



# River Canoe Trip Leading Skills Assessment

## Course Overview

The River Canoe Day Trip Leading course is designed to introduce the minimum skills necessary for an individual to lead a day trip on moving water. This course is appropriate for all types of tandem and/or solo canoes. It can be taught tandem, solo, or both.

## Course Prerequisites

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

## Course Duration

Two days (16 hours) or more.

## Course Location / Accessible Venues

Easy moving water up to and including class I-II rapids

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

All Instructors must operate within the venue corresponding to their level of certification.

## Succeeding Courses

- River Canoe Day Trip Leading Assessment
- 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 and Assessment cards

## **Assessment Criteria Checklist**

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

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

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

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

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

<b>Trip Preparation and Planning: Thorough Float Plans</b>	<b>Pass? Y/N/DNO</b>
Make sure the kayak is securely fastened to the car or racks, using proper tie downs, straps, or knots	
Use proper techniques to safely lift and carry the kayak on shore	
Obtain (recite) weather conditions, forecasts, and evaluate hazards to navigation and other environmental factors	
Put on a life jacket appropriate for the operator's size, kayak, and activity; confirm all others in the group are properly wearing their life jacket	
Inspect the kayak and all safety equipment to meet state, federal, and local requirements for the vessel and activity	
Recognize, describe and follow safe boating practices (behavior, substance abuse, on water and land etiquette, Leave No Trace ethics)	
Prepare kayak for departure, stowing gear securely, ensuring it is balanced	
Demonstrate knowledge of a float plan (components and filing)	
Hold the paddle in correct orientation and grip for effective paddling	
Federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and permits that apply to trip venue or route	
<b>Trip Leader and Group Equipment</b>	<b>Pass? Y/N</b>
Life jackets: types, usage, fitting, regulations	
Canoe: types, parts, materials, nomenclature, outfitting, and design	
Paddle: types, parts, materials, fit	
Spray skirts: types and materials, grab loop	
Helmets: types, fit, usage	
Flotation	
Repair kits, first aid kits, and group members with first aid and CPR training	
Throw ropes	
Emergency shelter, water purification, sanitation equipment, etc.	
<b>Basic Paddling Skills on Moving Water</b>	<b>Pass? Y/N/DNO</b>
<b>Ability to maneuver effectively in environment, upstream and downstream</b>	
General boat control	
Eddy turns and peel outs	
Ferry - upstream	
Ferry - downstream (back ferry)	
<b>Strokes</b>	<b>Pass? P/N/DNO</b>
Forward with rotation	
Cross forward	
Forward (with stern pry, rudder and J stroke corrections)	
Back	

<b>Strokes</b>	<b>Pass? P/N/DNO</b>
Cross back, far back, compound back	
Reverse J	
Sweeps (forward, reverse)	
Stationary and sculling draw (out of water and in water recovery)	
Bow Draw (stationary/dynamic)	
Cross Bow Draw (stationary/dynamic)	
Duffek (onside/offside)	
Stern draw	
Prys: sculling pry, stern pry	
Braces: low and high	

<b>Maneuvers to be performed in venue</b>	<b>Pass? P/N/DNO</b>
Front ferries: to a fixed point	
Back ferries: to a fixed point	
Eddy turns with boat leans into wide eddies	
Peel outs	
C-turns	
S-turns	
Sideslips (shift): onside and offside	
Spins: onside and offside	
Attainments	

<b>Safety &amp; Rescue</b>	<b>Pass? P/N/DNO</b>
Knowledge of river hydrology features and the associated risks	
Demonstrate and describe the principles of rescue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Rescue priorities: people, boat, paddle, gear</li> <li>◦ Responsibilities of the group, rescuer, swimmers</li> </ul>	
Identify and demonstrate the use of appropriate rescue and safety protocol for the boat and planned activity: assessing objective hazards, choosing routes/lines, options for setting safety	
Group organization, trip planning, and travel strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Lead boat, sweep boat, safety boats, spacing, group members with repair kits, first aid kits, and first aid and CPR training</li> </ul>	
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	

<b>Boat Based Rescues</b>	<b>Pass? P/N/DNO</b>
Deep water exits: vault and slide performed in flat water	
Calmly exit the boat in deep moving water after a capsize, using proper body position and contact with the craft and paddle	
Swim a boat 20 feet (6 meters) to shore	
Demonstrate a successful self-rescue: swimming with equipment using both defensive and offensive techniques	

<b>Boat Based Rescues</b>	<b>Pass? P/N/DNO</b>
Describe and demonstrate techniques for bumping, bulldozing, or towing a boat or swimmer to shore	
Demonstrate a successful swimmer re-entry (i.e., heel hook, rescue sling, etc.)	
Perform successful assisted rescues: boat over boat or side by side or others appropriate to conditions	
Perform a successful unresponsive paddler rescue	
Successfully empty water from the boat (on shore, bailers, pumps, etc.)	
Scouting and techniques for portaging	
One, two, and three person wading with a paddle	
Entrapments (stabilization line)	
Pinned boat rescues (arm strong and rope/vector)	

<b>Final Assessment</b>
Pass or Needs More Work (circle one)
Assessor Name:
Assessor Signature:
Assessor ACA Number:
Course Conclusion Date:
Comments:

## 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

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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](#).