



Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) Day Trip Leading Assessment

Course Overview

This course is intended to provide the minimum skills and training necessary for an adult leader possessing basic paddling skills (see prerequisite below) to lead a trip for participants with beginner level paddling skills, in gentle conditions, with apparent wind not exceeding 10 knots, waves not exceeding 1 foot and currents to 2 knots. The emphasis of this course is trip leading, safety education and rescue, not paddling instruction.

Assessment Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgment of personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Be a current ACA Member
- Completion of an ACA Level 2: Essentials of SUP skills course or equivalent skills

Course Duration

- 2 days (16 hours) minimum

Course Location / Accessible Venues

- Flat water with less than 10 knots of wind
- 1 foot waves or smaller, or 1-2 knots of current.

Course Size

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

Assessor

This assessment course may be offered by Level 2: Essentials of SUP (or higher) ACA Instructors, Instructor Trainers, or Instructor Trainer Educators.

Type of Board(s):

Stand up paddleboards with fin(s), leash attachment points and deck attachment points. (Appropriate leashes based on conditions when applicable)

Course Outline

The sequence of assessment should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location, time allowance, and craft being used. Participants must be able to perform all strokes, maneuvers, rescues, and

skills in the appropriate venue. In addition, the participant must demonstrate the appropriate level of knowledge for this level of skill assessment.

Day One Classroom and on shore discussion (Instructor judgment) depending on locale etc.

Introduction, Expectations, and Logistics

- Welcome
- Introduction of instructors and participants
- Workshop objectives
- Schedule
- Insurance waivers and medical disclosure
- PFD policy/eligibility

Trip Leader Qualities

- Qualifications and desired characteristics of trip leaders
 - Judgment and leadership
 - Competent paddler
 - Good communication skills
 - River/Sea sense
 - Safety and rescue trained
- Trip leader
 - Applies appropriate discipline & group control
 - Makes final safety decisions including trip cancellation
 - Considers the well-being of the group over the wants of an individual
 - Takes final responsibility overall

Trip Leader Knowledge

- Group Organization
 - Assignment of buddy boards or group formations; diamond, sandwich and others, with attention to best position for the leader(s)
 - Communication systems
 - Audio and visual signals
 - Radios and protocol
 - Rules of the Nautical road
- Group day camping ethics, including outdoor hygiene – Leave no trace, stretch breaks & lunch stops
- Group etiquette

Trip Preparations and Planning

Recommended Guidelines for Leader/Participant Ratio:

- 1 leader for every 5 participants with a minimum of 2 leaders/ 1 plus an assistant, for the first 10 participants 2:10 is recommended
- Conditions or skill levels may warrant additional leaders or assistants

Appropriate site selection and determining the skill level of the group

- Sources of information on venues: other paddlers, guidebooks, internet, locals, radio, and trip reports etc.

Develop a float plan including:

- Driving route to and from trip
- Specific put-in, break & take-out locations on a chart/map if possible / emergency take outs
- Daily schedules with approximate times
- Contingency plans for bad weather, special health needs, problems or equipment failures. Plans should include evacuation routes.
- Identify trip leaders and participants. Include emergency contact telephone numbers
- Emergency contact information for local rescue, governmental agencies for the chosen trip and designated emergency contact person(s) for the group.
- Attach copies of permits and documentation of permissions from private landowners when appropriate.

Make assignments to secure the necessary permits and permissions.

- Develop a planning and orientation outline when appropriate. Include organizational, classroom and on water sessions. If no paddling orientation is planned, determine methods to verify skills and experience.
- With group input, determine trip rules for acceptable behavior being a requirement.
- Determine meals and cooking assignments, if any.
- Discuss personal and group equipment. Make assignments for specific group equipment.
- Secure medical releases and/or parental permissions.
- Discuss site-specific concerns.
- Organize transportation and shuttles. Include use of possible outfitters or livery services.

