



Level 3: Coastal Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) Instructor Criteria

Course Overview

Fundamentally, participants are expected to have the paddling skills, technical knowledge, rescue ability, teaching ability, group management, and interpersonal skills commensurate with this level of certification prior to presenting themselves for evaluation as Instructor Candidates at an Instructor Certification Course (IDW, ICE, or ICW).

Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgement of personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Be a current ACA Level 2: Essentials of SUP Instructor in good standing
- Completion of the appropriate level skills course, assessment course, or equivalent skills

Course Duration

Combined Instructor Development Workshop (IDW) and Instructor Certification Exam (ICE) - minimum 2 days (16 hours).

Course Location / Accessible Venues

Level 3: Coastal SUP certification cannot be completed unless three of the four conditions necessary for rough water assessment are present during some portion of the certification course. Specified conditions must occur, but they do not have to be simultaneous. Area of escape from rough conditions must be accessible.

The four criteria include:

- 10-15 knot winds
- 2-3 foot/0.6-0.9 meters seas
- 1-2 foot/0.3-0.6 meters breaking waves (required)
- 2-3 knots of current

Course Size

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

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

Instructor Trainer

This certification course may be offered by Level 3: Coastal SUP ACA Instructor Trainers or Instructor Trainer Educators.

Succeeding Courses

- Instructor Skills, Assessment, and Certification courses in the appropriate discipline
 - Level 3: Surf SUP
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General Requirements for all ACA Certification Candidates

- Be at least 18 years old
- Demonstrate general knowledge of [ACA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) initiatives](#)
- Successfully complete an Instructor Certification Workshop (combined ICW or IDW and ICE)
- Upon successful completion, register with the [Safety Education and Instruction Council](#)
- Have and maintain venue-appropriate first aid and age-appropriate CPR
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of paddlesports and the ACA
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform, model, and teach all of the material contained within the official ACA skills course and assessment course outlines corresponding to their level of certification and all levels below, if applicable
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform, model, and teach all of the following material, unassisted, in the appropriate venue
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform, model, and teach all of the material contained within the official ACA skills course and assessment course outlines corresponding to their level of certification and all levels below, if applicable.

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 Level 3: Coastal SUP Instructor Requirements

Demonstrate a knowledge of ACA administrative processes:

- How to register and report a course (with and without insurance)
- An understanding of the ACA Waiver and Release of Liability
- Familiarity with the ACA website and the resources and SEIC policies available

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 including appropriate skills progressions when teaching complex skill sets
- Present information effectively, both prepared and impromptu
- Effectively make documented skill assessments
- Focus on **core principles** rather than specific techniques
- Provide appropriate, specific, and meaningful feedback

Demonstrate the following:

- Positive interpersonal skills
- Appropriate group management skills including leadership and judgment
- Ability to choose an appropriate venue / class site

Demonstrate ability to paddle efficiently and comfortably in venue utilizing:

- Board stability (trim, posture, rocking, balance, etc.)
- 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
- Fundamentally, we expect that paddlers should have basic paddling skills, before presenting themselves for evaluation as instructor candidates as below

All board control, strokes, and maneuvers listed below, unless otherwise specified, are to be performed in regular and goofy stance. Only the dominant stance must be performed at demonstration quality. Non-dominant stance should be evaluated to the standard of the candidate being comfortable and confident during execution.

