Level 4: Swiftwater Rescue
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 - 5 Day (40 hour) Minimum

Course Location / Venue: SWR instructor courses are taught on class II to III rapids

Class Ratio: 12 Instructor Candidates: 1 Instructor Trainer; with an additional instructor the ratio can be 24 : 2

Succeeding Levels of Certification: Level 5: Advanced Swiftwater Rescue

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 Certification Workshop (IDW & ICE)

- Be a full ACA member & upon successful completion of the ICE, 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

- Instructors are expected to be able to demonstrate, teach, and model everything on the official ACA skills course and assessment course outlines which correspond to their level/craft.

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

Level 4: Swiftwater Rescue Instructor Requirements:

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

Demonstrate knowledge of ACA Policies & Procedures:
- € How to register & report a course (with and without insurance)
- € Understanding of the ACA Waiver & Release of Liability
- € Instructor Maintenance Requirements

Demonstrate knowledge of teaching and learning theory:
- € Characteristics of different types of learners
- € Effective teaching methods
- € Effective prepared and impromptu presentations
- € Evaluate and provide feedback
- € Effective documentation of skill assessments

Demonstrate the following:
- € Positive interpersonal skills
- € Appropriate group management skills (including leadership and judgment)
- € Ability to choose an appropriate venue / class site

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

Class Management

- € Collect and administer all appropriate course paperwork
- € Establish an appropriate learning environment

Rescue Philosophy
- € Focus on prevention and preparation as the keys to managing river accidents
- € Establish rescue priorities and apply them throughout the course
- € Focus on simpler, safer, faster techniques as highest priority

Scene Management
- € Describe common roles in the incident command system (ICS). Understand the differences between formal (ICS) used by professional rescuers and the informal system used by recreational boaters.
- € Appropriately apply formal and informal incident command systems to course evolutions and scenarios
- € Establish / review appropriate communication techniques

Medical Issues
- € Appropriately manage medical events during courses

€ Encourage participants to further their medical training

€ Understand how to obtain more advanced medical and rescue care at the teaching site, and recognize challenges associated with medical care in remote / aquatic environments.

Equipment

€ Focus on how to choose appropriate gear, instead of focusing on what the instructor

€ personally prefers

€ Emphasize prior planning and practice when using rescue equipment

€ Understand the strengths and limitations of personal gear and rescue equipment

Rescue Vests

€ Correctly thread buckle and understand non-standard options for threading

€ Appropriately check participant's vest (visually and hands-on)

€ Understand strengths and limitations of commonly available rescue vests

€ Rescue Tether use

€ Identify and apply multiple rescue vest techniques during the course and encourage participant innovation

Throw Ropes

€ Discuss rope construction and characteristics desired in a river rescue rope

€ Discuss and demonstrate appropriate rope care

€ Explain advantages and disadvantages of all throwing techniques

€ Discuss and demonstrate appropriate belay techniques

€ Discuss and demonstrate proper rope receiving techniques

€ Discuss and demonstrate multiple techniques for restuffing bags

€ Discuss and demonstrate multiple techniques for recoiling ropes

€ Demonstrate a vector pull and discuss its applications to rope rescue

€ Consistently throw a bag at least 30 feet to a swimmer in a rapid, using multiple techniques, including a coil.

€ Coil and make a second accurate throw, to a victim in a rapid at least 30 feet away, within 20 seconds.

€ Consistently throw a bag at least 40 feet and cross a stationary, on-land, 4 foot wide target, using multiple techniques, including a coil

Line Ferries and Line Crossings

€ Demonstrate line ferries using swimming, boating, wading and throwing techniques

€ Discuss and demonstrate pendulum and reverse pendulum applications

€ Incorporate line ferries into other drills

€ Emphasize evaluating the river environment and using the simplest and most effective technique

€ Establish effective line crossings using hand over hand tag lines and pendulums

