



# Level 3: Essentials of Surf Kayaking Instructor Criteria

## Overview

Level 3: Essentials of Surf Kayaking instructors should be able to introduce students to surf kayaking using sit-on-top kayaks (with thigh straps), whitewater kayaks, surf-specific kayaks and wave-skis in moderate surf.

Fundamentally, we expect that participants should 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 Exam (ICE).

## Course Prerequisites

- Demonstrate general knowledge of the purpose and significance of the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Be a current ACA member
- Understands and acts in accordance with [ACA's Code of Conduct](#)
- 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 3 days (24 hours).

## Course Location / Accessible Venues

Sandy beach with moderate surf, mostly spilling waves with occasional steeper (plunging) waves during sets, with access to flat, protected water.

- Winds less than 15 knots
- Waves less than 3 feet (1 meter)

*NOTE: When selecting a venue, careful consideration should be given to hazards including other surfers, rip currents, long- shore drift, rocks, and man-made structures.*

## 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: Essentials of Surf Kayaking (or higher) ACA Instructor Trainers or Instructor Trainer Educators.

## **Succeeding Courses**

- Level 4: Surf Kayaking Skills or Certification Course
- 

## **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: Essentials of Surf Kayaking 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 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
- Effectively make documented skill assessments

### **Demonstrate ability to paddle efficiently and comfortably in venue utilizing:**

- Boat stability (trim, stance, etc.)
- Safe and effective body usage: biomechanics (body, posture, linkage, and rotation)
- Efficient and effective paddle placement for intended maneuver
- Parts of strokes: CPR (catch, power, recovery), static and dynamic

### **The ability to teach and model kayak paddle strokes and maneuvers effectively on flat water AND in moderate surf including:**

- High cadence forward stroke
- Reverse/back stroke, to stop and reverse straight backward
- Forward and reverse sweeps, to turn and or spin the kayak
- Draw and sculling draw, to move the kayak sideways evenly
- Low brace and high brace to avoid capsize
- Stern rudder to glide straight and turn to paddle side (pry)
- Low brace turn

### **Demonstrate the ability to perform and teach basic rescue techniques effectively in moderate surf including:**

- Controlled capsize, wet exit and swim to shore
- Popped skirt, flooded kayak and paddle to shore
- Perform safe, reliable roll
- Boat over boat – deep water reentry assisted rescue (outside of surf zone)

- Bow rescue and variations
- Swimmer tow

**Demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to teach, the following surf kayaking skills and techniques effectively:**

- Launch timing
- Punching through waves
- Take off positioning and timing
- Diagonal run
- Trimming to stay high (top half) of the wave
- Bottom turn
- Top turn
- Changes in direction
- Controlled side surf – ability to move laterally

**Demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to teach, the following surf kayaking information effectively:**

- Surf kayak nomenclature and design features
- Kayak paddle design, selection and hand placement
- Gathering swell, weather and tidal information and surf forecasting
- Wave dynamics, beach characteristics and anatomy of surf zone
- Hypothermia and hyperthermia – prevention and treatment
- Basic surf etiquette and collision avoidance

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

- Establishing safe parameters and protocols for participant practice
- Establishing an effective communication strategy for the surf zone
- Effective observation, analysis and feedback
- Differentiated instruction based on participant wants and needs

**Notes:**

*An ACA Level 3: Essentials of Surf Kayaking 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.*

© American Canoe Association

Date of last revision: 1/1/2023

<https://americancanoe.org>

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