



Paddlesports Safety Facilitator

Facilitator Criteria

General Knowledge Module Overview: Fundamentally, we expect that Paddlesports Safety Facilitators (PSF) should have the ability to manage groups, have background knowledge of paddling safety and environmental hazards, and the ability to effectively maneuver their craft in order to perform and demonstrate competent rescue techniques. This certification allows the facilitator to introduce paddlecraft safety and knowledge to the beginner paddler in a land-based setting. Facilitators are encouraged to report all Paddlesports Safety classes taught while certified. This is a 1 year, non-renewable certification.

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: none

General Knowledge Module Duration: 4 hour minimum

Discipline Specific Module Durations: 1 hour minimum, each module

Instructor: This course may be offered by currently certified ACA Level 1 or higher Instructors with a Paddlesports Safety Facilitator Endorsement. If the ACA Instructor would like to offer the PSF course in another discipline, they must have, at minimum, an ACA Level 1 Assessment in that discipline to offer that module.



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Endorsements: Endorsements can be given by any currently certified ACA Level 1 or higher Instructor Trainer or Instructor Trainer Educator. If the ACA Instructor Trainer or Instructor Trainer Educator would like to offer the PSF endorsement in another discipline, they must have, at minimum, an ACA Level 1 Assessment in that discipline to offer that additional Instructor Endorsement module.

Course Location / Venue: Calm, flat water, protected from wind, waves and outside boat traffic, with no apparent current, and within swimming distance of shore.

Course Ratios: 12 students : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor the ratio can be 24:2

Succeeding Levels of Certification:

- Level 1: Introduction to Canoeing Instructor
- Level 1: Introduction to Kayaking Instructor
- Level 1: Introduction to SUP Instructor

The following is a list of the criteria used to evaluate Facilitator 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 Facilitator Certifications:

- Be at least 16 years old
- Meet the appropriate essential eligibility criteria
- Successfully complete a Paddlesports Safety Facilitator Certification Workshop and Written Exam
- Be a full ACA member
 - *(any membership type except Introductory or Event memberships)*
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of paddlesports and the ACA
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform all of the following material unassisted in the appropriate venue

Paddlesports Safety Facilitator Requirements (General Knowledge Module):

- 1) Demonstrate a knowledge of the ACA:
 - Education, Stewardship, and Competition programs
 - How to report a PSF course
 - Certification limitations:
 - i.e., not an instructor, not eligible for instructor course insurance
 - Promotion of ACA Outfitter, Livery & Guide Insurance
- 2) Demonstrate the following:
 - Positive interpersonal skills
 - Appropriate group management skills (including leadership and judgment)
 - Ability to choose an appropriate venue / class site
- 3) Demonstrate knowledge of the following safety concepts:
 - Life Jackets (PFD's): Types, Usage, Fitting, Coast Guard and State Regulations
 - Importance and preparation of a float plan



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- 6-P's of prevention concept: Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance
 - Universal signals: paddle, hand, whistle
 - Weather conditions important to the Paddler: 4-W's (Water, Wind, Waves and Weather)
 - Lightning/Storm awareness and protocols
 - Cold shock, hypothermia and hyperthermia; (HELP/HUDDLE) prevention and treatment
 - Signaling devices and safety equipment
 - Boat traffic awareness and safe practice
- 4) Demonstrate the knowledge of the following concepts and skills:
- Environmental Issues: Leave No Trace
 - Personal Preparation: planning, clothing, food and water
 - Group Organization & Travel
 - Trip Planning: familiar with how to prepare for a short day trip
 - Federal, State and Local Laws and Regulations
 - Car Topping: Loading/Unloading (use of straps and knots)
- 5) Demonstrate a knowledge and the ability to perform the following skills related to facilitating a group on a sheltered lake near shore:
- Planning a trip
 - On-Water Etiquette
 - Group (3 boat minimum)
 - Group Management (Lead /Sweep, Safety, Spacing)
- 6) Demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to perform the following land-based rescue concepts and techniques:
- Possible Hazards: Submerged objects (pilings, rocks, strainers), Current, Changing water levels, other water craft
 - Rescue Sequence (RETHROG)
 - Rescue Priorities (People, craft, gear)
 - Responsibilities of the rescuer, group, victim
 - Evaluate water confidence and comfort
 - Effective Rescue Techniques (Throw bags or Type IV flotation) to target at 30 feet
- 7) Satisfactorily pass the Paddlesports Safety Facilitator Exam.
- 8) Satisfactorily complete 1 or more discipline (craft) specific modules.



