



# Level 1: Introduction to Stand Up Paddleboarding

## Instructor Criteria

**Overview:** Fundamentally, we expect that participants have the paddling skills, technical knowledge, rescue ability, teaching ability, group management, and interpersonal skills commensurate with this level of certification (Level 1) prior to presenting themselves for evaluation as Instructor Candidates at an Instructor Certification Exam (ICE).

### Course Prerequisites:

- All participants must acknowledge 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

**Instructor Trainer:** This certification course may be offered by Level 1: Introduction SUP (or higher) ACA Instructor Trainers or Instructor Trainer Educators.

**Course Duration:** Combined IDW and ICE - Minimum 2 days (16 hours).

**Course Location / Venue:** Flat water, protected from wind, waves and outside boat traffic, with current less than 0.5 knots, and within swimming distance of shore.

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

**Succeeding courses:** Level 2 Instructor Skills, Assessment, and Certification courses.

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 Instructor Certifications:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Demonstrate general knowledge of [ACA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) policy and 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

### Maintenance Requirements:

- Teach at least two courses, that meet ACA standards, within the four-year certification period and properly report the courses to the National Office



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- 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

### **Level 1: Introduction to SUP Instructor Requirements:**

- 1) Demonstrate a knowledge of ACA Paperwork:
  - How to register and report a course (with and without insurance)
  - An understanding of the ACA Waiver and Release of Liability
- 2) 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)
- 3) Demonstrate the following:
  - Positive interpersonal skills
  - Appropriate group management skills (including leadership and judgment)
  - Ability to choose an appropriate venue /class site
- 4) Demonstrate ability to paddle efficiently and comfortably, in flat water.
  - Board stability and trim
  - Stances: Prone, Sitting, Kneeling, Neutral or slight stagger variations
  - Efficient and effective paddle placement for intended maneuver
  - Safe and effective body usage: Bio-Mechanics (Body, Linkage and Rotation)
  - Parts of strokes: CPR (Catch, Power, Recovery), static and dynamic
- 5) The ability to teach and model:
  - Forward
  - Back
  - Sweeps (forward, reverse)
  - Draw (out of water and in water recovery)
  - Low Brace
- 6) The ability to teach and model these basic maneuvers effectively:
  - Enter and launch board from shore in a controlled manner, checking for clear departure
  - Propel the board forward in a straight line 15-20 board lengths
  - Stop the board within two board lengths



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- Move the board backwards 3-4 board lengths
  - Turn the board from a stationary position 180° to the right and left
  - Move the board sideways 10 feet (3 meters) to each side
  - Propel the board in a figure of 8 course around markers 3-4 board lengths apart
  - Turn the board while maintaining forward motion 90° to the right and left
  - Arrive at destination point, checking for clear approach, and exit the board in a controlled and safe manner
- 7) Demonstrate the ability to teach and model basic rescue techniques or concepts effectively, **and as appropriate to craft.**
- Awareness of rescue priorities: people, board, paddle, gear
  - Use of safe progressions T-RETHROG (Talk, Reach, THrow, ROw, Go) - including throwable floating aid or throw bag use
  - Responsibilities of: the group, rescuer, swimmers
  - Demonstrate the use of appropriate rescue and safety gear for the craft and planned activity
  - Exit the craft after capsize, using proper body position and contact with the craft and paddle
  - Rescue self and the board using multiple effective self rescue techniques (e.g., recover board and paddle, swim self and board to shore, with and without leash).
  - Deep Water Rescue: unassisted remounting of board from side or back of board
  - Rescue a person in the water and capsized board using appropriate techniques and equipment for the board
  - Techniques for bulldozing or towing a board and swimmer to shore
- 8) Demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to teach, the following knowledge or skills effectively:
- Weather conditions, forecasts, and other environmental hazards (wind, water, weather, waves)
  - Evaluating hazards to navigation
  - Importance of developing good judgment and group responsibility for a trip
  - Evaluating ability, water comfort, and confidence of participants prior to trip
  - Warm ups, conditioning, physical training to reduce injury
  - Securing board for transport using proper tie downs, straps, or knots.
  - Proper techniques to safely lift and carry the board on shore
  - Life jackets appropriate for the individual's size, craft, and activity, assuring all others in the group are properly wearing their life jacket
  - Inspect the board and all safety equipment to meet state, federal, and local requirements for the vessel and activity
  - Safe paddling practices (behavior, substance abuse, on water and land etiquette, leave no trace ethics)



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- Elements of a float plan (Who, What, When, Where, filing practices)
- Review personal equipment needed for the board, activity and environment
- Prepare board for departure: stowing gear securely, and ensuring board is balanced
- Review paddling equipment, terminology (board and paddle), and care of gear
- How to hold the paddle in correct orientation and grip for effective paddling
- Personal and group gear including, but not limited to:
  - Environmental supplies (food, water, appropriate clothing, sunscreen, etc.)
  - Navigational and signaling tools (maps, charts, whistle, etc.)
  - Safety and rescue tools
  - Repair kit
  - First aid kit (appropriate to training)
- Review the dangers of paddle sports and how to plan an appropriate course to avoid potential hazardous situations.
- How to avoid and prevent cold water shock, hypothermia and hyperthermia by choosing proper clothing; recognizing and treating early symptoms; 1-10-1 rule.
- Recognize the importance of hydration
- Appropriately use communication (paddle and whistle) signals
- Basic navigational rules for inland waterways
- Awareness of the group and effective on water management techniques; minimum/maximum standards
- Secure the board and equipment before leaving unattended, with attention paid to environment and conditions

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

***Note: An ACA Level 1: Introduction to SUP Instructor is expected to be able to demonstrate and teach everything on the Level 1 Skills Course and Level 1 Skills Assessment for their craft.***

Note: This course content meets the [National On Water Standards for human powered craft](https://www.usnows.org/assess-and-update) (<https://www.usnows.org/assess-and-update>).

The [National On Water Standards for human powered craft](https://www.usnows.org/assess-and-update) (NOWS) can be used to:

- Evaluate other paddlers and provide effective feedback
- Effectively make documented skill assessments