



River Kayak Hand-Paddling Endorsement Criteria

Course Overview

Designed for currently certified ACA River Kayak Instructors (ACA Level 2 or higher), the **River Kayak Hand-Paddling Endorsement** course provides instructors with the knowledge and skills for instruction on the safe and effective use of hand-paddles. Per the ACA, “By taking and passing the specified course, a certified ACA Instructor can become endorsed to teach *additional, specialized courses.*”

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
- Be a currently certified ACA Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking Instructor (or higher) in good standing

Course Duration

Minimum of one day (8 hours) or more.

Course Location / Accessible Venues

Course should be conducted on moving water venues in accordance with the level of certification held by the candidate.

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

Course Size

5 Endorsement Candidates : 1 Endorsed Instructor Trainer; with an additional endorsed instructor or qualified assistant, the ratio can be 10 : 2. The maximum number of participants permitted is 10.

Instructor Trainer

This endorsement course may be offered by:

- Level 4: Whitewater Kayaking (or higher) Instructor Trainer with the River Kayak Hand-Paddling Endorsement
- Level 2 or 3: River Kayaking Instructor Trainers with the River Kayak Hand-Paddling Endorsement AND the Kayak Rolling 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 Kayak Instructor (or higher) status through the following:

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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 Kayak Hand-Paddling Endorsement Requirements

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
- Effective methods of providing 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

Demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively in an instructional team environment

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

Demonstrate knowledge and skills to instruct on the effective use of hand-paddles in river kayaking

- Knowledge of varying styles and skill sets as they pertain to hand-paddles
- Demonstrate the ability to select and fit hand-paddles based upon the desired use and student ability to wet exit and remove paddles
- Ability to explain body position and how it differs from using a shafted paddle
- Ability to effectively perform, model, and teach basic kayak strokes with hand-paddles
 - Forward (alternating hands)
 - Back (alternating hands)
 - Draw (side, stationary, sculling, stern)
 - Sweep (forward, reverse)
 - Rudder
- Ability to effectively perform, model, and teach the following hand-paddle specific strokes:
 - Power forward (both hands)
 - Power back (both hands)
 - Neutral sweep (hands moving in opposite directions to create rotation)
 - Brace
 - Single brace (one-hand/one-side)
 - Double brace (both hands on same side)
 - Wing brace (both hands on opposite sides)

Demonstrate knowledge of and ability to effectively teach and perform the following river kayak maneuvers with hand-paddle specific technique

- Forward
- Spins
- Stopping
- Front ferry (upstream) to move laterally with effective boat control
- Back ferry (downstream) to stop in current and move laterally to avoid hazards
- Eddy turns and peel outs
- Moving abeam
- Maneuvering on moving water venues in accordance with the level of certification the candidate holds using various techniques, including but not limited to wave surfing with control.

- Kayak Rolling with Hand-Paddles Instructor Skills
 - Model
 - Level 3-4 River Kayaking Instructors (or higher) and Level 2 Essentials of River Kayaking Instructors holding the Kayak Rolling Endorsement must perform a safe and effective roll with hand-paddles from a non-setup position in the environment of their intended certification level.
 - A roll that emphasizes various components of a roll progression (initiation, body position, timing, and finish)
 - Demonstrate
 - The ability to address and develop underwater comfort beyond a wet exit
 - The ability to coach and teach methods to roll a kayak with hand-paddles that are repeatable and minimize the risk of injury
 - The ability to evaluate and troubleshoot students' rolls in the environment, providing cues for self-directed practice
 - Refer to Rolling Endorsement for more detail

Demonstrate the ability to teach and model kayak-based rescue techniques and concepts effectively, and as appropriate to craft.

- Advantages and disadvantages during rescues of various kayaks (e.g., sit-ins, sit-on-tops, recreational kayaks)
- Calmly exit the kayak after capsize, using proper body position and contact with the kayak and paddle. When exiting the kayak with a spray skirt after capsize, must be modeled two ways: (1) utilizing the spray skirt grab loop and (2) releasing the spray skirt off the hip (with and without maintaining possession of hand-paddles).
- Paddle recovery options
- Strategies for kayak recovery
- Swimmer tow options
- Swimmer re-entry / re-mount techniques (e.g., stern entry, heel hook, rescue sling, paddle float)
- Kayak bumping / bulldozing
- Kayak towing
- Kayak specific rescues (e.g., boat over boat, boat to boat, scoop)
- Unresponsive paddler rescue
- Emptying water from kayak (e.g., on-shore, bailers, pumps)

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

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