



AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION
LEVEL 3: COASTAL KAYAKING
LEVEL: 4 OPEN WATER COASTAL KAYAKING
LEVEL 5: ADVANCED OPEN WATER COASTAL KAYAKING
Instructor Criteria

General Requirements for all Certifications:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Successfully complete an Instructor Certification Workshop (IDW & ICE).
- ACA membership including the Safety Education & Instruction Council (SEIC).
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of Paddlesports and the ACA.

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.
- Attend for IT signature (within the four-year certification period) at least one of the following: Instructor Methods Workshop, Instructor Development Workshop, Instructor Certification Workshop
- Maintain ACA membership and SEIC registration annually.

Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Instructor Requirements:

Fundamentally, we expect that paddlers should be experienced sea kayakers in mild to moderate conditions, before presenting themselves for evaluation as instructor candidates at Level 3: Coastal Kayaking.

- 1) Demonstrate the ability to teach and model the basic paddle strokes:
 - Forward
 - Reverse
 - Forward and reverse sweeps
 - Draw and sculling draw
 - High and low braces
- 2) Demonstrate the ability to teach and model basic rescue techniques:
 - T-rescue
 - Side-by-Side
 - Rafted-T
 - Paddle Float
- 3) Also have working knowledge of other rescues
 - Scramble
 - Reentry and Roll with Paddle Float
 - Reentry and Roll
 - All-In
 - Scoop
 - Sling
- 4) Demonstrate ability to perform a reliable Eskimo roll.
- 5) Demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to teach, the following:
 - Safety issues and hazards of coastal kayaking

- Basic chart reading and use
 - Weather conditions important to the kayaker
 - Hypothermia and hyperthermia; prevention and treatment
 - Signaling devices and safety equipment
 - Boat traffic, Rules of the Road
 - Kayak design and equipment
 - Kayak towing technique
- 6) Demonstrate ability to paddle comfortably with grace and style, as well as to perform rescues efficiently, in calm water.
- 7) Demonstrate leadership, group management skills, experience and judgment necessary to be a safe, effective instructor.

Proficiency Requirements for Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Instructors:

L3: Coastal Kayaking instructor certification can not be completed unless during some period two of the conditions necessary for assessment are present during some portion the certification course. The four criteria include:

- 10-15 knot winds
- 1-2 foot seas
- 1-2 foot breaking waves
- 1-2 knots of current

Level 4: Open Water Coastal Kayaking Instructor Requirements:

Fundamentally, we expect that paddlers should be experienced sea kayakers in a variety of conditions, including rough water, before presenting themselves for evaluation as instructor candidates at the Open Water Level.

- 1) Demonstrate the ability to teach and model the basic paddle strokes:
 - Forward
 - Reverse
 - Forward and reverse sweeps
 - Draw and sculling draw
 - High and low braces
- 2) Demonstrate the ability to teach and model basic rescue techniques:
 - T-rescue
 - Side-by-Side
 - Rafted-T
 - Paddle Float
- 3) Also have working knowledge of other rescues:
 - Scramble
 - Reentry and Roll with Paddle Float
 - Reentry and Roll
 - All-In
 - Scoop
 - Sling
- 4) Demonstrate ability to perform a reliable Eskimo roll (3 rolls within 1 minute, one must be from a non set-up position)
- 5) Demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to teach, the following:
 - Wind, weather and waves
 - Tides and current
 - Chart reading, compass reading and basic navigation
 - Surf zone characteristics and hazards
 - Coastal features and hazards
 - Hypothermia and hyperthermia; prevention and treatment
 - Signaling devices and safety equipment
 - Boat traffic, Rules of the Road

- Kayak design and equipment
- Kayak towing technique
- 6) Demonstrate ability to paddle comfortably with grace and style in surf, tide rips, and rough water.*
- 7) Demonstrate the ability to perform rescues efficiently in rough water.
- 8) Demonstrate leadership and group management skills, experience and judgment necessary to be a safe, effective instructor.

**Note: Solid rough water skill (paddling in rough conditions with “grace and style”) must be demonstrated before Open Water certification.*

Proficiency Requirements for Open Water Instructor (OW):

OW certification can not be completed unless during some period two of the conditions necessary for rough water assessment are present during some portion the certification course. Two conditions must occur, but they do not have to be simultaneous. Area of escape from rough conditions must be accessible. The four criteria include:

- 3-5 foot seas
- 15-20 knot winds
- 3-4 foot surf
- 3-4 knots of current

Level 5: Advanced Open Water (AOW) Instructor Requirements:

Fundamentally, we expect that paddlers should be very experienced Open Water Instructors (2 years minimum) in a variety of conditions, including rough water, surf, and tidal currents before presenting themselves for assessment as instructor candidates at the Advanced Open Water Instructor Level. The primary difference between AOW and OW is this: the OW Instructor has to be personally proficient in rough water but is not expected nor certified to teach and manage a group in those conditions. The AOW Instructor must be more experienced and have the necessary training to conduct the approved ACA courses that fall within their certification.

All of the requirements for Basic and OW plus:

- 1) Demonstrate the ability to teach and model launching and landing in surf.
- 2) Demonstrate the ability to teach and model strokes in rough water.
- 3) Demonstrate the ability to teach and model rough water towing.
- 4) Demonstrate the ability to teach and model rough water rescue techniques including; Back deck rescue, bow and paddle shaft rescue, self rescues, T-rescue variations, loaded boat rescues, etc.
- 5) Demonstrate ability to consistently roll in very rough water, wind and surf.
- 6) Demonstrate ability to paddle comfortably with grace and style in surf, tide rips, and rough water.
- 7) Demonstrate leadership and group management skills in rough water and have the experience and judgment necessary to be a safe, effective instructor.

In any case, AOW certification cannot be completed unless during some period each of the conditions necessary for rough water assessment are present during some portion of the certification course.

**Conditions appropriate for rough water skill assessment:*

3 - 5 foot seas, 15-25 knots wind, 3-4 foot surf break, 4-5 knots current. Area of escape from rough conditions must be accessible. At least TWO of the conditions must take place for OW and assessment in EACH and EVERY ONE of the conditions must take place for AOW.