



ACA River Kayak Day-Trip Leading Assessment Course

Overall Objective:

This course is intended to provide the minimum skills and training necessary for an adult leader with ACA L 3 paddling skills, to safely lead a trip for participants with adequate paddling skills, on

day trips, in moving water up to and including Class I-II rapids. Course conditions are level I-II rapids where limited maneuvering in current may be required to avoid obstacles.

All of the following requirements are to be assessed in the course venue: class I-II rivers.

Specific Objectives:

At the conclusion of this course, each participant should be able to:

- Plan a trip, including a float plan with appropriate travel distances, contingency plans for weather to include changing weather patterns, health problems or equipment failures and notification procedures in case of an emergency.
- Identify the most likely hazards to be encountered on the trip and describe what precautions can be taken to avoid them or minimize their effects.
- Determine what personal and group safety equipment would be appropriate for the trip.
- Describe how to organize and effectively lead a group of paddlers while on the trip including the appropriate use of discipline.
- Provide the basic elements that should be included in a “put-in” talk.
- Demonstrate basic paddling skills needed for the trip.
- Demonstrate effective self-rescue using defensive and aggressive swimming skills.
- Demonstrate how to properly assist paddlers from shore with a throw bag and/rope.
- Demonstrate how to safely recover equipment (i.e. paddles and boats)
- Demonstrate how to do a boat-assisted rescue.
- Demonstrate how to affect wading rescues.

Intended Audience:

Adults who are responsible for leading trips of youth or adults, on moving water up to and including rivers with Class I-II rapids.

Prerequisites:

ACA L 3 River Kayak Course, or equivalent skills

Course Duration:

16 hours, or more to include Assessment

Teaching site:

moving water up to and including Class I - II.

RIVER KAYAK DAY-TRIP LEADING ASSESSMENT

COURSE OUTLINE

Day one. Classroom, or on shore discussion. (Assessors judgment) depending on locale, etc.)

Introduction and Logistics (40 minutes)

- Welcome
- Introduction of instructors and participants
- Workshop objectives
- Schedule
- Insurance waivers and medical disclosure
- PFD policy/Eligibility
- ACA Smartstart

Trip Leader Qualities (1 hour)

- Qualifications and desired characteristics of trip leaders
 - Judgment and leadership
 - Competent paddler
 - Good communication skills
 - River sense/awareness
 - Safety and rescue trained
- Trip leader
 - Applies appropriate discipline & group control
 - Makes final safety decisions including trip cancellation
 - Considers the well-being of the group over the wants of an individual
 - Takes final responsibility overall

Trip Leader Knowledge (1.5 hour) discussion

- Group Organization
 - Assignment of buddy boats
 - Group formations; responsibility for others, with attention to best position for the Leader
 - Communication systems
 - Audio and visual river signals
 - International Scale of River Difficulty
- Leave No Trace – outdoor hygiene, stretch break, and lunch stops
- Group etiquette with put-ins, take-outs, property owners, and changing clothing in public

Trip Preparations and Planning (2 hour)

- Recommended Guidelines for Leader/Participant Ratio:
 - 1 leader for every 10 participants, with an assistant.
 - Conditions or skill levels may warrant additional leaders
- Appropriate river selection and determining skill level of the group
- Sources of information on rivers- other paddlers, guide books, Internet
- Develop a float plan including:
 - Driving route to and from

- Specific put-in and take-out locations with a map
- Schedules with approximate times
- Contingency plans for bad weather, health problems or equipment failures. Plans should include evacuation routes.
- Identify trip leaders and participants. Include contact telephone numbers
- Emergency contact information for local rescue agency(s) and/or governmental agency(s) responsible for specific river and designated emergency contact person for group.
- Distance to and access points for emergency care/evacuation
- Attach copies of permits and documentation of permissions from private landowners when appropriate.
- Make assignments to secure the necessary permits and permissions.
- Develop a planning and training schedule when appropriate. Include organizational, classroom, and on-the-water time. If no training is planned, determine methods of verification of skills including swimming and paddling.
- With group input, determine trip rules for acceptable behavior and discipline consequences.
- Determine if food or snacks are necessary.
- Discuss personal and group equipment. Make assignments for specific group equipment.
- Secure medical releases and parental permissions.
- Discuss environmental concerns.
- Organize transportation and shuttles. Include use of possible outfitters or livery services.

