



## Level 4: Whitewater Rafting - Paddle

### Instructor Criteria

**Overview:** Fundamentally, it is expected that participants should possess 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 underwater
3. Independently hold head upright without neck/head support
4. Manage personal care independently or with the 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 the 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 paddle craft 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 ACA Level 4: Whitewater Rafting - Paddle skills assessment course, or equivalent skills
- Completion of an ACA, Rescue III, or similar Swift Water Rescue class in the last 3 years

**Course Duration:** Combined IDW & ICE - 4 Day Minimum

**Course Location / Venue:** This class is taught on moving water up to Class I-III

**Class Ratio:** 6 Instructor Candidates: 1 Instructor Trainer; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 12: 2



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### Complementary Levels of Certifications:

Level 4: Whitewater Rafting - Oar

### General Requirements for all Instructor Certifications:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Meet the appropriate essential eligibility criteria
- Successfully complete an Instructor Development Workshop (IDW)
- 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 paddle sports and the ACA
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform and teach all of the following material unassisted in the appropriate venue
- Demonstrate knowledge and ability to efficiently/effectively plan and implement appropriate instructional sessions and assessments for different learning styles and ability levels, to include:
  - Type 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 principles** rather than specific techniques
  - 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
- Maintain First Aid and CPR Requirements

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

### Level 4: Whitewater Rafting-Paddle Instructor Expectations:

It is expected that Instructor Candidates should have appropriate paddling skills, including versatility in captaining different types of rafts with different types of paddle crews, before presenting themselves for evaluation. This course will include the skills listed below:

### About the ACA - Demonstrate *knowledge* of the following topics:

- How to register & report a course (with and without insurance)
- An understanding of the ACA Waiver & Release of Liability
- A clear understanding of the ACA website and tools that exist therein

### Teaching Theory - Demonstrate *knowledge of* and *appropriately model* the following topics:

- Demonstrate knowledge of:
  - Teaching theory
  - Learning theory
  - Effective methods of providing feedback
- Demonstrate the following:



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

### General

Demonstrate *knowledge* of all the following topics and skills

Demonstrate the *ability to teach* one or more of the following topics and skills

1. Personal Preparation: Planning, clothing, food, and water
2. 4 W's - WIND, WAVES, WATER and WEATHER as it relates to paddlers and the course.
3. River Etiquette: River rules of the road, safety in multi-use areas where others may be present.
4. Regulations – USCG / State / Local safety requirements
5. Environmental Issues: Leave No Trace, ecology, Camp Etiquette ext....
6. Rafting as a Sport
  - History of the sport
  - Rafting terminology
  - Familiar with the different disciplines of paddle sports and boatmanship
7. Raft & Equipment
  - Securing rafts to vehicle/ trailer: Attach raft to rack or trailer using flat cam-straps or rope and suitable knots
  - Parts of a raft: Types, materials
  - Paddle design, types, and parts
  - Multi thwart raft
  - Rigging, securing equipment and entrapment
  - Proper paddle team spacing and position
  - Life Jacket (PFD): types, material, fit
  - Helmets
  - Clothing and footwear suitable for immersion and appropriate to the conditions
  - Raft outfitting: bow & stern lines, flip lines, perimeter lines
  - Proper Inflation
  - Care of equipment
  - Raft maintenance and repair
8. River Dynamics (Explain how each item below changes with river levels)
  - Tongues
  - Bends
  - Eddies
  - Waves
  - Holes
  - Rocks
  - Hazards
  - How each of these features affects a paddle raft and why
9. Responsibilities of captain (guide):
  - Distribution of Paddlers
  - Group Communication
  - Commands
  - Boat Loading and Trim
  - Reading the River



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- Special Equipment: (Coolers, Dry Bags, etc...)

### Strokes and Maneuvers

*Appropriately model* all the following skills

Demonstrate the *ability to teach* one or more of the following topics and skills

#### Lifting & Carrying:

- Carries overhead
- Carries underhand

#### Launching:

- Lifting
- Stacking
- Shoreline
- Launching and Landing

#### In The Raft:

- Seating and proper paddling position
- Movements in the raft: high side, down
- Personal protection from paddle and entrapment
- Safety of paddle team and passengers

#### Paddle:

- Types, parts, materials, fit
- How to hold the paddle
- Efficient paddle position (use of core muscles & paddlers box)
- Back and shoulder protection
- Foot and knee lock-in positions for paddlers and captain
- Positions in the raft based on the number of paddlers
- How to balance each paddlers ability

