



SUP Yoga Leader Certification Criteria

Course Outline

Fundamentally, participants are expected to have the paddling skills, technical knowledge, rescue ability, teaching ability, group management, and interpersonal skills commensurate with this course content prior to presenting themselves for evaluation as a candidate for SUP Yoga Leader Certification.

This course is designed for Yoga Instructors who currently hold at least a 200-Hour Yoga Instructor Certification from an authorized provider who want to incorporate yoga into their paddling programs. ACA SUP Yoga Leader Certification prepares you with the knowledge and skills for yoga movements and poses that are safe and functional on the water. While this curriculum is designed for yoga on a stand up paddleboard, if the leader has successfully completed the SUP Yoga Leader Certification and has successfully completed a Paddlesports Safety Facilitator (PSF) module (or higher) for other crafts, then yoga may be modified for those crafts as well.

Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgement of personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Be a current ACA member
- Have and maintain first aid and age appropriate CPR
- Hold a 200-Hour (or higher) Yoga Instructor Certification from an authorized provider recognized by Yoga Alliance
- Have previous experience paddling a stand up paddleboard (SUP)

Other 200-Hour Yoga Instructor certifications may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the ACA National Office.

Course Duration

Minimum of 3 days (24 hours), four hours of which may be virtual at the discretion of the course provider.

Course Location / Accessible Venues

Lakes or coastal waters with potential areas of exposure to mild wind and wave conditions, with constant access to safe landing and within 1.5 nm from shore:

- Winds less than 10 knots
- Waves less than 1 foot (0.3 meters)
- Current less than 1 knot

Successful candidates will demonstrate the ability to competently perform at the top of this range.

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.

Instructor

This yoga leader certification may be offered by:

- Level 2 SUP Instructors or higher with the SUP Yoga Leader - or SUP Yoga Endorsement (no longer available)

The following is a list of the criteria used to evaluate Leader 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 Leadership Candidates

- Be at least 18 years old
- Demonstrate general knowledge of ACA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives
- Have and maintain first aid and age appropriate CPR
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of boardsports, paddlesports, and the ACA
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform and teach all of the following material, unassisted, in the appropriate venue
- Leaders are expected to demonstrate, teach, and model everything on the ACA skills course outline, which corresponds to their level/craft

SUP Yoga Leader Certification Maintenance Requirements

- Maintain ACA membership annually
- Maintain a 200-Hour (or higher) Yoga Instructor Certification from an authorized provider recognized by Yoga Alliance
- Maintain first aid and age appropriate CPR

Other 200-Hour Yoga Instructor certifications may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the ACA National Office

ACA SUP Yoga Leader Requirements

Demonstrate a knowledge of ACA administrative processes:

- Understand ACA's certification limits as they pertain to ACA's insurance program:
 - Current ACA Instructor Certification plus this Leader Certification = eligible to request ACA insurance coverage
 - No ACA Instructor Certification plus this Leader Certification = not eligible to request ACA insurance coverage
- An understanding of the ACA Waiver and Release of Liability
- Familiarity with the ACA website and the resources and SEIC policies available

- Familiarity with ACA's Education, Stewardship & Public Policy, and Competition programs

Leadership Skills:

- Positive interpersonal skills
- Ability to calmly strategize and problem solve under pressure
- Ability to collaborate with others and recognize available resources
- Ability to seek advice, set boundaries, and learn from mistakes
- Situational awareness to include time management
- Meeting people where they are, not where you want them to be
- Effective communication pre-outing, during outing, post outing
- Modeling joy and appreciation for the paddling community as a whole

Environmental Conditions:

- Venue selection with alternatives (accessible, parking, restrooms, access to emergency services, cell coverage, use permits, etc.)
- Weather conditions, forecasts, and other environmental hazards (water, weather, wind, waves)
- How to prevent cold water shock, hypothermia and hyperthermia and how to recognize and treat early symptoms
- Elements of a float plan (Who, What, When, Where, filing practices)
- Evaluating navigational hazards including Navigational Rules of the Road

SUP Knowledge:

- The importance of life jacket and leash wear
 - Types, usage, fitting, Coast Guard and State regulations
 - When to wear them, and when not to wear them
 - PFD policy for SUP Yoga
- SUP Paddle: parts, sizing, and hand placement
- SUP Board: designs and parts
- Securing board for transport using proper tie downs, straps, or knots.
- Proper techniques to safely lift and carry the board on shore
- Launching from the beach, shore or dock
- How to secure equipment on a board for yoga
 - Paddle, water bottle, etc.
- Board Stances: prone, sitting, kneeling, standing (neutral & hybrid)
- Board stability & trim (nose to tail & rail to rail)
- Strokes & Maneuvers
 - Appropriately maneuver the board to rescue and assist guests.

- Strokes
 - Basic forward stroke
 - Reverse stroke
 - Sweeps (forward and reverse)
 - Draw (side)
- Maneuvers
 - Paddle in a reasonably straight line
 - Stop in a reasonable distance
 - Do gradual, wide turns

Demonstrate knowledge & ability to perform & convey the following SUP Yoga specific concepts:

- SUP Yoga anchoring risks, challenges, and solutions
 - When appropriate
 - Appropriate spacing
 - Types of weights used for anchors
 - How to safely transport anchors
 - Individual anchor systems
 - Group anchor systems
 - Anchor to shore
 - Anchor to bottom
 - Simple to complex systems
- Movements and poses appropriate for SUP yoga
 - Stable poses
 - Must have a minimum of two points of contact
 - No poses with pressure on head, neck or spine
 - No poses where you can compromise the head, neck or spine
 - Modifications of poses from land to board
 - Cues that are helpful when teaching SUP yoga

Demonstrate ability to paddle and perform rescues efficiently & comfortably, while maintaining appropriate situational awareness & group management in protected, calm water:

- Board handling to effectively complete rescues and manage group connectivity
- Techniques for falling
- Self-rescue

- Assisted rescues
- Side-by-side
 - Board flip rescue
 - Or other effective means
- Methods for board and gear recovery
- Towing strategies
 - Contact Tow
 - Leash Tow
 - Or other effective means
- Responsibility of the group, individual, rescuer, and victim
- Rescue priorities
 - STEVE: Self, Team, Everyone else, Victim, Equipment
 - SAFER: Stop, Assess, Formulate, Execute, Review/Reflect
 - T-RETHROG: Talk, REach, THrow, ROw, Go

Communication within the group and to the outside world:

- Float Plan
- Paddle signals
- Whistle use
- Cell Phone, VHF Radio, AIS System (based on venue)

© American Canoe Association

Date of last revision: 2/8/2024

<https://americancanoe.org>

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](#).