



# Level 2: Essentials of Sit-On-Top Kayak Touring Trip Leader Skills/Training Course

## Course Purpose and Overview

The purpose of the Level 2: Essentials of SOT Kayak Touring Trip Leader (Level 2: ESOTKTL) training is to prepare individuals who intend to lead other paddlers, either recreationally or professionally, in protected waterways using Sit-on-Top (SOT) kayaks only. The emphasis of the training is on leadership.

The Level 2: ESOTKTL training is designed to expose candidates to the skill-set required for leading paddlers in protected waterways. While this is not a teaching award, a Level 2: ESOTKTL should also be able to provide basic tips to paddlers, as appropriate, to help them through the environment. This training course is intended to be followed by an assessment course.

## Skills Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgment of personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Be a current member of the ACA
- Previously completed the Level 2: Essentials of Sit-On-Top Kayak Touring Skills Assessment and/or demonstration of equivalent skills

## Course Duration

One day (8 hours) minimum

## Course Location / Accessible Venues

Lakes or coastal waters with potential areas of exposure to mild wind and wave conditions, with constant access to safe landing and within 1.5 nm from shore:

- Winds less than 10 knots
- Waves less than 1 foot (0.3 meters)
- Current less than 1 knot
- No surf - shore break less than 1 ft (0.3 meters)

## Course Size

5 Participants : 1 Instructor; with an additional qualified assistant, the ratio can be 10 : 2.

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

## **Trainer:**

- Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Instructor Trainer (or higher), or

- Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Instructor with the Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Trip Leading (EKTTL) Endorsement, or
- Level 4: Open Water Coastal Kayaking Instructor (or higher)

## **Succeeding Courses**

- Level 2: Essentials of Sit-On-Top Kayak Touring Trip Leader Assessment Course

## **Equipment**

*Participants shall possess all the equipment appropriate for a trip leader in Level 2: ESOTKTTL conditions and demonstrate the judgment to carry equipment that is appropriate for day trips and various group characteristics. Participant's gear selections shall cover the following categories:*

- Kayak (single sit-on-top or tandem sit-on-top with fixed flotation sufficient to allow deep-water self-rescue) and personal equipment appropriate for kayak touring. Tandems are not required for the assessment. However, if tandem kayaks are used, at least some of the kayaks in the course must be singles to allow demonstration of skills and knowledge in both types of boats.
- Safety and emergency
- Signaling and communications
- First aid and equipment repair kits
- Navigation

## **Skills**

The following list of criteria are to be used in the training of Level 2: ESOTKTTL candidates. The time spent on each skill and the sequence of evaluation should be adjusted to fit the candidate's needs, class location, and time allowance with an emphasis on the application of each skill in a leadership context

## **Maneuvering**

*Participants must be able to demonstrate safe, effective, and efficient maneuvering in Level 2: ESOTKTTL conditions. The focus of the training will be on desired results rather than on specific techniques. The skills shall include:*

- Forward and reverse paddling
- Turning with forward and reverse momentum
- Static turns and 360 rotation with forward and reverse strokes
- Sideways movement – static and with forward momentum
- Preventing capsize with braces

*Note: The training context shall include maneuvering for towing, quickly attaining the bow of a capsized boat, paddling on edge to maintain directional stability, using support strokes to prevent capsize, reverse paddling to assist in rescue rather than turning, or similar practical applications of personal skills.*

## **Rescues and Tows**

*Participants be able to perform a variety of assisted rescues and self-rescues, as well as tows in Level 2: ESOTKTTL conditions to include:*

- Side by side with stabilization assisted rescue

- Cross kayak PFD grab assisted rescue
- Stirrup rescue
- Efficient self-rescue from a swimming start
- Swimmer carries (bow, stern, and back deck)
- Contact tow (forward and reverse)
- Tows: single boat and multiple boat inline
- Rafted tow
- Unresponsive paddler rescue, i.e., Hand of God

The lead instructor shall evaluate the candidate's situational awareness and ability to maintain group control during the performance of rescues and towing exercises. A variety of touring, sit-on-top and tandem kayaks may be used at the their discretion.

