



# Level 2: Essentials of River Canoeing Skills Assessment

## Course Overview

This ACA Assessment Course is designed to evaluate your ability to perform all of the skills listed and demonstrate an appropriate level of paddling knowledge. This assessment course provides the opportunity for you to receive documentation of having achieved this level of paddling ability.

## Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgment of personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Be a current ACA Member

## Course Duration

One day (8 hours) minimum

## Course Location / Accessible Venues

Moving water on rivers up to and including class I sections. *A rapid class includes rapids at the lower and upper ends of the difficulty range, designated “-” and “+” respectively.*

## Course Size

**Tandem:** 6 participants : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor, the ratio can be 12 : 2. The maximum number of participants permitted is 12.

**Solo:** 5 participants : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor, the ratio can be 10 : 2. The maximum number of participants permitted is 10.

For additional details, see [SEIC Policy Manual Chapter 6](#).

## Assessor

This assessment course may be offered by Level 2: Essentials of River Canoeing (or higher) ACA Instructors, Instructor Trainers, or Instructor Trainer Educators.

## Succeeding Courses

- Level 3: River Canoeing
- Level 4: Whitewater Canoeing
- Level 5: Advanced Whitewater Canoeing

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## Course Outline

The sequence of assessment should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location, time allowance, and craft being used. Participants must be able to perform all strokes, maneuvers, rescues, and skills in the appropriate venue. In addition, the participant must demonstrate the appropriate level of knowledge for this level of skill assessment.

### **Introduction, Expectations, and Logistics**

- Welcome, introductions, paperwork
- Student and instructor course expectations and limitations
- Explain assessment procedure
- Course itinerary and site logistics
- Review waiver, assumption of risk, challenge by choice, medical disclosure
- About the ACA
- PFD policy (always wear on water)
- Appropriate personal behavior
  - No alcohol / substance abuse
  - Proper etiquette on and off the water
  - Respect private property
  - Practice Leave No Trace ethics

### **Conclusion and Wrap-Up**

- Group debrief/individual feedback
- Course Limitations
- Importance of first aid and CPR
- Importance of additional instruction, practice, experience
- Importance of appropriate level of safety and rescue training
- Life sport/paddling options
- Local paddling groups/clubs
- Reference materials
- ACA membership
- Course evaluations
- Assessment cards (if applicable)

### **Assessment Criteria Checklist**

**Participant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant ACA Membership #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Course Venue:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Course Date(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

*P = Pass, N = Not Pass, DNO = Did Not Observe*

| <b>Strokes Bow</b>      | <b>Pass?<br/>Y/N/DNO</b> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Forward                 |                          |
| Back                    |                          |
| Draw                    |                          |
| Bow Draw                |                          |
| Cross Bow Draw          |                          |
| Push Away               |                          |
| Pry                     |                          |
| Sweeps: Forward/Reverse |                          |

Assessor Notes:

| <b>Strokes Stern</b>    | <b>Pass?<br/>Y/N/DNO</b> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Forward                 |                          |
| Forward w/Rudder        |                          |
| Forward w/Stern Pry     |                          |
| Forward w/J Stroke      |                          |
| Back                    |                          |
| Draw                    |                          |
| Stern Draw              |                          |
| Push Away               |                          |
| Pry                     |                          |
| Stern Pry               |                          |
| Sweeps: Forward/Reverse |                          |

Assessor Notes:

| <b>Strokes Solo</b> | <b>Pass?<br/>Y/N/DNO</b> |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Forward             |                          |
| Forward w/Rudder    |                          |
| Forward w/Stern Pry |                          |
| Forward w/J Stroke  |                          |
| Back                |                          |
| Draw: bow/stern     |                          |
| Cross bow draw      |                          |
| Push Away           |                          |

| <b>Strokes Solo</b>     | <b>Pass?<br/>Y/N/DNO</b> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Pry                     |                          |
| Stern Pry               |                          |
| Sweeps: Forward/Reverse |                          |

