



# Level 2: Essentials of River Canoeing Instructor Criteria

## Overview

Fundamentally, participants are expected to have the paddling skills, technical knowledge, rescue ability, teaching ability, group management, and interpersonal skills commensurate with this level of certification prior to presenting themselves for evaluation as Instructor Candidates at an Instructor Certification Course (IDW, ICE, or ICW).

## Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgement of personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Be a current ACA member
- Completion of the appropriate level skills course, assessment course, or equivalent skills

## Course Duration

Combined Instructor Development Workshop (IDW) and Instructor Certification Exam (ICE) - Minimum 3 days (24 hours).

## Course Location / Accessible Venues

Moving water on rivers 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 Instructor Candidates : 1 Instructor Trainer; with an additional instructor, the ratio can be 12 : 2. The maximum number of instructor candidates permitted is 12.

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

## **Instructor Trainer**

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

## **Succeeding Courses**

- Level 3: River Canoeing Skills, Assessment, Trip Leader, or Certification Course

The following is a list of the criteria used to evaluate Instructor Candidates. The content and sequence of evaluation is to be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location, time allowance, and be craft appropriate.

## **General Requirements for all ACA Certification Candidates**

- Be at least 18 years old
- Demonstrate general knowledge of ACA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives
- Successfully complete an Instructor Certification Workshop (IDW and ICE)
- Upon successful completion, register with the Safety Education and Instruction Council
- Have and maintain first aid and age appropriate CPR
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of paddlesports and the ACA
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform and teach all of the following material, unassisted, in the appropriate venue

## **Certification Maintenance Requirements**

- Teach at least two courses that meet ACA standards within the four-year certification period and properly report the courses using the ACA Course Management System (CMS).
- Complete an Instructor Update, at the highest level of certification, during the four-year certification period
- Maintain ACA membership and SEIC registration annually
- Maintain appropriate CPR and first aid certification for the duration of certification

## **ACA Level 2: Essentials of River Canoeing Instructor Requirements**

### **Demonstrate a knowledge of ACA administrative processes:**

- How to register and report a course (with and without insurance)
- An understanding of the ACA Waiver and Release of Liability
- Familiarity with the ACA website and the resources and SEIC policies available

### **Demonstrate a knowledge of and appropriately model teaching and learning theory:**

- Understand multiple methods of teaching and how they impact different learners
- Differentiate instruction targeting different learners
- Use effective teaching methods including appropriate skills progressions when teaching complex skill sets
- Present information effectively, both prepared and impromptu
- Focus on **core principles** rather than specific techniques
- Provide appropriate, specific, and meaningful feedback

### **Demonstrate the following:**

- Positive interpersonal skills to include all items outlined in the ACA SEIC Policy Manual
- Appropriate group management skills including leadership and judgment

- Ability to choose an appropriate venue / class site
- Effectively make documented skill assessments

### **Demonstrate ability to paddle efficiently and comfortably in venue utilizing:**

- Safe and effective body usage: bio-mechanics (body, posture, linkage, and rotation)
- Efficient and effective paddle placement for intended maneuver
- Parts of strokes: CPR (catch, power, recovery), static and dynamic

### **Demonstrate ability to teach and model these paddling strokes:**

- Forward
- Forward (with stern pry, rudder and J stroke corrections)
- Back
- Sweeps (forward, reverse)
- Draws (out of water and in water recovery)
- Bow Draw (stationary/dynamic)
- Cross Bow Draw (stationary/dynamic)
- Pry/Push Away

### **Demonstrate ability to teach and model these flatwater maneuvers effectively:**

- Forward stroke, to propel the boat straight forward
- Reverse/back stroke, to stop and reverse straight backward
- Forward and reverse sweeps, to turn and/or spin the boat
- Draw and sculling draw, to move the boat sideways evenly
- Rudder (stern) to glide straight and turn to paddle side

### **Principles of Rescue**

- Rescue priorities: people, boat, paddle, gear

- Responsibilities of the group, rescuer, swimmers
- Throw rope applications as rescuer and swimmer
- Basic wading