Trip Hazards and Prevention (1 hour)

- Environmental Hazards
 - Air temperature
 - Water temperature
 - Hypothermia/Hyperthermia
 - Changing weather/water levels
- River Dynamics
 - Flow volume
 - Gradient-elevation changes
 - Flow rates and current
 - Straight channel
 - Bends
 - Right angle turns at obstacles
 - Eddies
 - Waves
- Specific River Hazards
 - Rocks (upstream and downstream Vs)
 - Holes
 - Low-head dams and ledges
 - Undercut rocks
 - Strainers and sieves
 - Debris and logjams
 - Manmade obstructions
 - Bridge abutments
 - Entrapments
 - Pins and broaches
- River classification systems

- Prevention
 - Proper planning and pre-trip hazard identification
 - Proper skill training
 - Scouting from boat or shore and when
 - Constant Reassessment of changing conditions
 - Lining or portaging boats
 - “Just Say NO!” if uncomfortable. Better safe than sorry.

Personal and Group Safety Equipment (1hour) discussion

- Awareness and Effective communication are key.
- Risk management issues. Warn and inform.
 - Life Jackets - right type and size
 - Properly fitting helmet
 - Appropriate paddling clothes plus spares
 - Dry bags, water proof containers and packs
 - Appropriate foot wear
 - Night lighting and signal devices (cell/radio) as appropriate.
 - Bivy bag, ground cloth, etc.
 - Survival kit (knife, matches, etc.) and where to carry what - e.g. on your person
 - Personal items including sunscreen, meds, hygiene products, plenty of food & water
 - Items NOT to bring - e.g., glass containers.

- Boats – properly outfitted.
 - Grab loops intact
 - Sponges
 - Flotation materials and float bags
 - Center Walls/Pillars where necessary
 - Foot braces, backbands, thigh braces
- Group
 - Adequate first aid kit(s).
 - Repair kit for use on/off water
 - Cell phones (several) and other communication devices
 - Bivouac Kit if appropriate
 - Tow systems-rescue ropes
 - River maps, Compass
 - Emergency Group Shelter
 - Spare paddles, food & water
 - Water purification
 - Bio breaks and Sanitation equipment

Debrief and discuss day two preparations, boats, gear etc.

End of Day One, or at IT’s discretion an evening session, homework, etc.

Schedule, Day Two. ACA Day Trip Leader

The Put-in Talk/ Pre launch briefing (40 minutes)

- Discuss weather and water temperature/conditions for the day

- Review trip plan for day including known hazards and plans to deal with them.
- Review paddling partner and buddy boat assignments
- Discuss responsibility of buddy boats, lead boat and sweep boats and group organization on water
- Check PFD's for size and fit
- Check each boat for safety equipment, inflated flotation bags, and that all gear is well-secured.
- Review auditory and visual signals
- Discuss what to do in the event of a capsized, the responsibility of the individual and the group.
- Demonstrate and discuss Foot Entrapment, defensive swimming position, and aggressive self-rescue.
- Discuss lost paddler procedures/scenario.
- **Make sure wet exit procedure is clear** and demonstrate/test as appropriate.
- Review etiquette and outdoor ethics

Review of Basic Paddling Skills (2hours as needed) on water

- Strokes
 - Forward
 - Back
 - Sweeps
 - Bracing
 - Draws (spin control)
- Maneuvers
 - Forward: boat moves in a straight line
 - Reverse: boat moves in a straight line
 - Edging: boat turns with edge control
 - Carving turns
 - Sideslips, draws on the move

Water Reading and Route Determination (30minutes)

- Understanding Behavior of Water in the Riverbed
- River Running Strategies, i.e. Destination, Obstructions, Route, Alternatives (DORA)
- Use of eddies
- Awareness of weather – current conditions and upcoming conditions

Rescue (2 hours)

- Principles of Rescue discussion and on-water demo/practice.
 - Priorities – the group, swimmer, boat and gear depending on conditions.
 - Responsibilities of swimmer
 - Responsibilities of Rescuers, split for swimmer, boat, gear
 - Responsibilities of the Group
 - Self defense; bracing, rolling, wet exits, swimming with boat and paddle
 - Importance of gaining self rescue skills

Rescues Continued (2 hours) on water

- Contact Rescues, bow/stern tow swimmers with proper care

- Towing boats/bulldozing boats to shore
- Use of Rescue Vest and waist towline (quick release).
- Rafted support/rescue
- T - Rescues
- Boat-over-Boat Rescue/importance of inflated airbags
- In-Water Re-entry
- Hand of God type rescues for a capsized paddler unable to wet exit

Review and Wrap Up

- Importance of safety and trip leader responsibility
- Avoid and manage risks as much as possible
- Incident reporting
- Additional training in advanced first aid, wilderness first aid, maintaining CPR certification
- Take ACA courses
- Making things fun with games etc.
- Evaluation of course by participants
- Assessments of participants by Instructor

Suggested Books and Videos

- *Kayaking* by the American Canoe Association
- *Whitewater Safety and Rescue* by Ferraro
- *Swiftwater Rescue* by Slim Ray
- *River Rescue* by Les Bechtel and Slim Ray
- *Whitewater Self Defense DVD* by Performance Video