



Paddlesports Safety Facilitator (PSF) Certification Criteria - General Module

Paddlesport Safety Facilitator (PSF) Course Overview

Fundamentally, we expect that Paddlesports Safety Facilitators (PSF) should have the ability to manage groups, have background knowledge of paddling safety and environmental hazards, and possess the ability to effectively maneuver their craft to perform and demonstrate effective rescue techniques. This certification allows the facilitator to introduce paddlecraft safety and knowledge to the beginner paddler in a land-based setting. This is a 4-year, non-renewable certification.

If you're a student who would like a resource to prepare for this course, ACA is pleased to provide a free online paddling safety course, [here](#). A certificate of completion is included!

Course Prerequisites

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

Course Duration

General Knowledge Module Duration: Minimum of 4 hours

Discipline Specific Module Duration: minimum of 1 hour per module

Course Location / Accessible Venues

Flat water, protected from wind, waves and outside boat traffic, with current less than 0.5 knots and within swimming distance of shore.

Course Size

12 Participants : 1 Instructor; with an additional qualified assistant, the ratio can be 24 : 2. The maximum number of participants permitted is 24.

Instructor

The PSF course may be offered by Level 3 (or higher) ACA Instructors, Instructor Trainers, or Instructor Trainer Educators within the discipline of canoe. Additionally, this course may be offered by currently certified ACA Level 1 and 2 instructors who hold the Paddlesports Safety Facilitator (PSF) Endorsement. If the ACA Instructor would like to offer PSF module(s) in the other disciplines of kayak or SUP (other than which they are currently certified), they must hold an ACA Level 1 Skills Assessment (or higher) in that additional discipline to offer that module.

Succeeding Courses

Level 1: Introduction to Kayaking, Canoeing, or SUP Skills, Assessment, or Certification Course

Community Paddlesports Leader (CPL) Certification Course

The following is a list of the criteria used to evaluate Paddlesport Safety Facilitator (PSF) 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 PSF Certification Candidates

- Be at least 16 years old
- Demonstrate general knowledge of ACA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives
- Be a full ACA member
- Successfully complete the PSF General Module

- Successfully complete at least one of the discipline specific modules: canoe, kayak, or SUP
- Successfully complete the PSF written exam
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of paddlesports and the ACA
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform all of the following material, unassisted, in the appropriate venue

Certification Maintenance Requirements

- Maintain ACA membership annually
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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
 - This certification is not a certified instructor award, and thus does not grant eligibility for ACA's instructor insurance program
- Lay of the land (and water): the logistics of this venue
- Explain the process of evaluation
- Review liability waiver (if applicable), assumption of risk, challenge by choice, and medical disclosure

ACA Paddlesport Safety Facilitator (PSF) Requirements

Demonstrate a knowledge of the ACA:

- Education, Competition, Recreation, Stewardship & Policy, and overarching DEI programs
- Benefits of ACA membership, including community connections, educational resources, insurance programs, public policy representation, and more

Demonstrate the following:

- Positive interpersonal skills
- Appropriate group management skills including leadership and judgment
- Ability to choose an appropriate venue / class site

Demonstrate knowledge of the following safety concepts:

- Life jackets
 - Types, usage, fitting, and U.S. Coast Guard and state/local regulations
- Elements of a float plan (who, what, when, where, filing practices)
- Paddling environments pertinent to paddlers
 - Wind
 - Waves
 - Weather
 - Water
 - Water confidence and comfort including swimming ability
 - Communication
 - Paddle, hand, and whistle signals
 - Cell phone and radios when appropriate
 - Signaling devices and other safety equipment
 - 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 traffic awareness and safe practice (rules of the nautical road)
 - Emergency procedures including lightening/storm awareness and protocol

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/board, paddle, gear
- Responsibilities of the group, rescuer, swimmers

Demonstrate knowledge of the following concepts and skills:

- Paddler etiquette and Leave No Trace (LNT) principles and application to paddling environments
- Importance of developing good judgment and group responsibility for a trip
 - Group organization, trip planning, and travel strategies
 - Maps, guide books, local knowledge
 - Lead boat, sweep boat/board, safety boats/boards, spacing, group members with repair kits, first aid kits, and first aid and CPR training
 - Three boat/board minimum for group trip
- Federal, state, and local laws and regulations that apply to trip venue or route
- Put-in safety briefing

Successfully complete the Paddlesports Safety Facilitator Exam

Satisfactorily complete 1 or more discipline (craft) specific modules:

- Canoe module
- Kayak module
- Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) module

Conclusion and Wrap Up

- This has been a great class! Let's talk through what we've learned with a group debrief and/or Individual feedback
- Course limitations: there is always more to learn, and the skills and concepts we discussed require more practice and experience
- First aid and CPR training is a very valuable tool and could make the difference between a "near miss" and an emergency requiring outside rescue / first responders

- Paddling is a lifetime sport - there are local organizations, clubs, events, competitions, and classes through which you can continue your learning and build community. Get connected!
- Handouts and reference materials (if applicable)

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