



# Level 4: Whitewater Canoeing

## Instructor Criteria

**Overview:** 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).

### **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.*

### **Prerequisites:**

- Completion of the appropriate level skills course, assessment course, or equivalent skills.
- Taking an ACA Swiftwater Rescue class for further training on rescue is strongly suggested
- Given the common remoteness of this course venue, WFR or WFA is strongly suggested

**Course Duration:** Combined IDW & ICE - 5 Days (40 hours) Minimum

**Course Location / Venue:** The course will be conducted on sections of rivers rated up to Class II-III, where limited maneuvering in current may be required to avoid obstacles.



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**Class Ratio:** **Tandem:** 6 Instructor Candidates : 1 Instructor Trainer; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 12 : 2

**Solo:** 5 Instructor Candidates: 1 Instructor Trainer; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 10:2

### **Succeeding Levels of Certification:**

Level 5: Advanced Whitewater Canoeing  
Canoe Rolling

*The following is a list of the criteria used to evaluate Instructor Candidates. The content covered and sequence of evaluation should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance.*

### **General Requirements for all Instructor Certifications:**

- Be at least 18 years old
- Meet the appropriate essential eligibility criteria
- Successfully complete an Instructor Certification Workshop (IDW & ICE)
- Be a full ACA member
- Upon successful completion, register with the Safety Education & Instruction Council
- Have and maintain First Aid and age appropriate CPR
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of paddlesports and the ACA
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform and teach all of the following material unassisted in the appropriate venue
- Instructors are expected to be able to demonstrate, teach, and model everything on the official ACA skills course and assessment course outlines which correspond to their level/craft.

Demonstrate knowledge and ability to efficiently/effectively plan and implement appropriate instructional sessions and assessments for a different learning styles and ability levels, to include:

- Differentiation of instruction based on the individual learner (student centered)
- Use of an appropriate skills progression when teaching complex skill sets
- Selection of appropriate teaching venue based on ability and desired outcomes
- Focus on core principals rather than specific technique
- Provides appropriate, specific and meaningful feedback

### **Maintenance Requirements:**

- Teach at least two courses that meet ACA standards within the four-year certification period and report the results to the National Office
- Complete an Instructor Update, at the highest level of certification, during the four-year certification period
- Maintain ACA membership and SEIC registration annually



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### Level 4: Whitewater Canoeing Instructor Requirements:

- 1) Demonstrate a knowledge of ACA Paperwork:
  - How to register & report a course (with and without insurance)
  - An understanding of the ACA Waiver & Release of Liability
- 2) Demonstrate a knowledge of teaching and learning theory:
  - Characteristics of different types of learners
  - Effective teaching methods
  - Effective prepared and impromptu presentations
  - Evaluate and provide feedback
  - Effectively make documented skill assessments
- 3) Demonstrate the following:
  - Positive interpersonal skills
  - Appropriate group management skills (including leadership and judgment)
  - Ability to choose an appropriate venue / class site
- 4) Demonstrate ability to paddle efficiently and comfortably, in venue utilizing versatile/whitewater canoes with proper outfitting and gear.
  - Boat stability
  - Paddle: position, angle, and timing
  - Safe and effective body usage: Bio-Mechanics (Body, Linkage and Rotation)
  - Parts of strokes: CPR (Catch, Power, Recovery)
- 5) Demonstrate the ability to teach and appropriately model these paddle strokes:
  - Forward / Cross Forward (w/rotation)
  - Forward (w/ stern pry, rudder and J stroke corrections)
  - Back (stern far back and compound back, solo & bow reverse J)
  - Sweeps (forward, reverse)
  - Draws (onside/offside) static/dynamic/sculling (out of water and in water recovery)
  - Prys (static/dynamic, righting)
  - Braces (low, high)
  - Duffek (onside/offside)
  - Jam
  - Slice
  - C Stroke (solo)
- 6) Demonstrate the ability to teach and appropriately model these flat water maneuvers:
  - Propel the canoe forward in a straight line 15-20 boat lengths
  - Move the canoe backwards 3-4 boat lengths
  - Stop the canoe within two boat lengths
  - Turn the canoe from a stationary position 180° to the right and left
  - Move the canoe sideways (abeam) 10 feet (3 meters) to each side
  - Propel the canoe in a figure of 8 course around markers 3-4 boat lengths apart
  - Turn the canoe while maintaining forward motion 90° to the right and left

