

Effective and Prudent Paddling Instructors

In general, effective and prudent paddling instructors:

- Seek out on-going professional development and education, including peer review
- Develop and maintain physical fitness, leadership, teaching and emergency skills appropriate to their teaching venue
- Maintain high ethical standards
- Follow all applicable laws and regulations
- Abide by the ACA's statement on interpersonal skills
- Seek to develop excellent judgment and use that judgment to provide the highest quality instruction possible



AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION

The **American Canoe Association (ACA)** is a member-based nonprofit organization (501(c)3) that promotes fun and responsible canoeing, kayaking, and rafting. Founded in 1880, the ACA actively advocates recreational access and stewardship of America's water trails. For more information and to become a member, visit www.americancanoe.org.



American Canoe Association

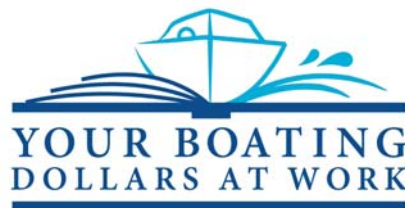
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Making the world a better place to paddle. Since 1880.

American Canoe Association Instructional Best Practices



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PREPARATION

Before each class, effective and prudent instructors:

- Appropriately present information regarding course venue, objectives, demands and equipment needs to students
- Appropriately screen participants. In many cases, screening may be done at the first meeting of the class, or as part of the course registration process. Screening may involve only an on-site evaluation of participant equipment and skills
- Choose appropriate waterways on which to teach,
- Are familiar with the waterways on which they teach. Familiarity includes not only the waterway itself, but also access issues, weather, and other factors that might affect safe boating. Familiarity does not require personal experience with a waterway, but does require that the instructor be able to focus on their students instead of the intricacies of navigating the waterway
- Develop emergency plans appropriate to their teaching venue. Where appropriate, written plans should be developed and frequently reviewed
- Complete all appropriate pre-course paperwork (e.g., permits and insurance) in a timely fashion



PRESENTATION

During a paddling course, effective and prudent instructors:

- Seek to minimize risk to an appropriate level, while also recognizing that risk is inherent to paddlesports and paddlesport instruction
- Establish and maintain an appropriate, effective and positive learning environment
- Abide by ACA, local, State and Federal policies on harassment and diversity,
- Avoid inappropriate dual relationships with students
- Help participants choose equipment that is appropriate and in good working order
- Develop and use drills and scenarios that appropriately challenge students
- Demonstrate excellent paddling, teaching and interpersonal skills
- Use a “challenge by choice” approach that allows students to choose to not to participate in activities without fear of embarrassment and without uncomfortable peer pressure
- Help students develop good judgment and personal responsibility in regards to

paddlesports

- Appropriately look out for the welfare and best interests of their students and co-instructors. This includes, but is not limited to, appropriate food, water and rest breaks
- Set an appropriate pace for the class,
- Use an appropriate range of teaching styles and techniques
- Are flexible when teaching, and change their lesson plans in response to participant needs, hazards, water conditions and other concerns
- Maintain appropriate supervision and student-instructor ratios
- Provide appropriate feedback to participants
- Where possible, follow a Leave No Trace philosophy

COMPLETION

After a course ends, prudent and effective instructors:

- Use appropriate course feedback to improve their teaching
- Guide students towards appropriate future paddling classes, opportunities and venues. This may include information on local clubs, paddling schools, national organizations and regulatory agencies
- Complete all post-course paperwork in a timely manner