**Demonstrate ability to teach and model these boat-based rescue techniques effectively:**

- Calmly exit the boat after a capsize, using proper body position and contact with the craft and paddle
- Paddle recovery
- Strategies for boat recovery
- Self-rescue: swimming with equipment
- Swimmer towing options
- Swimmer re-entry techniques
- Strategies and techniques for boat and paddle recovery including bumping, bulldozing, towing, equipment to shore
- Canoe specific rescues (i.e., boat over boat, side by side, scoop)
- Unresponsive paddler rescue (i.e., Hand of God rescue)

**Demonstrate the ability to teach the following river hydrology features and articulate the associated risks:**

- Currents
- Rocks (upstream and downstream Vs)
- Ledges and low head dams (horizon lines)
- Pins and entrapment
- Strainers/sieves
- Bends
- Undercut rocks or ice
- Dams/flow diversion structures and pipelines

- Boat traffic awareness and safe practices

### **Demonstrate ability to teach and model these moving water maneuvers effectively:**

- Front ferries: to a fixed point
- Eddy turns: with boat leans into wide eddies
- Peel-outs
- C-turns
- S-turns

### **Demonstrate ability to teach these concepts effectively:**

- Paddling environments pertinent to paddlers
  - Water
  - Weather
  - Wind
  - Waves
    - Water confidence and comfort including swimming ability
    - River classifications (Understanding of Class I - VI)
- Principles of Rescue
  - Rescue Priorities: people, boat, paddle, gear
  - Responsibilities of the group, rescuer, swimmers
  - Appropriate use of rescue and safety gear
  - Emergency procedures
- Communication
  - Paddle, hand, and whistle signals
  - Cell phone and radios when appropriate

- River etiquette and Leave No Trace (LNT) principles and application to paddling environments
- Self care and care of other group members
  - Importance of fueling, hydration, clothing/insulation, and sun protection
  - Cold shock, hypothermia, and hyperthermia: prevention and treatment

### **Demonstrate ability to teach and model these boat-based rescue techniques effectively:**

- Deep water exits: vault and slide performed in flat water
- Calmly exit the boat after a controlled capsize, using proper body position and contact with the craft and paddle
- Self rescue: swim 20 feet (6 meters) to shore in moving water using defensive and offensive techniques
- Strategies and techniques for boat and paddle recovery including bumping, bulldozing, towing, or swimming equipment to shore
- Swimmer tow options
- Self and assisted swimmer re-entry techniques (i.e., heel hook, rescue sling, etc.)
- Assisted rescues: boat over boat or side by side or others appropriate to conditions
- Unresponsive paddler rescue
- Throw rope: rescuer must be able to throw a rope to a swimmer in moving water at 30 feet (9 meters) and demonstrate proper rope receiving technique as a swimmer
- Emptying water from the boat (on shore, bailers, pumps, sponges, etc.)

### **Demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to teach the following knowledge and skills effectively:**

- Life jackets: types, usage, fitting, regulations
- Canoe: types, parts, materials, nomenclature, and design
- Paddle: types, parts, materials, fit

- Securing boat for transport on car or trailer using proper tie downs, straps, or knots
  - Knots: Figure-8, bowline, truckers hitch, and 2 half hitches
- Canoe carries: overhead & suitcase
- Importance of developing good judgment and group responsibility for a trip
  - Group organization, trip planning, and travel strategies
    - Float plan components and filing
    - Maps, guide books, local knowledge
    - Lead boat, sweep boat, safety boats, spacing, group members with repair kits, first aid kits, and first aid and CPR training
  - Federal, state, and local laws and regulations that apply to trip venue or route
  - Put-in safety briefing
  - Scouting

**Demonstrate leadership, group management skills, experience and judgment necessary to be a safe, effective instructor**

**Notes:**

*An ACA Level 2: Essentials of River Canoeing Instructor is expected to be able to demonstrate and teach everything on the Level 2: Skills Course and Level 2: Skills Assessment for their level/craft.*

© American Canoe Association

Date of last revision: 1/1/2023

<https://americancanoe.org>

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](#).