#### Strokes:

- Focus on hand position and using core muscles
- Captain focus on Draw and Pry strokes
- The rafting J-Stroke
- Sweep stroke

Maneuvers: (Calm Water) lead the following and perform each maneuver with and without the help of a paddle team

- **Forward:** Slowly paddle in a straight line
- **Forward:** With speed, paddle 200 yards row in a straight line (using corrective strokes as needed)
- **Backward:** 200 yards paddle in a straight line starting slow and working up to speed (using corrective strokes as needed)
- **Spin:** Pivot the raft – left & right and stop
- **Turn Forward/Backward:** Broad arcing turn
- **Forward Left/Right Turn:** Make a square with 10-yard sides, 4 left turns, then spin and repeat in the opposite direction.
- **Forward Left/Right Turn:** Figure 8's in both directions



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- **Backward Left/Right Turn:** Make a square with 10-yard sides, 4 left turns, then spin and repeat in the opposite direction.
- **Backward Left/Right Turn:** Figure 8's in both directions
- **Stopping:** Stop the raft from a good speed (within ½ boat length)
- **Reverse Stopping:** Stop the raft from a good speed (within ½ boat length)

Maneuvers (Moving Water – class II-III) lead the following and perform each maneuver with and without the help of a paddle team:

- **Proper Raft Angle:** Entering a rapid/ tongue
- **Angle Adjustment:** While in rapid
- **Proper Use:** Forward stroke vs backstroke
- **Ferries:** Front, back
- **Eddy Turns:** tight, wide
- **Peel Outs:** tight, wide
- **Spin:** Pivot the raft – left & right and stop the spin
- **Micro Eddy Use:** While running Rapids, Boat Scouting and Safety Positions
- **Surfing:** Hole & wave

### Safety and Rescue

*Appropriately model* all the following skills

Demonstrate the *ability to teach* one or more of the following topics and skills

- **Group Awareness:** Familiar with whistle and paddle signals
- **Responsibility:** Group, Individual, Rescuer, Victim
- **Rescue Priorities:** People, Boats & Gear
- **Signals:** Whistle, Paddle, Hand
- **Rescue Sequence:** Fast & Simple To Slow & Complex
  - Boat-Based
  - Land-Based
- **Boat Flip & Recovery:** Self, assisted (Considerations-Load, flip safety, shore-based flips for heavy boats)
- **Reentry:** Self and assisted
- **Swimming In Current:** defensive and aggressive, downriver position
- Throw Rope / Bag: use and practice
- **Boat Pin/Wrap:** strong arm, rope use (Boy Scout pull, vector pull, mechanical advantage systems, anchors, safety considerations)
- Bumping/ bulldozing
- Towing another raft
- **Rescue Equipment:** Unique to rafting due to the force of water and raft load ability. Safety consideration while rescue equipment is under load

Demonstrate *knowledge* of all following topics and skills

Demonstrate the *ability to teach* one or more of the following topics and skills

- **Hypothermia ~ Hyperthermia:** Prevention, recognition and basic treatment
- **Safety:** Understand the risks of rafting and hazard avoidance
- **Trip Planning:** Comfortable in preparing for a day or multi-day trip
- **Trip Planning:** 6P's – prior proper planning prevents poor performance. Familiar with how to prepare for a day and up to 3-day trips



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- **Knots:** Figure 8 family, bowline, trucker's hitch, and clove hitch. Proper application of all knots and hitches.
- **Rescue Equipment:** A clear understanding of all rescue gear that needs to be carried on any raft trip. This includes but is not limited to throw bags, carabiners, anchor systems, etc...

### Group Management

Demonstrate *knowledge* of all the following topics and skills

Demonstrate the *ability to teach* one or more of the following topics and skills

- Planning a trip
- Put-in Briefing
- Group Management (1 Boat or Team, Lead /Sweep, Safety, Spacing)
- Demonstrate leadership, group management skills, experience, and judgment necessary to be a safe, effective instructor
- Understand group dynamics

### Basic Trip Logistics, Planning, and Special Topics:

Demonstrate *knowledge* of all following topics and skills

Demonstrate *the ability to teach* one or more of the following topics and skills

- A deep understanding and familiarity with River guidebooks and maps
- Understand the “Shuttle Problem”
- Proper equipment for single, multi-day and expedition length raft trips
- Permit processes and river regulations