



AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION RIVER KAYAKING

Purpose - The ACA River Kayak Course is a program emphasizing safety, enjoyment and skill acquisition for entry-level through intermediate individuals in public, private and commercial settings.

Goals:

- **Safety:** To safely paddle on whitewater, perform self rescue and respond to emergencies that arise.
- **Enjoyment:** To become aware of paddling opportunities and the rewards of lifetime participation in paddling.
- **Skills:** To acquire the skills to safely and enjoyably paddle a kayak on whitewater.

Course Venue: Course may be conducted on sections of rivers rated up to class I-II

Course Duration: 8 hours (Instructors may adjust the course at their discretion.)

Prerequisites: None

Successive Courses: Whitewater Kayak and Advanced Whitewater Kayak. River Kayak skills are a prerequisite for successive courses.

The following is a summary of course content for the River Kayak program. The **REQUIRED** information is required for all courses. All other information should be considered optional and included to best fit the students, class locations, and time allowed.

Introduction and Logistics (Required)

- Welcome
- Introduction of instructors and participants
- Overview with expectations & limitations
- Waiver/Assumption of Risk/Medical Form
- Site specific procedures, regulations, times
- WARM UP and stretching to reduce injury
- ACA Safety Packet (AWA revised safety code)
- Hypothermia
- Alcohol/Chemical Substance abuse
- Group Responsibilities/ No peer pressure

Personal Preparation (Required)

- Learning Judgment

- Continue learning from other experienced paddlers
- Responsibility to support other paddlers (no peer pressure)
- Group Equipment: extra paddle, rescue sling, drybags, maps, first aid kit, rescue gear
- Guidebooks, local knowledge
- Assessing Current environmental conditions, including
- Water, Weather, Time of Day, Temperature, Accessibility
- Assessing personal and group dynamics (Skills, Equipment, Group makeup, Logistics, Group selection, Leadership)

Safety and Rescue

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- A. Principles of Rescue (**required**)
 1. Priorities - People, Boats, Gear
 2. Responsibilities of Victim
 3. Responsibilities of Rescuers
- B. Types of Rescue
 1. Self-Rescue in moving current (**required**)
 - body/boat positions
 - handling equipment
 2. Boat-Assisted Rescue
 - Tired Swimmer
 - Towing
 4. Bumping
 5. Shoreline Rescue - Extension Rescues
 - Use of Throw Bags/Ropes
 - Pinned Craft

Equipment

- Kayak: types, materials, flotation, parts (including safety features: walls, foot braces, grab loops)
- Kayak outfitting: comfort & safety; back rests, hip pads
- Paddle: types, parts, length, blade size & shape, fitting, hand position
- Spray skirts: types & material, grab loop!
- Care of equipment
- Personal Equipment: water, food, shoes, sunscreen, bug spray, sun glasses, eyeglass straps, protective clothing for heat or cold, sponge, hat, foot protection, food, whistle
- Car topping: Loading and unloading, racks, tie down
- (**required equipment topics**)
- Life jackets (PFDs): types, fit
- Helmet: types, fit

Getting Started (required)

- Launching, carries, landing
- Water confidence and comfort
- Rescue Priorities: People, gear, & boats
- Wet exits
- How to empty a kayak
- The Terminology of Paddling
- (Frequently blended in with stroke instruction)
- Types of strokes: power, turning & bracing
- Stroke components: catch, propulsion, recovery, control and correction
- Effective Body Usage and Bio-Kinetics
- Use of larger torso muscles
- Arms as struts connecting paddle to torso

- Avoidance of positions that contribute to shoulder injury or dislocations

The Paddling Environment (* items Required)

Fundamentals of River Currents

- Characteristics of Current*
- Downstream and Upstream V's / Chutes
- Eddies/ Eddy Lines
- Waves/ Wave Holes
- Bends
- Effects of Obstacles
- Ledges/ Horizon Lines*
- Strainers & Sieves*
- Rocks/ Pillows
- Holes/ Hydraulics*
- Other Hazards
- Power of the Current / River Level
- Cold Water*
- Dams/ Flow Diversion Structures/ Pipelines
- Undercut Rocks / Ice *
- International Scale of River Difficulty (handout: American Whitewater Safety Code)

River Running

A. Strategies in Running Rivers

1. How to paddle in current
 - Spacing/ Avoid "tunnel vision"
2. Scouting
 - From boat/ From shore
 - How to establish the "best" route/ "Plan "B"
3. Portaging Hazards

B. Group Organization on the River

1. Group cohesiveness (lead, sweep boats, etc.)
2. Universal River Signals System

C. Emergency Procedures

Strokes

- Forward Sweep
- (aggressive and reactive techniques)
- Reverse Sweep
- Stern Draw
- Bow Draw
- Forward
- Back
- T (Eskimo) Rescue
- Optional at instructors' discretion:
- Roll
- High Brace
- Low Brace
- Bow Draw

- Stationary Draw
- Sculling Draw
- Duffek and other draw variations

Maneuvers

- (practiced on flatwater)
- Spins (onside and offside): boat pivots in place
- Forward: boat moves in reasonably straight line
- Reverse: boat moves in a reasonably straight line
- Stopping: boat stops within a reasonable distance
- Turns: boat turns in broad arc made while underway
- Veering, Carving, and paddling the “inside circle”
- Abeam: boat moves sideways without headway
- Sideslips: boat moves sideways with headway

Whitewater Practice

- Ferries
- Eddy Turns
- Peelouts
 - Wide (exit wide from eddy line)
 - Shallow (exit close to eddy line)
- Sequences of Maneuvers
 - C-turns (Peel out and eddy into same eddy)
 - S-turns (Peel out one side and eddy into opposite side)
- Surfing (for Whitewater course only)

Next Steps (required)

- Emphasize the need for further instruction, practice and experience
- River Reading
- Hazard Recognition and Avoidance
- Boat Control
- Managing, Reducing, Eliminating Risks
- Recommendation for First Aid, CPR, and rescue training
- River Etiquette
- Other Paddling options
- Local paddling groups/clubs
- ACA Membership forms
- Participation cards
- Evaluation of course