## Technical

*participants successfully demonstrate the following technical skills:*

- Navigation – Candidates must demonstrate a knowledge of symbols, distance measurement, bearings, and variation for inland and marine charts. While on the water, candidates must be able to determine a position using bearings, navigate using shoreline features and other visible references, and maintain a course using a compass heading and time
- Basic boat repair – Candidates will demonstrate basic field repair/management of either a small hole or a damaged skeg/rudder. At the trainer's discretion, the repair may occur on the water

## Leadership

Leadership ability shall be evaluated during a journey where each candidate is given the opportunity to make appropriate decisions, cognizant of conditions and the current performance capability of the group. Individual legs shall be debriefed to evaluate an understanding of leadership principles and to reveal the candidate's decision-making process. Candidates must show leadership appropriate to the circumstances, the risk at hand, the individuals being led, and the environmental challenges encountered.

- Group abilities – demonstrate the ability to assess individual and group performance capabilities (i.e., skills, experience, judgement, fitness, boats, and equipment) and set goals
- Environmental awareness – demonstrate the ability to assess conditions based on weather forecasts, observed wind, current and swell. Candidates shall also identify protected areas, potential hazards, early exit options, remoteness, and rescue resources. Based on these observations, candidates shall plan an appropriate journey and adapt their plan as conditions
- Group awareness – demonstrate group awareness throughout a trip to include assessing a group's energy levels, hydration, confidence in conditions and readiness for upcoming challenges, and adjust their trip plans
- Group management – demonstrate group management and control appropriate to the conditions, environment, and group readiness (for example, spacing, pacing, formation and supporting roles) to include setting clear parameters and establishing emergency procedures
- Risk assessment, incident avoidance and management – demonstrate on-going risk assessment relative to the readiness of the group, implement proactive strategies to avoid potential incidents, and manage incidents effectively if incidents occur

- Communication – demonstrate the use of effective and ongoing communication to manage the group, share plans, assess paddlers, adapt to environmental limitations (i.e., wind or swell) and proactively prepare for potential emergencies
- Positioning – use various positions as appropriate to the situation, environment, and potential consequences. Leader positioning shall reflect an awareness of potential hazards, the need to maintain a line of sight, and preparedness to manage potential rescues/incidents
- Launching and landing – demonstrate proficiency launching and landing themselves and a group in Level 2: ESOTKTTL conditions, including planning, communication, and positioning to maintain group control

## Knowledge

The topics and concepts below provide a framework of knowledge necessary for trip planning, implementation, and leadership. All will be covered and evaluated in the context of the Level 2: ESOTKTTL environment and conditions. A candidate's knowledge can be evaluated using a variety of methods which may include observation, self-assessment, feedback, written assessment, questioning and pre-assigned and/or ad-hoc presentations.

- Weather – be familiar with the terminology typically found in inland and marine forecasts, know multiple sources for obtaining forecasts and be able to assess the impact of forecasts on trip plans
- Tides and currents – be familiar with tidal terms, timing, forecast tables and the concept of drift
- Conditions – be familiar with the terminology found in marine and weather forecasts, know multiple sources for obtaining forecasts, know the upper limits of the Level 2: ESOTKTTL environment, and understand the importance of keeping their trips within those parameters
- Trip planning – As a tabletop exercise, prepare a trip plan that demonstrates an understanding of chart data, simple course plots, weather, tides, currents, and group abilities
- Communication and signaling – demonstrate knowledge of communication and signaling tools and their appropriate use, including VHF radios, emergency signals, paddle, and hand signals
- Rules of the road – understand the hazards posed by other boat traffic, know USCG night lighting requirements and basic rules of the road as they pertain to paddlers
- Leave No Trace (LNT) skills and ethics – have a general understanding of LNT best practices and always follow LNT principles and practices at all times
- Prevention and management of cold-water shock, hypothermia, and hyperthermia – knowledge of symptoms, prevention, and management of cold-water shock, hypothermia, and hyperthermia

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