



Level 5: Advanced Whitewater Rafting - Oar

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 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 an ACA Level 5: Advanced Whitewater Rafting -Oar 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 - 5 Day Minimum

Course Location / Venue: This class is taught on moving water up to Class I– IV



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

Complementary Levels of Certification:

Level 5: Advanced Whitewater Rafting - Paddle

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 paddlesports 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 a 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
- 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 location, and time allowance.

Level 5: Whitewater Rafting-Oar Instructor Expectations:

It is expected that Instructor Candidates should have advanced rowing skills, including versatility in rowing different types of rafts with different types of frame and oar setups, before presenting themselves for evaluation. This course will include the skills listed below:

About the ACA

Demonstrate **knowledge** of the following topics:

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



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Teaching Theory

Demonstrate *knowledge of* and *appropriately model* the following topics:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of:
 - Teaching theory
 - Learning theory
 - Effective methods of providing feedback
2. Demonstrate the following:
 - Positive interpersonal skills
 - Appropriate group management skills (including leadership and judgment)
 - Ability to choose an appropriate venue/class site

General

Demonstrate *knowledge* of all 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, and catarafts
 - Oar design, materials, types and parts, and length for different boats
 - Oarlocks, different types - Free oars, oar rights, pins & clips. Pros and cons of each.
 - Frame parts, mounting, position, adjustment, design, oar towers, loading, and types
 - Rigging, securing equipment and entrapment, boat loading & trim
 - Oar to Frame to Boat interface, proper oar spacing, position for ergonomic rowing
 - 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, frame, and oar maintenance and repair



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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 raft and why
 - Consideration for each feature when rowing a loaded raft
9. Responsibilities of a boatman with passengers:
 - Distribution of passengers - Keep clear of oar swing
 - Paddle assist
 - Boat Loading and Trim
 - Reading the River
 - Special Equipment: (Coolers, Dry Bags, etc...)
10. Lifting & Carrying:
 - Carries overhead
 - Carries underhand
11. Launching:
 - Lifting
 - Stacking
 - Shoreline
 - Launching and Landing
12. In the Raft:
 - Positions of the frame in a raft: stern mount, center frame, bow frame in catarafts. Frame position changes the pivot point.
 - Seating and proper rowing position
 - Efficient rowing position (use of core muscles)
 - Back and shoulder protection
 - Considerations for rowing full loaded rafts
 - Foot and knee position for effective rowing
 - Movements in the raft: high side, down
 - Protection of self and passengers from oars and entrapment
13. Oars:
 - Oar types, parts, materials, fit
 - How to hold oars
 - Oar Interface- oar towers, oar stops, oar length, frame width, seat height
 - Proper body position for forward, backward and rotational strokes
 - Rest positions while rowing
 - Shipping oars (not pulling in)

Strokes and Maneuvers

Appropriately model all of the following skills

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

On all below rowing related categories: Candidate must understand the difference in rowing a fully loaded vs empty raft/catacraft:



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1. Strokes:
 - Focus on oar entry, purchase, and exit of water to maximize efficiency
 - Forward: Use of Double Stroke and Bicycle stroke
 - Back: Emphasized as power stroke and need for proper body position
 - Single oar boat rotation strokes
 - Double oar boat rotation strokes
 - Stern rudders and bow draw strokes with oar
 - Slowing strokes
 - Feathering (for open oarlock - free oars)

2. Maneuvers: (Calm Water)
 - **Forward:** row in a straight line
 - **Forward:** With speed, row 200 yards row in a straight line (using corrective strokes as needed)
 - **Backward:** 200 yards row in a straight line starting slow and working up to speed (using corrective strokes as needed)
 - **Spin:** Pivot the raft – using single and double oar techniques, left & right and stop
 - **Turn Forward/Backward:** Broad arcing turn while underway using double and single oar techniques, with a goal of keeping speed through turns
 - **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
 - **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)

3. Maneuvers (Moving Water – class III-IV)
 - **Proper Raft Angle:** Entering a rapid/ tongue
 - **Angle Adjustment:** While in rapid
 - **Proper Use:** Forward stroke vs back (power) stroke
 - **Ferries:** Front, back
 - **Eddy Turns:** tight, wide
 - **Peel Outs:** tight, wide
 - **Spin:** Pivot the raft – left & right and stop
 - Bow & stern draw catch strokes
 - **Micro Eddy Use:** While running Rapids, Boat Scouting and Safety Positions
 - **Surfing:** Hole & wave, play and maneuver
 - **Strong Eddy Line Play**
 - **Raft Boof:** (small oar boat or cataraft)



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Safety and Rescue

Appropriately model all of 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 the 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
- **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...



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Hazard Evaluation & Judgment

Appropriately model all of the following skills

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

Self-Awareness and Evaluation:

- Understanding your level of anxiety
- Knowing your personal style and level of risk tolerance
- Awareness of your level of responsibility to the group
- Awareness of the environment and your group
- Realistically knowing your level of skill and personal preparedness

Group Evaluation:

- Making decisions based on the skill level and condition of the group

Objective Hazards:

- Understanding what objective hazards are
- How to deal with them

Subjective Hazards:

- Understanding what subjective hazards are
- How to deal with them

Group Management

Demonstrate *knowledge* of all 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
- Special Equipment: (Groovers, Coolers, Dry Boxes, Ammo Cans, ext...)