insurance)
- An understanding of the ACA Waiver and Release of Liability
- Familiarity with the ACA website and the resources and SEIC policies available

Demonstrate a knowledge of and appropriately model teaching and learning theory:

- Understand multiple methods of teaching and how they impact different learners
- Differentiate instruction targeting different learners
- Use effective teaching methods including appropriate skills progressions when teaching complex skill sets
- Present information effectively, both prepared and impromptu
- Focus on **core principles** rather than specific techniques
- Provide appropriate, specific, and meaningful feedback

Demonstrate the following:

- Positive interpersonal skills to include all items outlined in the ACA SEIC Policy Manual
- Appropriate group management skills including leadership and judgment

- Ability to choose an appropriate venue / class site
- Effectively make documented skill assessments

Demonstrate ability to paddle efficiently and comfortably in venue utilizing:

- Safe and effective body usage: bio-mechanics (body, posture, linkage, and rotation)
- Efficient and effective paddle placement for intended maneuver
- Parts of strokes: CPR (catch, power, recovery), static and dynamic

Demonstrate ability to teach and model these paddling strokes:

- Forward
- Back
- Sweeps (forward, reverse)
- Draws: both stationary and sculling (out of water and in water recovery)
- Low brace
- Stern rudder

Demonstrate ability to teach and model these flatwater maneuvers effectively:

- Forward stroke, to propel the kayak straight forward
- Reverse/back stroke, to stop and reverse straight backward
- Forward and reverse sweeps, to turn and/or spin the kayak
- Draw and sculling draw, to move the kayak sideways evenly
- Low brace to avoid capsize
- Rudder (stern) to glide straight and turn to paddle side

Principles of Rescue

- Use of safe rescue strategies such as T-RETHROG (Talk, Reach, Throw, Row, Go) including throwable buoyancy aids and throw bag use

- Rescue priorities: people, boat, paddle, gear
- Responsibilities of the group, rescuer, swimmers
- Throw rope applications as rescuer and swimmer
- Basic wading

Demonstrate ability to teach and model these boat-based rescue techniques effectively:

- Calmly exit the boat after a capsize, using proper body position and contact with the craft 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
- Paddle recovery
- Strategies for boat recovery
- Self-rescue: swimming with equipment
- Swimmer towing options
- Swimmer re-entry/re-mount techniques
- Strategies and techniques for boat and paddle recovery including bumping, bulldozing, towing, equipment to shore
- Kayak specific rescues (i.e., boat over boat, boat to boat, scoop)
- Unresponsive paddler rescue (i.e., Hand of God rescue)
- Advantages and disadvantages during rescues of various kayaks (i.e., sit-ins, sit-on-tops, recreational kayaks, etc.)

**Not required for those paddling a kayak without a spray skirt*

Demonstrate the ability to teach the following river hydrology features and articulate the associated risks:

- Currents
- Rocks (upstream and downstream Vs)
- Ledges and low head dams (horizon lines)

- Pins and entrapment
- Strainers/sieves
- Bends
- Undercut rocks or ice
- Dams/flow diversion structures and pipelines

Demonstrate ability to teach these concepts effectively:

- Appropriate use of rescue and safety gear
- Emergency procedures
- Communication
 - Paddle, hand, and whistle signals
 - Cell phone and radios when appropriate
- River etiquette and Leave No Trace (LNT) principles and application to paddling environments
- 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

Demonstrate leadership, group management skills, experience and judgment necessary to be a safe, effective instructor

Notes:

An ACA Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking Instructor is expected to be able to demonstrate and teach everything on the Level 2: Skills Course and Level 2: Skills Assessment for their craft.

Successful candidates using a boat without a spray skirt during this course will be certified to teach non-spray skirted kayaks only.

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