Trip Hazards and Prevention

Environmental Hazards

- Air and water temperature, sunburn
- Hypothermia/Hyperthermia
- Weather/lightning
- Topography/shoals

- Local hazards

Dynamics

- Tidal Currents
- Tides
- Winds, fetch
- River Currents
- River mouths
 - Straight channel
 - Bends
 - Right angle corners
 - Refracting waves
- Eddies
- Waves, chop, swell

Specific Hazards

- Access and egress conditions
- Oyster Beds
- Sand bars and other features
- Wrecks
- Weeds
- Debris and logjams
- Manmade obstructions
- Bridge abutments
- Entrapments
- Disabled paddler
- Boat traffic

Prevention- reduce risk with recognition, avoidance and or management

- Proper planning and pre-trip hazard identification
- Proper skill training (first aid knowledge).
- Scouting: "Don't go where you don't know"
- Always reassessing changing conditions
- Towing, when and how
- Just say "no" if uncomfortable. Better safe than sorry. "Challenge by choice"

Personal and Group Safety Equipment

- Effective communication is key.
- Risk management issues. Warn and inform.
 - PFD-right type and size
 - Leash: appropriate type and length for conditions & boards
 - Appropriate paddling clothes plus spares
 - Dry bags, water proof containers and packs
 - Appropriate footwear
 - Night lighting and signal devices as appropriate and required by law.
 - Bivy bag, ground cloth, etc.
 - Survival kit (knife, matches, etc.) and where to carry what e.g. on your person
 - Personal items including sunscreen, meds, hygiene products, plenty of food & water
 - Items NOT to bring e.g., glass containers.
- Boards – properly outfitted.
 - Straps and/or bungees
 - How to fix bags/gear on the board properly
 - Leashes
 - Fins
- Group
 - Adequate first aid kit(s).
 - SUP repair kit for use on/off water
 - VHF's, cell phones (several), flares, dye, smoke etc. according to the venue
 - Tow bags/belts - rescue ropes
 - Chart, map and compass
 - Emergency group shelter
 - Spare paddles, food & water
 - Bio breaks and sanitation equipment

Debrief and discuss day two preparations, boards, gear etc. End day one, or at Instructor discretion an evening session, homework etc.

Schedule - Day Two

The Put-in Talk/ Pre-launch briefing

- Discuss weather and water temperature for the day
- Review trip plan for day including known hazards and plans to deal with them.
- Review paddling partner and buddy board assignments
- Discuss responsibility of buddy boards, lead paddler and sweep paddler and group organization on water

- Check PFD's for size and fit (check CO2 for inflatables)
- Check each board for safety equipment, extra paddle and that all gear is well secured.
- Review auditory and visual signals
- Discuss what to do in the event of a swim, the responsibility of the individual and the group.
- Discuss what to do in the event of a paddler and board separation, the responsibility of the individual and the group.
- Discuss lost paddler procedures/scenario.
- Review etiquette and outdoor ethics

Review of Basic Paddling Skills

- Strokes
 - Forward
 - Reverse
 - Draws
 - Sculling
 - Sweeps
 - Braces
- Maneuvers
 - Forward: board moves in a straight line
 - Reverse: board moves in a straight line for 2 board lengths
 - Edging: board turns by edge control
 - Stopping in 3 to 4 strokes
 - Look back brace underway (high and low)
 - Brace turns
 - Sideslips, draws on the move

Water Reading and Route Determination

- Beaufort Scale
- River Mouths and headlands
- Use of eddies
- Weather awareness

Rescue

- Principles of Rescue discussion and on water demo/practice.
- Priorities – People or boards/gear depending on conditions. Don't lose board.
- Responsibilities of Victim
- Responsibilities of Rescuers

- Responsibilities of the Group
- Self-defense; bracing, falling, and swimming with paddle

Rescues on-water

- Towing with rigs
- Towing Injured paddler
- Contact Tows
- Unconscious paddler rescue

Board recovery and repair

- Nose on tail push, ski, switch and tow
- Rafting up for repairs on water

Conclusion & Wrap Up

- Importance of safety and trip leader responsibility
- Avoid and manage risks as much as possible
- Incident reporting
- Additional training in advanced first aid, maintaining CPR certification
- Take ACA courses
- Making things fun with games etc.
- Administer written exam
- Evaluation of course by participants
- Assessments of participants by Instructor

Assessment Criteria Checklist

Participant Name: _____

Participant ACA Membership #: _____

Course Venue: _____

Course Date(s): _____

P = Pass, N = Not Pass, DNO = Did Not Observe

Final Assessment
Pass or Needs More Work (circle one)
Assessor Name:
Assessor Signature:
Assessor ACA Number:
Course Conclusion Date:
Comments:

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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](#).