



Level 4: Whitewater Kayaking

Instructor Criteria

Overview: Fundamentally, we expect that participants should 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 Exam (ICE).

Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC):

ACA courses are open to all individuals who acknowledge the ability to perform the following essential eligibility criteria.

1. Breathe independently (i.e., not require medical devices to sustain breathing)
2. Independently maintain sealed airway passages while under water
3. Independently hold head upright without neck / head support
4. Manage personal care independently or with assistance of a companion
5. Manage personal mobility independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance
6. Follow instructions and effectively communicate independently or with assistance of a companion
7. Independently turn from face-down to face-up and remain floating face up while wearing a properly fitted life jacket*
8. Get on / off or in / out of a paddlecraft independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
9. Independently get out and from under a capsized paddlecraft*
10. Remount or reenter the paddlecraft following deep water capsize independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
11. Maintain a safe body position while attempting skills, activities and rescues listed in the appropriate Course Outline, and have the ability to recognize and identify to others when such efforts would be unsafe given your personal situation*

** To participate in adaptive programs, participants must acknowledge only the first six EEC listed above. Entry-level adaptive programs will involve teaching and practicing EEC #7-11.*

Course Prerequisites:

- Completion of the appropriate level skills course, assessment course, or equivalent skills.
- Taking an ACA SWR class for further training on rescue is strongly suggested as is WFR or WFA at minimum

Course Duration: 5 days (40 hours) Minimum



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Course Location / Venue: Class conditions are level II- III rapids where limited maneuvering in current may be required to avoid obstacles. All of the following instructor requirements are to be completed in the course venue: class II- III rivers.

Class Ratio: 5 Instructor Candidates : 1 Instructor Trainer; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 10 : 2

Succeeding courses:

Level 5: Advanced Whitewater Kayaking

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

General Requirements for all Instructor Certifications:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Meet the appropriate essential eligibility criteria
- Successfully complete an Instructor Certification Workshop (IDW & ICE)
- Be a full ACA member
- Upon successful completion, register with the Safety Education & 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
- Instructors are expected to be able to demonstrate, teach, and model everything on the official ACA skills course and assessment course outlines which correspond to their level/craft.

Demonstrate knowledge and ability to efficiently/effectively plan and implement appropriate instructional sessions and assessments for a different learning styles and ability levels, to include:

- Differentiation of instruction based on the individual learner (student centered)
- Use of an appropriate skills progression when teaching complex skill sets
- Selection of appropriate teaching venue based on ability and desired outcomes
- Focus on core principals rather than specific technique
- Provides appropriate, specific and meaningful feedback

Maintenance Requirements:

- Teach at least two courses that meet ACA standards within the four-year certification period and report the results to the National Office
- Complete an Instructor Update, at the highest level of certification, during the four-year certification period
- Maintain ACA membership and SEIC registration annually



Level 4: Whitewater Kayaking

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Level 4: Whitewater Kayaking Instructor Requirements:

- 1) Demonstrate a knowledge of ACA Paperwork:
 - How to register & report a course (with and without insurance)
 - An understanding of the ACA Waiver & Release of Liability
- 2) Demonstrate a knowledge of:
 - Teaching theory
 - Learning theory
 - Effective methods of providing feedback
- 3) Demonstrate the following:
 - Positive interpersonal skills
 - Appropriate group management skills (including leadership and judgment)
 - Ability to choose an appropriate venue / class site
- 4) Effectively perform, model and teach basic kayak strokes and maneuvers listed below
 - Forward stroke, to propel the kayak straight forward with good form
 - Reverse/back stroke, to stop with control and paddle backward with control
 - Forward and reverse sweeps, for turning and spinning, including stern draw
 - Draw and sculling draw, to move the kayak sideways evenly
 - Low and high braces using good form to avoid capsize
 - Draws of all types to control spin and provide controlled turns to either side
 - Eddy turns and peel outs using good form with body, boat and paddle
 - Front ferry (upstream) in class III rapids to move laterally with effective boat control.
 - Back Ferry (downstream) in class II rapids to stop in current and move laterally to avoid hazards
 - Maneuvering on Class II-III water using various techniques, including, but not limited to surfing and playing the river with comfort and control.
- 5) Effectively teach and model the basic rescue techniques below
 - Demonstrate and teach methods that provide underwater composure and confidence prior to wet exit
 - Wet exits must be modeled and taught two ways: (1) utilizing the spray skirt grab loop and (2) releasing the skirt off the hip
 - Controlled capsize and wet exit kayak with a spray skirt
 - Boat over boat rescue technique for deep water re-entry (not in rapids)
 - Swimming with and without boat and gear
 - Bull dozing boat to shore with correct angle and recovering gear
 - Towing swimmers from kayak bow/stern, and kayak using quick release waist tow
 - T-rescues using bow etc.
 - Use of throw rope as rescuer and victim along with Talk, Reach, Throw, Row, Go basics
 - Instructors should be able to perform and demo an unresponsive paddler rescue
 - Pinned craft , unpinning concepts including wading



Level 4: Whitewater Kayaking

Instructor Criteria

- 6) Demonstrate solid knowledge of, and ability to effectively teach, the material listed below :
 - Overall knowledge of paddlesports
 - Safety issues including using the American Whitewater Safety Code
 - River features and hazards and how to use and or avoid them
 - River running strategies, including scouting and group management on the river
 - Weather reading and weather protocols, including (lightning plan) important to kayakers
 - Cold water shock, hypothermia and hyperthermia; prevention and treatment
 - River Signaling ,with hand , paddle, whistle
 - Maps, guide books and value of local knowledge for trip planning
 - Developing a float plan
 - Trip (day) and class planning considerations
 - Kayak designs and uses include river running, play boating, and creeking
 - Whitewater kayak outfitting
 - Kayak Paddle fit, hand placement & designs

- 7) Demonstrate knowledge of teaching and learning theory:
 - Characteristics of different types of learners
 - Barriers to learning
 - Effective general teaching methods
 - Effective prepared and impromptu presentations
 - Evaluate and provide feedback effectively
 - Team teaching and co teaching
 - Use of progressions in skills/venue and mental comfort

- 8) Perform and be able to teach reliable kayak rolls using techniques that avoid injury to muscles and joints