Knots

€ Describe features of effective knots

€ Describe the strengths and limitations of common rescue knots

€ Choose appropriate knots in any given situation

€ Appropriately tie all required and optional knots in the SWR curriculum, plus any type of load-releasing hitch other than a "no knot" (Munter hitch, mariner hitch, or radium release hitch)

€ Tie an in-line figure 8 and a double eyed figure 8

Anchors

- € Discuss desirable features of one and two point anchors
- € Demonstrate one and two point anchors using natural and manmade features
- € Understand the rationale for self-equalizing, load distributing anchors in swiftwater rescue
- € Discuss and demonstrate effects of friction and vector pulls on anchors

Mechanical Advantage

- € Discuss and demonstrate the importance of simplicity and rescue safety in mechanical advantage systems
- € Create an appropriate 2:1, 3:1 and 4:1 mechanical advantage system using brakes, dampers and directional changes
- € Discuss and demonstrate the effects of friction and vector pulls in mechanical advantage systems

Pins

- € Focus on avoiding pins and early self rescue
- € Understand rescuer hazards associated with pin release
- € Focus on rescue priorities – people over equipment
- € Use multiple techniques to effectively release pinned craft and equipment

Entrapments

- € Focus on avoiding entrapments and maintaining rescue safety
- € Identify common causes of entrapment
- € Use appropriate skills (e.g., wading, snag lines,etc) to contact the victim and release the entrapment

Stabilization, cinch, and snag lines

- € Establish effective stabilization lines on land and in water
- € Effectively snag foot entrapped victims in a rapid
- € Coordinate creation of simple cinches for people and gear in rapids Simple cinch – open and closed, Lasso loop cinch, and Kiwi cinch

Water Hazards and Hydrology

- € Create effective teaching modules using blackboards, handouts, sand tables, video, etc., as well as using natural features while alongside a river
- € Appropriately apply hydrology to site selection and to all in-water modules

Swimming

- € Choose appropriate swimming venues, with lower risk to students
- € Discuss and demonstrate appropriate techniques for entering rivers
- € Discuss and demonstrate defensive and aggressive swimming techniques
- € Effectively and repeatedly peel out, catch eddies and ferry. Effectively swim through waves and hydraulics
- € Aggressively swim a downstream class II or higher whitewater course at least 100 yards long, with multiple ferries and eddy moves
- € Discuss appropriate techniques for managing strainer, holes and drops

Strainers

- € Create and position an effective strainer bar
- € Discuss and demonstrate defensive, passive and aggressive approaches to strainers
- € Discuss "Canadian Log Roll" technique for trees too large to avoid or swim over

Wading

€ Discuss and demonstrate multiple wading techniques

€ Choose appropriate techniques for application in other skill modules

€ Discuss and demonstrate practical applications of wading solo with a paddle, wading with a partner and wading as part of 3+ person team (e.g., wedge, circle, line astern or line abreast, fence wade)

Boat-based rescue

€ Paddle candidate's craft of choice effectively and comfortably in class II+ whitewater

€ Demonstrate a working knowledge of all types of boat-based rescue, for all paddle craft

€ Emphasize the importance of paddling skill for effective boat-based rescues

€ Discuss the rationale for boat-based rescue over potentially lower risk techniques

Tethered and Non-Tethered Swimming Rescues

€ Discuss and demonstrate effective technique and timing for live bait rescues

€ Apply effective swimming strategies while performing rescue

€ Discuss and apply common patterns of victim behavior

€ Emphasize the high risk nature of contact rescues

€ Discuss and demonstrate appropriate uses of tethered swimming rescues, beyond contact rescues (e.g., line receivers)

V-lowers

€ Emphasize strengths, limitations, and multiple applications

€ Discuss and demonstrate in-water communication with shore teams

€ Develop appropriate emergency plans for vest failure

€ Discuss and demonstrate effective body positions while deployed on a V-lower

Scenarios

€ Create scenarios appropriate for specific sites and participants

€ Effectively manage scenarios

€ Provide effective feedback to scenario participants

€ Effectively participate in appropriately challenging scenarios