



## Swiftwater Rescue Instructor Performance Objectives

**Venue:** SWR instructor courses are taught on class II to III rapids.

### **Course Objectives:**

- Promote proactive prevention of river accidents and injuries.
- Develop and practice key self-rescue skills.
- Identify and avoid river hazards by understanding hydrology, hazards, and river features.
- Focus on fast, low-risk strategies for early management of river accidents
- Develop and practice methods for recovering swimmers, and loose boats and equipment
- Develop and practice more advanced rope-based and in-water skills
- Gain experience using the rescue PFD, and understand its strengths and weaknesses
- Utilize rescue scene management principles needed within a paddling group
- Evaluate techniques on a fast to slow, simple to complex, and relatively safe to relatively dangerous scale

### **General Instructor Objectives:**

- Focus on course objectives above and overall participant safety
- Effectively and accurately demonstrate and teach all skills addressed in the skills course. Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of all topics
- Use a wide variety of teaching styles and techniques in response to participant needs and logistic constraints. Demonstrate an effective knowledge of learning styles.
- Develop a “critical eye” to help identify and solve common participant errors
- Develop multiple techniques to help correct participant errors/inefficiencies
- Manage each course module and the overall course according to ACA instructional best practices, and with strong attention to site- and course-specific logistics.
- Choose appropriate sites for courses and specific drills.

### **Course Specific Instructor Objectives:**

#### **1. Class Management**

- 1.1. Collect and administer all appropriate course paperwork
- 1.2. Establish an appropriate learning environment

#### **2. Rescue Philosophy**

- 2.1. Focus on prevention and preparation as the keys to managing river accidents
- 2.2. Establish rescue priorities and apply them throughout the course
- 2.3. Focus on simpler, safer, faster techniques as highest priority

#### **3. Scene Management**

- 3.1. 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.

- 3.2. Appropriately apply formal and informal incident command systems to course evolutions and scenarios
  - 3.3. Establish / review appropriate communication techniques
- 4. Medical Issues**
- 4.1. Appropriately manage medical events during courses
  - 4.2. Encourage participants to further their medical training
  - 4.3. 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.
- 5. Equipment**
- 5.1. Focus on how to choose appropriate gear, instead of focusing on what the instructor personally prefers
- 6.**
- 6.1. Emphasize prior planning and practice when using rescue equipment
  - 6.2. Understand the strengths and limitations of personal gear and rescue equipment
- 7. Rescue Vests**
- 7.1. Correctly thread buckle and understand non-standard options for threading
  - 7.2. Appropriately check participant's vest (visually and hands-on)
  - 7.3. Understand strengths and limitations of commonly available rescue vests
  - 7.4. Identify and apply multiple rescue vest techniques during the course and encourage participant innovation
- 8. Throw Ropes**
- 8.1. Discuss rope construction and characteristics desired in a river rescue rope
  - 8.2. Discuss and demonstrate appropriate rope care
  - 8.3. Explain advantages and disadvantages of all throwing techniques
  - 8.4. Discuss and demonstrate appropriate belay techniques
  - 8.5. Discuss and demonstrate proper rope receiving techniques
  - 8.6. Discuss and demonstrate multiple techniques for restuffing bags
  - 8.7. Discuss and demonstrate multiple techniques for recoiling ropes
  - 8.8. Demonstrate a vector pull and discuss its applications to rope rescue
  - 8.9. Consistently throw a bag at least 40 feet to a swimmer in a rapid, using multiple techniques, including a coil.
  - 8.10. Coil and make a second accurate throw, to a victim in a rapid at least 30 feet away, within 20 seconds.
  - 8.11. Consistently throw a bag at least 40 feet and cross a stationary, on-land, 4 foot wide target, using multiple techniques, including a coil
- 9. Line Ferries and Line Crossings**
- 9.1. Demonstrate line ferries using swimming, boating, wading and throwing techniques
  - 9.2. Incorporate line ferries into other drills
  - 9.3. Emphasize evaluating the river environment and using the simplest and most effective technique
  - 9.4. Establish effective line crossings using hand over hand tag lines and pendulums
- 10. Knots**
- 10.1. Describe features of effective knots
  - 10.2. Describe the strengths and limitations of common rescue knots
  - 10.3. Choose appropriate knots in any given situation
  - 10.4. Appropriately tie all knots in the SWR curriculum, plus any type of load-releasing hitch other than a "no knot"
- 11. Anchors**
- 11.1. Discuss desirable features of one and two point anchors
  - 11.2. Demonstrate one and two point anchors using natural and man made features
  - 11.3. Understand the rationale for self-equalizing, load distributing anchors in swiftwater rescue