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- Switch Positions in the canoe on water
  - Sideslips (Shifts): Onside & Offside
  - Carving Circle: Onside/Offside
- 7) Demonstrate the ability to teach and appropriately model these maneuvers in course venue:  
(Solo includes traditional and 2 X 4 methods)
- Front Ferries: To a fixed point
  - Eddy Turns: w/boat leans into small eddies
  - Peel-Outs
  - C-Turns
  - S-Turns
  - Back Ferries
  - Sideslips (Onside & Offside)
  - Spins (Onside & Offside)
  - Bracing (High/Low/Righting Pry)
  - Complex Attainments
  - Front Surfing
- 8) Demonstrate a knowledge and the ability to teach, the following river features and risks associated with them:
- Currents (direction and changes caused by streambed features)
  - Downstream and Upstream V's / Chutes
  - Eddies / Eddy Lines
  - Waves
  - Holes / Hydraulics
  - Rocks Ledges and low head dams (Horizon Line)
  - Broaching
  - Pins and entrapment
  - Strainers/Sieves
  - Bends
  - Undercut Rocks/Ice
  - Dams/Flow diversion structures and pipelines
- 9) Demonstrate the ability to teach and appropriately model these rescue techniques:
- Deep water exits: Vault and Slide performed in moving water
  - Controlled Capsize: Performed in deep moving water
  - Self Rescue: Swim 25 FT to shore in moving water using defensive and offensive technique
  - Towing a swimmer/canoe
  - Swim a canoe 25 FT to shore
  - Empty a canoe full of water at shore line
  - Canoe over canoe rescue (T Rescue) on quiet water
  - Side by side (Parallel) on moving water
  - Re-entry: Self & Assisted; Heel Hook, Sling on flat water
  - Throw Rope: Rescuer must be able to throw a rope to a swimmer in moving water at 30 ft and demonstrate proper rope technique as a swimming victim.



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- Entrapments (Stabilization Line)
  - Pinned Boat Rescues (Arm Strong, Rope/Vector/Simple Mechanical Advantage)
  - 1, 2 & 3 person wading with a paddle
- 10) Demonstrate the ability to teach the following safety concepts:
- PFD's (Life Vests): Types, Usage, Fitting and Regulations
  - Helmets: Types and usage
  - 6-P's of prevention concept: Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance
  - Safety issues and hazards of moving water rivers with no rapids
  - Universal signals: Paddle, hand, whistle
  - Weather conditions important to the canoeist: 4-W's (Water, Wind, Waves and Weather)
  - Cold shock, hypothermia and hyperthermia; (HELP/HUDDLE) prevention and treatment
  - Rescue Sequence: (RETHROG)
  - Signaling devices and safety equipment
  - Boat traffic awareness and safe practice
  - Safety equipment: Bailer, pump, sling, light
  - Launching and Landing: Low dock or bank to enter and exit safely
  - River etiquette
  - Emergency procedures
- 11) Demonstrate the ability to teach the following concepts and skills:
- Environmental Issues: Leave No Trace etc, ecology
  - Personal Preparation: Planning, clothing, food and water
  - Canoe: types, parts, materials, whitewater outfitting
  - Paddle: Types, parts, materials, fit
  - River Classifications (Understanding of Class I-VI)
  - Concepts of Paddling (Class II-II)
  - River Hydrology, features and hazards (Class II-III)
  - Group Organization & Travel
  - Strategies in river running (Class II-III)
  - Canoe Carries: Overhead & Suitcase
  - Canoe Trim
  - Posture, Rocking, Balance
  - Trip Planning: Familiar with how to prepare for a short day trip
  - Knots: Figure 8 or bowline, truckers hitch and 2 half hitches
  - Federal, State and Local Laws and Regulations
  - Car Topping: Loading/Unloading (Use of straps and knots)
  - Canoe nomenclature & design
  - Bio-mechanics of canoeing
- 12) Demonstrate a knowledge and the ability to teach the following skills related to leading a group in venue:
- Planning a trip
  - Put-in Briefing
  - Scouting



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- Portage and Lining
  - Group (3 boat minimum)
  - Group Management (Lead /Sweep, Safety, Spacing)
- 13) Demonstrate leadership, group management skills, experience and judgment necessary to be a safe, effective instructor.
- 14) Demonstrate the ability to perform these skills in venue:
- Paddle comfortably
  - Perform appropriate emergency procedures related to entrapments and pin situations using rope, vector and simple mechanical advantage