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Paddlesports Safety Facilitator Exam

Personal Preparation and Planning

1. Planning the route for the day involves:
 - a. Obtaining the weather forecast
 - b. Deciding on a distance the group can paddle
 - c. Discussing local water hazards
 - d. Establishing intermediate meeting points on the route
 - e. All of the above

2. What information should be included in a float plan?
 - a. Weather forecast for the day
 - b. Phone number to call if overdue
 - c. Maximum boat capacities
 - d. Pre-departure checklist

3. Prior to each outing a float plan should be:
 - a. Filed with the U.S. Coast Guard
 - b. Mailed to the state police
 - c. Given to a local marine patrol officer
 - d. Left with a relative or friend

4. When dressing for paddling, in what order should environmental factors be considered:
 - a. Current weather conditions, water temperature, weather forecast
 - b. Weather forecast, current weather conditions, water temperature
 - c. Water temperature, weather forecast, current weather conditions
 - d. Water temperature, current weather conditions, weather forecast

5. It is unsafe to paddle _____.
 - a. While drinking alcohol
 - b. In weather conditions that you are not prepared for
 - c. Alone
 - d. All of the above

6. Paddlers should _____.
 - a. Take a water bottle and drink rarely
 - b. Take a water bottle for emergencies only
 - c. Take a water bottle and drink from it frequently
 - d. Not drink water while boating



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7. To avoid hypothermia
 - a. Dress in wool or synthetic layers
 - b. Wear cotton clothing
 - c. Drink lots of coffee
 - d. Insulate your head, neck, and hands
 - e. Both A and D
8. The most common paddle sport injuries are:
 - a. Sunburn
 - b. Dehydration
 - c. Sore muscles
 - d. Foot injuries
 - e. All of the above

Life Jacket Knowledge

9. What is the most important thing about a life jacket?
 - a. You wear it
 - b. Good color
 - c. Style
 - d. Price
10. A threadbare, worn or discolored life jacket should be _____.
 - a. Washed and repaired
 - b. Destroyed and disposed of
 - c. Given away
 - d. Returned to manufacturer
11. A life jacket should fit _____.
 - a. Loosely so swimming is easier
 - b. Casually to keep from overheating
 - c. Snugly and securely
 - d. So it can be pulled overhead easily
12. What are U.S. Coast Guard life jacket requirements for adult paddlers?
 - a. One per boat
 - b. One per occupant
 - c. Two per boat
 - d. Regulation does not apply to paddlers



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General Knowledge

13. When entering or exiting a kayak/canoe, or getting onto and moving to a standing position on a SUP, _____.
- Keep your upper body centered over the craft
 - Float the craft in the water
 - Use the paddle for secondary support
 - All of the Above
14. What is a hazardous place to paddle for inexperienced paddlers?
- Smaller lakes
 - Protected waterways without fast current
 - Protected coastlines with less than one foot surf
 - Flooded rivers
15. To increase stability while paddling
- Point your craft into the wave or wake
 - Keep your weight centered and craft appropriately trimmed
 - Continue to paddle smoothly
 - All of the above
16. When you hear thunder
- Wait to see if there is any lightning before getting off the water
 - Get off the water and monitor the weather
 - Seek shelter underneath a tall tree, gulley or shallow cave
 - Remove your PFD in case you need to dive into the water
17. How will a boat or board perform if it is loaded beyond its capacity?
- It will be easier to stop
 - It will have better steering
 - It will be harder to control
 - It will be much faster
18. Which of the following is true about low head dams?
- They are easily spotted from upstream
 - They can be safely approached from downstream
 - They should be avoided both above and below
 - They have a strong backwash above the dam
19. Which of the following is most likely to occur during the initial shock when falling into cold water?
- Gasping and rapid breathing
 - Loss of feeling in the limbs
 - Cooling of organs in the body core
 - Stiffness in the fingers and limbs



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20. A (an) _____ is a hazard found on the outside of a sharp river bend or on bridge abutments.
- Keeper
 - Strainer
 - Hole
 - Eddy
21. When paddling around other recreational boaters and vessels:
- stay visible and vigilant
 - paddle craft always have the right of way
 - change your direction of travel often and at random
 - stop paddling when you see other boats
22. When traveling in a group you should maintain _____.
- clear communication
 - line of sight of group members
 - awareness of your surroundings including hazards
 - a position of usefulness to your fellow paddlers
 - All of the above
23. When planning a journey with the same launch and take out, it is best to
- paddle against the wind and current first
 - paddle with the wind and current to cover as much ground as possible
 - consider bail out point if the weather should turn on you
 - Both, A and C

Rescue Knowledge

24. When performing a rescue, which do you rescue first?
- Boat / Board
 - Paddler
 - Gear
 - Closest in proximity to rescuer
25. If you capsize in moving water, you should do all of the following EXCEPT
- Check on your partner
 - Stand up and attempt to slowly walk to shore
 - Hold on to your craft and your paddle
 - Get into the defensive swimming position
26. When throwing a throw bag to a swimmer, it's important to
- Have eye contact
 - Yell "rope"
 - Throw the rope an arms length of the swimmer
 - All of the above



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Paddlesports Safety Facilitator Exam Answer Sheet

Paddlesports Safety Facilitator Candidate: _____

Date: _____ ACA certified Instructor: _____

Please circle your response

- 1. A B C D E
- 2. A B C D
- 3. A B C D
- 4. A B C D
- 5. A B C D
- 6. A B C D
- 7. A B C D E
- 8. A B C D E
- 9. A B C D
- 10. A B C D
- 11. A B C D
- 12. A B C D
- 13. A B C D
- 14. A B C D
- 15. A B C D
- 16. A B C D
- 17. A B C D
- 18. A B C D
- 19. A B C D
- 20. A B C D
- 21. A B C D
- 22. A B C D E
- 23. A B C D

- 24. A B C D
- 25. A B C D
- 26. A B C D

Test Scoring : _____ / 26
21/26 or higher is passing