11.4. Discuss and demonstrate effects of friction and vector pulls on anchors

## **12. Mechanical Advantage**

12.1. Discuss and demonstrate the importance of simplicity and rescue safety in mechanical advantage systems

12.2. Create an appropriate 3:1 mechanical advantage system using brakes, dampers and directional changes

12.3. Discuss and demonstrate the effects of friction and vector pulls in mechanical advantage systems

## **13. Pins**

13.1. Focus on avoiding pins and early self rescue

13.2. Understand rescuer hazards associated with pin release

13.3. Focus on rescue priorities – people over equipment

13.4. Use multiple techniques to effectively release pinned craft and equipment

## **14. Entrapments**

14.1. Focus on avoiding entrapments and maintaining rescue safety

14.2. Identify common causes of entrapment

14.3. Use appropriate skills (e.g., wading, snag lines, ...) to contact the victim and release the entrapment

## **15. Stabilization, snag, and cinch lines**

15.1. Establish effective stabilization lines on land and in water

15.2. Effectively snag foot entrapped victims in a rapid

15.3. Coordinate creation of simple cinches for people and gear in rapids

## **16. Water Hazards and Hydrology**

16.1. Create effective teaching modules using blackboards, handouts, sand tables, video, etc., as well as using natural features while alongside a river

16.2. Appropriately apply hydrology to site selection and to all in-water modules

## **17. Swimming**

17.1. Choose appropriate swimming venues, with lower risk to students

17.2. Discuss and demonstrate appropriate techniques for entering rivers

17.3. Discuss and demonstrate defensive and aggressive swimming techniques

17.4. Effectively and repeatedly peel out, catch eddies and ferry. Effectively swim through waves and hydraulics

17.5. Aggressively swim a downstream class II or higher whitewater course at least 100 yards long, with multiple ferries and eddy moves

17.6. Discuss appropriate techniques for managing strainer, holes and drops

## **18. Strainers**

18.1. Create and position an effective strainer bar

18.2. Discuss and demonstrate defensive, passive and aggressive approaches to strainers

## **19. Wading**

19.1. Discuss and demonstrate multiple wading techniques

19.2. Choose appropriate techniques for application in other skill modules

19.3. 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)

## **20. Boat-based rescue**

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

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

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

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

**21. Live bait rescues**

- 21.1. Discuss and demonstrate effective technique and timing for live bait rescues
- 21.2. Apply effective swimming strategies
- 21.3. Discuss and apply common patterns of victim behavior
- 21.4. Emphasize the high risk nature of contact rescues
- 21.5. Discuss and demonstrate appropriate uses of live bait rescues, beyond contact rescues

**22. Contact Rescues and C-spine control**

- 22.1. Emphasize mechanism of injury creating high index of suspicion for C-spine injury, and high morbidity/mortality associated with C-spine injury
- 22.2. Discuss and demonstrate rotation of an in-water face-down victim to a face up motion using techniques that minimizes spinal motion and ultimately allow an open airway
- 22.3. Emphasize high risk nature of contact rescues

**23. V-lowers**

- 23.1. Emphasize strengths, limitations, and multiple applications
- 23.2. Discuss and demonstrate in-water communication with shore teams
- 23.3. Develop appropriate emergency plans for vest failure
- 23.4. Discuss and demonstrate effective body positions while deployed on a V-lower

**24. Scenarios**

- 24.1. Create scenarios appropriate for specific sites and participants
- 24.2. Effectively manage scenarios
- 24.3. Provide effective feedback to scenario participants
- 24.4. Effectively participate in appropriately challenging scenarios

**25. Closing**

- 25.1. Guide participants to appropriate further training opportunities
- 25.2. Emphasize the need for ongoing practice and education