Assessor Notes:

| <b>Flatwater Maneuvers</b>                                       | <b>Bow</b> | <b>Stern</b> | <b>Solo</b> | <b>Pass?<br/>P/N/DNO</b> |
|--|------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Forward: straight 15-20 Boat Lengths                             |            |              |             |                          |
| Reverse: reasonably straight 3-4 boat lengths                    |            |              |             |                          |
| Stopping (forward/reverse): 2 boat lengths                       |            |              |             |                          |
| Spin: 360 degree pivot to onside & offside                       |            |              |             |                          |
| Abeam: sideways both sides 10 feet without headway               |            |              |             |                          |
| Turns: Figure 8 around markers 3-4 boat lengths apart            |            |              |             |                          |
| Switch Positions in the canoe on water                           |            |              |             |                          |
| Launching and landing: low dock or bank to enter and exit safely |            |              |             |                          |

Assessor Notes:

| <b>Moving water maneuvers</b>               | <b>Bow</b> | <b>Stern</b> | <b>Solo</b> | <b>Pass?<br/>P/N/DNO</b> |
|---|------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Front ferries: to a fixed point             |            |              |             |                          |
| Eddy turns with boat leans into wide eddies |            |              |             |                          |
| Peel outs                                   |            |              |             |                          |
| C-turns                                     |            |              |             |                          |
| S-turns                                     |            |              |             |                          |

Assessor Notes:

| <b>Safety and Rescue</b>   | <b>Pass?<br/>P/N/DNO</b> |
|--|--------------------------|
| Understand the risks and dangers of moving water and how to avoid them |                          |
| Signals: whistle, paddle and hand                                      |                          |
| Rescue sequence: (RETHROG)   |                          |
| Priorities: people, canoe, gear  |                          |
| Responsibility: individual, group, rescuer, victim                     |                          |
| Cold Shock, Hypothermia, clothing                                      |                          |

| Safety and Rescue   | Pass?<br>P/N/DNO |
|---|------------------|
| Hyperthermia: hydration, clothing   |                  |
| Emergency procedures  |                  |
| Safety equipment  |                  |
| Deep water exits: vault and slide performed in quiet water  |                  |
| Controlled capsize: performed in deep moving water  |                  |
| Self Rescue: Swim 25 feet to shore in moving water using defensive and offensive technique  |                  |
| Towing a swimmer/canoe  |                  |
| Swim a canoe 25 feet to shore   |                  |
| Empty a canoe full of water at shore line   |                  |
| Canoe over canoe rescue (T Rescue) on flat water  |                  |
| Side by side (parallel) on flat water   |                  |
| Re-entry: self & assisted; heel hook, sling on flat water   |                  |
| Throw Rope: rescuer must be able to throw a rope to a swimmer at 30 feet<br>Demonstrate proper rope technique as a swimming victim. |                  |
| Portaging   |                  |
| Basic wading  |                  |

Assessor Notes:

| Technical Knowledge   | Pass?<br>P/N/DNO |
|---|------------------|
| Environmental Issues: Leave No Trace etc, ecology             |                  |
| Paddling environment: 4 W's                                   |                  |
| Personal preparation: planning, clothing, food and water      |                  |
| Canoe: types, parts, materials                                |                  |
| Paddle: types, parts, materials use                           |                  |
| Lifejacket: types, materials, fit                             |                  |
| River classifications (understanding of Class 1-6)            |                  |
| Concepts of paddling (moving Water)                           |                  |
| River hydrology, features and hazards (Moving Water)          |                  |
| Group organization & Travel                                   |                  |
| Strategies in river running (Moving Water)                    |                  |
| Scouting  |                  |
| Canoe carries: overhead & suitcase                            |                  |
| Canoe trim  |                  |
| Posture, rocking, balance                                     |                  |
| Trip planning: how to prepare a day trip                      |                  |
| Knots: figure 8 or bowline, truckers hitch and 2 half hitches |                  |

| Technical Knowledge                                      | Pass?<br>P/N/DNO |
|--|------------------|
| Federal, state and local laws and regulations            |                  |
| Car topping: loading/unloading (use of straps and knots) |                  |

Assessor Notes:

| Final Assessment                     |
|--------------------------------------|
| Pass or Needs More Work (circle one) |
| Assessor Name:                       |
| Assessor Signature:                  |
| Assessor ACA Number:                 |
| Course Conclusion Date:              |
| Comments:                            |

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This curriculum is managed by the ACA Canoeing Committee. To connect with the leadership of this committee, please view the SEIC Committee rosters on [the ACA website](#).