



# River Canoe Trip Leading Endorsement Criteria

## Course Overview

Fundamentally, participants are expected to have the paddling skills, technical knowledge, rescue ability, teaching ability, group management, and interpersonal skills commensurate with this course content prior to presenting themselves for evaluation as an Endorsement Candidate.

This endorsement course provides the knowledge and skills needed for safe and effective leading of a day trip. The following are the endorsement criteria for currently certified instructors.

## Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgement of personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Be a currently certified ACA Level 3: River Canoeing Instructor (or higher) in good standing

## Course Duration

Minimum of one day (8 hours) or more.

## Course Location / Accessible Venues

**For Level 3:** Moving water on rivers rated class I-II.

**For Level 4:** Moving water on rivers including class II-III sections.

*A rapid class includes rapids at the lower and upper ends of the difficulty range, designated “-“ and “+” respectively.*

## Course Size

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

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

## Instructor Trainer

This endorsement course may be offered by:

- Level 4: Whitewater Canoeing (or higher) Instructor Trainer
- Level 3: River Canoeing Instructor Trainers with the River Canoe Trip Leading Endorsement

All Instructor Trainers must operate within the venue corresponding to their level of IT certification.

The following is a list of the criteria used to evaluate Endorsement 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 Endorsement Candidates**

- Be at least 18 years old
- Demonstrate general knowledge of [ACA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) initiatives](#)
- Successfully complete an Endorsement Workshop
- 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
- Maintain ACA Level 2: River Canoe Instructor (or higher) status through the following:

## **Certification Maintenance Requirements**

- Teach a minimum of two courses that meet ACA standards within the four-year certification period and properly report the courses using the ACA [Course Management System \(CMS\)](#). At least one course must be at their highest level of certification.
- 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 River Canoe Trip Leading Endorsement Requirements**

### **Demonstrate a knowledge of teaching and learning theory**

- Understand multiple modalities of teaching and how they impact different learners
- Differentiate instruction targeting different learners
- Use effective teaching methods
- Present information effectively, both prepared and impromptu

### **Demonstrate the following**

- Positive interpersonal skills
- Appropriate group management skills including leadership and judgment
- Ability to choose an appropriate venue / class site

### **Demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively in an instructional team environment**

- Work well with students, including ability to effectively listen and respond to student concerns and desires
- Work well with other members of instructional teams
- Actively participate in discussions throughout the course

### **Trip Leader Qualities and Knowledge**

- Judgment and leadership

- Competent paddler
- Good communication skills
  - Paddle, hand, and whistle signals
  - Cell phone and radios when appropriate
- River sense
  - Water confidence and comfort including swimming ability
  - River classifications (Understanding of Class I - VI)
- Trained and well versed in safety and rescue
- Applies appropriate discipline and group control
- Makes final safety decisions including trip cancellation
- Considers the well-being of the group over the wants of an individual
- Takes responsibility
- River etiquette and Leave No Trace (LNT) principles and application to paddling environments

### **Trip Preparation and Planning**

- Appropriate vetting of group members / participants
- Ability to choose an appropriate venue / trip course based on goals and existing skills of the group
- Sources of venue information: maps, guide books, local knowledge, etc.
- Completes thorough float plan including
  - Trip timing and schedule
  - Contingency plans for unexpected events and conditions
  - Emergency contact information for local rescue agency(s) and/or governmental agency(s) responsible for the chosen venue
  - Designated emergency contact person for group
  - Federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and permits that apply to trip venue or route
  - Assignment of buddy boats, lead and sweep boats, group formations, and evacuation routes
  - Organization of put-in and take-out locations, transportation route, and shuttles to include possible assistance from local outfitters or liveries

### **Venue Hazards and Prevention of Accidents**

#### Environmental hazards

- Air temperature
- Water temperature
- Weather

#### River Hydrology and dynamics

- Flow volume

- Gradient/elevation changes
- Flow rates and current
- 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

#### River features

- Eddies
- Waves
- Holes and hydraulics
- Downstream Vs

#### Prevention of accidents

- Proper planning and pre-trip hazard identification
- Put-in safety briefing
- Constant reassessment of venue conditions
- Scouting
- Portaging and lining

### **Personal and Group Equipment**

- Life jackets: types, usage, fitting, regulations
- Canoe: types, parts, materials, nomenclature, outfitting, and design
- Paddle: types, parts, materials, fit
- Helmets: types, fit, usage
- Flotation
- 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
- Repair kits, first aid kits, and group members with first aid and CPR training
- 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

- Throw ropes
- Emergency shelter, water purification, sanitation equipment, etc.

## **Paddling strokes in course venue**

- Tandem (Bow)
  - Forward
  - Back
  - Draw
  - Bow Draw
  - Cross Bow Draw
  - Push Away
  - Pry
  - Sweeps: Forward / Reverse
- Tandem (Stern)
  - Forward
  - Back
  - Draw
  - Stern Draw
  - Push Away
  - Pry
  - Stern Pry
  - Sweeps: Forward / Reverse
  - Forward w/Rudder
  - Forward w/Stern Pry
  - Forward w/J Stroke
- Solo
  - Forward
  - Back
  - Draw
  - Bow Draw
  - Cross Bow Draw
  - Stern Draw
  - Push Away
  - Pry
  - Stern Pry

- Sweeps: Forward / Reverse
- Forward w/Rudder
- Forward w/Stern Pry
- Forward w/J Stroke

### **Maneuvers in course venue**

- Forward: paddle in a straight line
- Reverse: stop and reverse reasonably straight backwards
- Spin: Pivot the canoe – onside and offside
- Abeam: move sideways without headway
- Turn: turn in arc while underway
- Front ferries
- Eddy turns
- Peel Out

### **Principles of Rescue**

- Rescue Priorities: people, boat, paddle, gear
- Responsibilities of the group, rescuer, swimmers
- Appropriate use of rescue and safety gear
  - Bailer, pump, sling, lights, etc.
- Emergency procedures such as a lost paddler scenario
- Discuss foot entrapment, defensive and aggressive swimming, and aggressive self-rescue
- Calmly exit the boat after a capsize, using proper body position and contact with the craft and paddle
- 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
- Assisted rescues: boat over boat in flat water, side by side in moving water
- Entrapments (stabilization line)
- Pinned boat rescues (arm strong, rope/vector)
- Basic wading with a paddle
- Emptying water from the boat (on shore, bailers, pumps, sponges, etc.)
- Unresponsive paddler rescue

### **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
- Handouts / reference materials
- ACA membership forms
- Course evaluation
- Participation cards

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

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Date of last revision: 12/8/2023

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