



Coastal Kayak Day-Trip Leading

(Sample Skills Course)

Course Overview: This course is intended to provide the minimum skills and training necessary for an adult leader possessing basic paddling skills (see prerequisite below) to lead a trip for participants with beginner level paddling skills, in gentle conditions, with apparent wind not exceeding 10 knots, waves not exceeding 1 foot and currents to 2 knots. The emphasis of this course is trip leading, safety education and rescue, not paddling instruction. The content is relevant for clubs, camps, scouts and other entities providing trips.

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: Must be an ACA Member

Course Duration: 2 days (16 hours) minimum



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Course Location / Venue: Protected waterways with easy access, shore classroom and access to course appropriate conditions for on water, training, practice and assessment. Course is to be conducted within ½ mile of shore.

Assessor: Level 4: Open Water Coastal Kayaking Instructor (or higher)
Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Instructor with the Trip Leading Endorsement

Course Ratio:

Solo: 5 students : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 10 : 2

Tandem: 6 students : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 12 : 2

Type of Boat(s): Solo or Tandem Kayaks (IT discretion) with deck lines and flotation fore and aft. Spray skirts will be used for at least part of the course.

The sequence of assessment should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance.

Course Outline:

Day One Classroom and on shore discussion (IT judgment) depending on locale etc.

Introduction and Logistics

- Welcome
- Introduction of instructors and participants
- Workshop objectives
- Schedule
- Insurance waivers and medical disclosure
- PFD policy/Eligibility
- ACA SmartStart

- Applies appropriate discipline & group control
- Makes final safety decisions including trip cancellation
- Considers the well being of the group over the wants of an individual
- Takes final responsibility overall

Trip Leader Qualities

- Qualifications and desired characteristics of trip leaders
 - Judgment and leadership
 - Competent paddler
 - Good communication skills
 - River/Sea sense
 - Safety and rescue trained
- Trip leader

Trip Leader Knowledge

- Group Organization
 - Assignment of buddy boats o Group formations; Diamond and other, with attention to best position for the Leader
 - Communication systems
 - Audio and visual signals
 - Radios and protocol
 - Rules of the Nautical road



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- Group day camping ethics, including outdoor hygiene – Leave no trace, stretch breaks & lunch stops
- Group etiquette

Trip Preparations and Planning

- Recommended Guidelines for Leader/Participant Ratio:
 - 1 leader for every 6 participants with a minimum of 2 leaders/ 1 plus an assistant, for the first 10 participants 2:10 is recommended
 - Conditions or skill levels may warrant additional leaders or assistants
- Appropriate site selection and determining the skill level of the group
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- Sources of information on venues: other paddlers, guidebooks, Internet, locals, radio, and trip reports etc.
- Develop a float plan including:
 - Driving route to and from trip
 - Specific put-in, break & take-out locations on a chart/map if possible / emergency take outs
 - Daily schedules with approximate times
 - Contingency plans for bad weather, special health needs, problems or equipment failures. Plans should include evacuation routes.
 - Identify trip leaders and participants. Include emergency contact telephone numbers
 - Emergency contact information for local rescue, governmental agencies for the chosen trip and designated emergency contact person(s) for the group.

- Attach copies of permits and documentation of permissions

from private landowners when appropriate.

- Make assignments to secure the necessary permits and permissions.
- Develop a planning and orientation outline when appropriate. Include organizational, classroom and on water sessions. If no paddling orientation is planned, determine methods to verify skills and experience.
- With group input, determine trip rules for acceptable behavior being a requirement.
- Determine meals and cooking assignments, if any.
- Discuss personal and group equipment. Make assignments for specific group equipment.
- Secure medical releases and parental permissions.
- Discuss site-specific concerns.
- Organize transportation and shuttles. Include use of possible outfitters or livery services.

