



Level 3: River Safety and Rescue

Skills Assessment

Assessment Overview: This ACA Assessment Course is designed to evaluate a participant's ability to perform all of the skills listed along with demonstrating an appropriate level of knowledge. This assessment course provides the participant with the opportunity to receive documentation of having achieved a certain level of rescue skills ability.

Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC):

ACA courses are open to all individuals who acknowledge the ability to perform the following essential eligibility criteria.

1. Breathe independently (i.e., not require medical devices to sustain breathing)
2. Independently maintain sealed airway passages while under water
3. Independently hold head upright without neck / head support
4. Manage personal care independently or with assistance of a companion
5. Manage personal mobility independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance
6. Follow instructions and effectively communicate independently or with assistance of a companion
7. Independently turn from face-down to face-up and remain floating face up while wearing a properly fitted life jacket*
8. Get on / off or in / out of a paddlecraft independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
9. Independently get out and from under a capsized paddlecraft*
10. Remount or reenter the paddlecraft following deep water capsize independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
11. Maintain a safe body position while attempting skills, activities and rescues listed in the appropriate Course Outline, and have the ability to recognize and identify to others when such efforts would be unsafe given your personal situation*

*To participate in adaptive programs, participants must acknowledge only the first six EEC listed above. Entry-level adaptive programs will involve teaching and practicing EEC #7-11.

Course Prerequisites: Must be an ACA Member

Course Duration: 1 day (8 hours) minimum

Course Location / Venue: A deep chute of water with well-defined eddy lines and no immediate hazards or risks below. The site may include moving water and class I-II rapids. Protected space is needed for on-land work, with adequate shelter for inclement weather.

Assessor: Level 3: River Safety & Rescue Instructor (or higher)

Class Ratio: 12 Students: 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor the ratio can be 24: 2

Succeeding courses: Level 4: Swiftwater Rescue Skills Assessment



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Introduction, Expectations, & Logistics:

- Welcome, introductions, paperwork
- Student & instructor course expectations and limitations
- Course itinerary & 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 use
- Proper etiquette on & off the water

Conclusion & Wrap-Up:

- Group debrief / Individual feedback
- Course limitations
- Importance of First Aid/CPR and Wilderness First Aid
- Importance of additional instruction, practice, experience
- Life sport / Paddling options
- Local paddling groups / Clubs
- Handouts / Reference materials
- ACA Membership forms
- Course evaluation
- Participation cards



Level 3: River Safety and Rescue

Skills Assessment

Participant: _____ **ACA #** _____ **Date:** _____

Location and venue: _____

Rating: ✓ - *Passing* N - *Needs more practice.*

Participant must be able to effectively and efficiently perform all maneuvers, rescues, and skills in the appropriate venue. In addition, the participant must demonstrate the appropriate level of knowledge for this skill assessment level.

The Paddling Environment	P / N	Comments
Shore based scouting explaining river features and hazards as well as alternative paddling routes		
Personal Protective Equipment	P / N	Comments
Minimize risk of personal injury by wearing properly fitted personal protective equipment		
Avoid cold water shock, hypothermia and hyperthermia by choosing proper clothing and other safety gear.		
Rescue Strategy	P / N	Comments
Minimize potential hazards and risks through proper trip planning.		
Use and follow effective communication techniques including hand, paddle, and whistle signals		
Describe characteristics of stable and unstable subjects and explain how these two conditions would impact rescue strategies		
Apply appropriate rescue strategies and principles during course scenarios		



Level 3: River Safety and Rescue

Skills Assessment

Wading Skills	P / N	Comments
Minimize risk of foot entrapment while wading		
Demonstrate an understanding of the factors that affect success in wading by selecting appropriate wading locations		
Four Point Crawl		
Single Person Assisted Wade		
Two-Person Wade		
<i>Line Astern</i>		
<i>Wedge Wade</i>		
Actively participate in scenarios that apply wading skills for rescues of foot entrapments		
Throw Rope Skills	P / N	Comments
Demonstrate an understanding of the factors that affect success in throw rope applications by selecting appropriate throwing locations and techniques		
Consistently demonstrate proper rope receiving techniques		
Throw a throw bag to a stationary target in a rapid at least 30 feet away		
Throw a throw bag to a swimmer moving downstream in a rapid at least 30 feet away		
Hip belay and back-up belay		
Using a rope coil make a successful throw to a stationary target in a rapid at least 30 feet away.		
Participate in practical application of a vector pull to assist a swimmer holding a rope		
Participate in practical application of pendulum use for crossing current		



Level 3: River Safety and Rescue

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Swimming Skills	P / N	Comments
Consistently minimize risk of foot entrapment while swimming		
Consistently perform effective ferry maneuvers using aggressive swimming techniques		
Self-Rescue: swimming with equipment		
Swiftwater entries: In & Out of water starting positions		
<i>Aggressive swim into and over simulated strainer (Strainer bar must be hand-held)</i>		
Demonstrate an effective downstream swim of a rapid in the appropriate course venue. Swim must include a mix of defensive and aggressive swimming techniques, multiple ferries, eddy moves, and techniques to minimize foot entrapments.		
Rigging Skills	P / N	Comments
Figure 8 Family: standard, on bight, follow-through		
Overhand Family for webbing: Overhand on a bight, overhand bend		
<i>One-pint Anchors: Friction Wrap, 3 Bight, & Single Loop</i>		
Craft-Pins	P / N	Comments
Effectively release simple pinned craft in a class I rapid via unbalancing forces using one of the following techniques: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Vector Pull</i> - <i>Progressive Vector Pull</i> - <i>1:1 with Change of Direction</i> 		



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Craft-based Rescues	P / N	Comments
Demonstrate the ability to competently and confidently paddle chosen craft in the appropriate course venue		
Swimmer tow		
Craft towing		
Swimmer re-entry/re-mount techniques		
Craft bumping/bulldozing		
Craft specific rescues		
Unresponsive Paddler Rescue		

Final Assessment		Comments
PASS	NEEDS MORE WORK	
Assessor		
<i>Assessor must be a currently certified ACA Instructor at or above this level.</i>		
IT or Instructor: _____		
Signature: _____		
ACA #: _____	Date: _____	
Assisting IT or Instructor: _____		
ACA #: _____		