



Paddlesports Safety Facilitator (PSF) Certification Criteria - General Module

Course Overview

We expect Paddlesports Safety Facilitators (PSF) to be able to effectively maneuver their craft and demonstrate competent rescue techniques. This certification allows the facilitator to introduce paddlecraft safety and knowledge to the beginner paddler in a land-based setting. This module is to be taught in conjunction with the Paddlesports Safety Facilitator General Knowledge Module. 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

This course may be offered by currently certified ACA Level 3 or higher Instructors. Additionally, this course may be offered by currently certified ACA Level 1 and 2 instructors with a Paddlesports Safety Facilitator Endorsement. If the ACA Instructor would like to offer the PSF course in another discipline (other than which they are currently certified), they must have, at minimum, an ACA Level 1 Assessment in that additional discipline to offer that module.

Endorsements

Endorsements can be given by any currently certified ACA Level 1 (or higher) Instructor Trainer or Instructor Trainer Educator. If the ACA Instructor Trainer or Instructor Trainer Educator would like to offer the PSF endorsement to an instructor certified in a different discipline, the IT or ITE must have, at minimum, an ACA Level 1 Skills Assessment in that discipline.

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

Certification Maintenance Requirements

- Maintain ACA membership annually

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 (PFDs): Types, Usage, Fitting, Coast Guard and State Regulations
- Importance and preparation of a float plan
- 6-P's of prevention concept: Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance
- Universal signals: paddle, hand, whistle

- Weather conditions important to the Paddler: 4-W's (Water, Wind, Waves and Weather)
- Lightning/Storm awareness and protocols
- Cold shock, hypothermia and hyperthermia; prevention and treatment
- Signaling devices and safety equipment
- Boat traffic awareness and safe practice

Demonstrate the following skills and concepts:

- Environmental Issues: Leave No Trace
- Personal Preparation: planning, clothing, food and water
- Group Organization and travel
- Trip Planning: familiar with how to prepare for a short day trip
- Federal, State and Local Laws and Regulations
- Car Topping: Loading/Unloading (use of straps and knots)

Demonstrate a knowledge and the ability to perform the following skills related to facilitating a group on a sheltered lake near shore:

- Planning a trip
- On-Water Etiquette
- Group (3 boat minimum)
- Group Management (Lead /S weep, Safety, Spacing)

Demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to perform the following land-based rescue concepts and techniques:

- Possible hazards: submerged objects (pilings, rocks, strainers), current, changing water levels, other water craft
- Rescue Sequence (RETHROG)
- Rescue Priorities (people, craft, gear)
- Responsibilities of the rescuer, group, swimmer
- Evaluate water confidence and comfort
- Effective rescue techniques (throw bags or Type IV flotation) to target at 30 feet

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

© American Canoe Association

Date of last revision: 2/8/2024

<https://americancanoe.org>

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](#).