Trip Hazards and Prevention

- Environmental Hazards
 - Air and water temperature, sunburn
 - Hypothermia/Hyperthermia
 - Weather/lightning
 - Topography/shoals
 - Local hazards
- Dynamics
 - Tidal Currents
 - Tides
 - Winds, fetch
 - River Currents
 - River mouths
 - Straight channel
 - Bends
 - Right angle corners



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- Refracting waves
- Eddies
- Waves, chop, swell
- Specific Hazards
 - Access and egress conditions
 - Oyster Beds
 - Sand bars and other features
 - Wrecks
 - Weeds
 - Debris and logjams
 - Manmade obstructions
 - Bridge abutments
 - Entrapments
 - Disabled paddler
 - Boat traffic
- Difficulty of classification systems
- Prevention- reduce risk with recognition, avoidance and or management
 - Proper planning and pre-trip hazard identification
 - Proper skill training (first aid knowledge).
 - Scouting. Don't go where you don't know.
 - Always reassessing changing conditions
 - Towing, when and how
 - Just say "no" if uncomfortable. Better safe than sorry. "Challenge by choice"
- Survival kit (knife, matches, etc.) and where to carry what e.g. on your person
- Personal items including sunscreen, meds, hygiene products, plenty of food& water
- Items NOT to bring e.g., glass containers.
- Boats – properly outfitted.
 - Hatches/covers
 - Bailers and sponges
 - Bulkheads
 - Flotation materials and float bags
 - Foot braces, seating , deck lines
- Group
 - Adequate first aid kit(s).
 - Kayak repair kit for use on/off water
 - VHF's, cell phones (several), flares, dye, smoke etc.
 - Bivouac Kit
 - Tow bags-rescue ropes
 - Chart, Map and compass
 - Emergency Group Shelter
 - Spare paddles, food & water
 - Water purification
 - Bio breaks and Sanitation equipment

Personal and Group Safety Equipment

- Effective communication is key.
- Risk management issues. Warn and inform.
 - PFD-right type and size
 - Appropriate paddling clothes plus spares
 - Dry bags, water proof containers and packs
 - Appropriate foot wear
 - Night lighting and signal devices as appropriate and required by law.
 - Bivy bag, ground cloth, etc.

Debrief and discuss day two preparations, boats, gear etc.

End day one, or at IT discretion an evening session, homework etc.

Schedule - Day Two

The Put-in Talk/ Pre launch briefing

- Discuss weather and water temperature for the day
- Review trip plan for day including known hazards and plans to deal with them.



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- Review paddling partner and buddy boat assignments
- Discuss responsibility of buddy boats, lead boat and sweep boats and group organization on water
- Check PFD's for size and fit
- Check each boat for safety equipment, extra paddle and that all gear is well secured.
- Review auditory and visual signals
- Discuss what to do in the event of a capsize, the responsibility of the individual and the group.
- Discuss lost paddler procedures/scenario.
- Make sure wet exit procedure is clear and demonstrate/test as appropriate.
- Review etiquette and outdoor ethics

Review of Basic Paddling Skills (on water)

- Strokes
 - Forward
 - Back
 - Draws
 - Sculling
 - Sweeps
 - Braces
 - Rudder
- Maneuvers
 - Forward: boat moves in a straight line
 - Reverse: boat moves in a straight line
 - Edging: boat turns by edge control
 - Stopping in 3 to 4 strokes
 - Look back brace underway
 - Brace turns
 - Sideslips, draws on the move

Water Reading and Route Determination

- Beaufort Scale
- River Mouths and headlands
- Use of eddies
- Weather awareness

Rescue

- Principles of Rescue discussion and on water demo/practice.
- Priorities – People or boats/gear depending on conditions. Don't lose boat.
- Responsibilities of Victim
- Responsibilities of Rescuers
- Responsibilities of the Group
- Self defense; bracing, rolling, wet exits, swimming with boat and paddle

Rescues on-water

- Back Deck and bow hug
- Towing with rigs
- Towing Injured paddler
- Contact Tows
- T Rescues
- Paddle Float
- Re enter and roll w/float
- Sling assisted
- Scoop
- Hand of God
- Eskimo, bow and paddle

Boat and recovery and repair

- Bulldozing, herding, cowtails
- Rafting up for repairs on water

Conclusion & Wrap Up

- Importance of safety and trip leader responsibility
- Avoid and manage risks as much as possible
- Incident reporting
- Additional training in advanced first aid, maintaining CPR certification
- Take ACA/BCU courses
- Making things fun with games etc.
- Administer written exam
- Evaluation of course by participants



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- Assessments of participants by Instructor