Boat Control

- Ability to move from kneeling to standing and back to kneeling while maintaining hand placement on paddle
- Edging and board tilt – paddle a circle while edging both toe and heel
- Controlled surf launch and landing (dominant stance only)
- Crossing, entering, and exiting moderate eddy lines
- Use of ranges
- Linking downwind waves
- Surfing forward with control in swell (dominant stance only)
- All strokes and maneuvering in a variety of sea states, wind conditions, wind directions and tidal current up to this course venue

Strokes

- Forward & canted forward (touring and power)
- Cross forward
- Reverse and stopping
- Sweeps (forward / reverse)
- Draw (standard / sculling)
- Draws to nose, cross nose draw, & draw to tail (static and dynamic)
- Nose and cross nose pry, tail pry
- Bracing (low and high, sculling & slap, cross tail heel side low brace)
- Gliding low brace to steer and control the SUP while in motion
- Use of static tail pry & draw for tracking and turning (rudder)
- Forward Paddling: paddle 200 yards (183 meters) in a reasonably straight line (beam wind, head wind, and tail wind)
- Stop: stop the SUP from a good speed

Maneuvers

- Spinning: spin SUP using forward and reverse sweeps or draws in neutral and staggered stances (on and off side)
- Paddle a figure of 8 course: using reasonable control in neutral and staggered stances
- Lateral Movement: use draws to travel sideways 20 feet (6 meters) in neutral and staggered stances
- Turning on the move: sweep strokes, draws and pries while underway to turn board in neutral and staggered stances
- Maneuvering: practicing weight transfers from nose to tail and rail to rail
- Side slip (static shift onside and offside / pry and draw) (neutral and staggered)
- Pivot turn (dominant stance only)
- Moving pivot turn with submerged tail (dominant stance only)
- Cross stepping (dominant stance only)
- Endurance: to maintain 2-3 mph/3-5 kph pace for a minimum of 1 hour

Demonstrate the ability to effectively and efficiently perform, assess and teach rescue topics and techniques in a variety of sea states, wind conditions, wind directions and tidal current up to the Level 3: Coastal SUP certification course venue and conditions

- Unassisted board remount (side and tail, pros vs. cons)
- Retrieve stray paddle from SUP, return it to rider
- Assisted Rescues
- SUP towing techniques
- Tow rigs: bags, belts, tow ropes

- Towing board and rider with a variety of rigs for a variety of board types
- Unresponsive paddler rescue
- Swimmer recovery (nose - tail)

Demonstrate technical knowledge of, and ability to effectively and efficiently perform, assess and teach, the following

- History of SUP in coastal venues
- SUP terminology used in coastal venues
- Awareness of coastal SUP destinations (local, regional, and national, international)
- Safety issues and hazards of coastal SUP
- Weather and tide conditions important to the coastal touring SUP
- Cold Water Shock - Hyperthermia - Hypothermia: recognition and treatment
- Information gathering (i.e. forecast for swell, tide, wind speed and direction, weather)
- Wind, waves, water & weather
- USCG regulations / safety requirements and other regulations; access, private property, litter, and local laws or rules
- Leash and PFD use for various venues
- Development of a float plan
- Leave No Trace, understanding ecology, conservation, stewardship, environmental ethics
- Able to interpret basic chart datum, plot a course, and adjust for variation/declination
- Down winders
- Design and parts of a Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) commonly used in coastal SUP, to include nomenclature & design
- Paddle designs and parts commonly used in coastal SUP, to include nomenclature, design, and fit (including length and blade volume)
- Fin set ups for different styles, locations, constructions, & application in coastal SUP
- Equipment selection / packing
- Deck: attachment points, tie down types, rigging for rider and application, weight distribution including trim
- Safety Equipment
- Spare paddles
- Dry bags and other waterproof containers
- First aid kit, repair kit, emergency kit
- Communication & signaling devices (VHF/pyrotechnics/smoke/EPIRB)
- Leashes

Demonstrate the ability to effectively and efficiently perform, assess, and teach group management and incident management skills and concepts, to include:

- Planning a trip
- Group Management
- Communication and signaling on trips with a group
- Situational awareness
- Demonstrate appropriate leadership, group management skills, experience, and judgement necessary to be a safe, effective instructor in a variety of open water coastal environments

Notes:

An ACA Level 3: Coastal SUP Instructor is expected to be able to demonstrate and teach everything on the Level 3: Skills Course and Level 3: Skills Assessment for their craft.

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