



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 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 assessment course, or equivalent skills.

Course Duration: Combined IDW & ICE - 4 Day Minimum

Course Location / Venue: This class is taught on moving water in 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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Succeeding Levels of Certification:

None.

Complementary Levels of Certifications:

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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 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 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
 - Selects 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
- Maintain First Aid and CPR Requirements

Level 4: Whitewater Rafting-Paddling Instructor Requirements:

Fundamentally, we expect that Instructor Candidates should have basic paddling skills, before presenting themselves for evaluation as instructor candidates as below:

- 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
 - Have a Clear understanding of the ACA website and tools that exist therein
- 2) Demonstrate a knowledge of:



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- 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) Demonstrate the knowledge and ability to teach the following topics and skills:

RAFT HISTORY

- History of the sport
- Rafting terminology

RAFT & EQUIPMENT

- Parts of a Raft: Types, materials
- Paddle design, types and parts
- Multi thwart raft
- Cooler Frame to Boat interface,
- Proper paddler spacing
- 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, chicken/life lines
- Proper Inflation
- Securing equipment
- Care of equipment
- Raft , frame and paddle repair and improvisation

RIVER DYNAMICS (and how each item below changes with river levels)

- Tongues
- Bends
- Eddies
- Waves
- Holes
- Rocks
- Hazards
- How each of these features effect a paddle raft and why

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...)

5) Demonstrate the ability to teach and appropriately model these strokes and maneuvers:

LIFTING ~ CARRYING:

- Carries overhead
- Carries underhand

LAUNCHING:

- Lifting
- Stacking

- Shoreline
- Launching and Landing

IN THE RAFT:

- Seating and proper paddling position
 - Back and shoulder protection
- Foot and knee lock in positions for paddlers and captain
- Movements in the raft: high side, down
- Personal protection from loss of paddle, entrapment, safety of passengers

PADDLE:

- How to hold paddle
- Efficient paddle position (Use of Core Muscles)
- Foot and knee position
- Positions in the raft based on number of paddlers
- How to balance each paddlers ability

STROKES:

On all below Paddling related Categories: Candidate must be comfortable captaining raft with two or more paddlers

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

MANEUVERS: (calm water) as the paddle captain with at least two paddlers, lead the following

- 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 row in a straight line starting slow and working up 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 Square with 10 yard sides, 4 left turns, then spin and repeat in opposite direction.
- FORWARD LEFT/RIGHT TURN: Figure 8's in both directions



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- BACKWARD LEFT/RIGHT TURN: Make Square with 10 yard sides, 4 left turns, then spin and repeat in 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 III)

- PROPER RAFT ANGLE: Entering a Rapid/Tongue

- ANGLE ADJUSTMENT: While in Rapid
- PROPER USE: Forward stroke
- FERRIES: Front, Back
- EDDY TURNS: shallow, wide
- PEEL OUTS: shallow, wide
- SPIN: Pivot the raft – left & right and stop spin
- MICRO EDDY USE: While running Rapids, Boast Scouting and Safety Positions

6) Demonstrate the ability to teach and appropriately model these rescue techniques:

- ALL CANDIDATES: Must have taken a ACA or Rescue III Swift Water Rescue class
- RESPONSIBILITY: Group, Individual, Rescuer, Victim
- RESCUE Priorities: People, Boats & Gear
- SIGNALS: Whistle, Paddle, Hand
- RESCUE SEQUENCE: (RETHROG)
- BOAT FLIP & RECOVERY: Self, assisted (Considerations- Frame, load, flip safety, shore based flips for heavy boats)
- REENTRY: Self, assisted
- SWIMMING IN CURRENT: defensive and aggressive, down river position
- THROW ROPE / BAG: use and practice
- BASIC WADING
- ENTRAPMENTS: show stabilization line
- BOAT PIN/WRAP: strong arm, rope use (Boy scout pull, vector pull, mechanical advantage systems, anchors, safety considerations)
- BUMPING
- TOWING ANOTHER RAFT
- RESCUE EQUIPMENT: Unique to rafting due to force of water and raft load ability. Safety consideration while rescue equipment is under load

7) Demonstrate knowledge of, and the ability to teach, the following:

- RIVER ETIQUETTE: River rules of the road, safety in multi-use areas where others may be present.
- 4 W's- WIND, WAVES, WATER AND WEATHER as it relates to paddlers
- REGULATIONS – USCG / State / Local safety requirements
- SAFETY: Understand the risks of rafting and hazard avoidance
- HYPOTHERMIA ~ HYPERTHERMIA: Recognition and treatment HELP/HUDDLE
- ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: Leave No Trace, ecology, Camp Etiquette ext....
- TRIP PLANNING: Comfortable in preparing for a day or multi day trip



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- GROUP AWARENESS:** Familiar with whistle and paddle signals
- GENERAL:** Familiar with the different disciplines of paddle sport, Oars Boat-man-ship
- SECURING RAFTS TO VEHICLE/TRAILER:** Attach raft to rack or trailer using flat cam-straps or rope and suitable knots
- PERSONAL PREPARATION:** Planning, clothing, food and water
- RAFT:** types, parts, materials, maintenance, care and repair
- OARS:** Types, parts, materials, fit
- CONCEPTS OF ROWING:** in river environment
- 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, truckers hitch, and clove hitch. Munter-Mule for rescue purposes, and 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 harnesses, carabineers, anchor systems, etc...

GROUP MANAGEMENT

- 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