

4 Star Sea Kayak Leader Training Notes

Technical Syllabus

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

Note to providers: if the paddler's kayak is fitted with a rudder, it will be disabled for the purpose of the assessment.

Through the blending of their body, boat and blade positions paddlers will be coached in their ability to skilfully control their kayak in the prescribed conditions.

Training should develop knowledge of and use of trim and skeg.

Training will incorporate application of the practical techniques listed below.

The provider should encourage the paddler to keep their paddling actions within the 'safety box' and perform strokes on both sides.

A.1 Lifting, carrying, launching and landing

Training should include awareness of various boat-packing techniques appropriate to the conditions and the equipment to be carried.

Training should look at launching and landing in a variety of situations including small surf and rocky shores, ensuring minimal damage to person and equipment and the safety of the group.

A.2 Efficient and effective sea paddling skills

Efficient forward paddling: Throughout training paddlers should be encouraged to work on their efficient and sustained forward paddling in a variety of conditions up to sea state 3/4. Paddlers should be trained in the selection of a variety of paddle shapes and sizes to enable efficient and sustained forward paddling.

Reverse paddling and stopping: Training should help to develop accurate and efficient backward paddling and stopping in a range of environmental conditions.

Maintaining direction, changing direction and moving sideways: Training should include a range of control techniques to demonstrate the ability to handle the kayak in waves from all directions and the interface between flow and eddy (caused by either wind or tide).

Supporting: During training paddlers should experience a range of realistic conditions, where the recovery stroke or brace is needed for support e.g. surf, rough water, and waves.

A.3 Rolling in rough water

Training must move the paddler from rolling on flat water to an effective roll performed whilst travelling at cruising speed on open water in sea state 3-4 (not set up).

A.4 Practical navigation on the water and in poor visibility

Training should include:

- Planning by interpreting maps, charts and sources of tidal information for the purpose of navigation.
- A variety of simple techniques to navigate accurately (avoiding danger areas) along coastlines, on small crossings (up to 2 nautical miles) and in poor visibility using a combination of dead reckoning, tidal timing and a compass.
- Using a handheld GPS receiver to obtain a position fix.

Part B – Safety and Rescue

Training should provide paddlers with a broad awareness of the dangers and problems associated with paddling and leading on the sea.

Training should provide paddlers with simple solutions to common problems that they may encounter whilst paddling. This should include undertaking dynamic risk assessments for them and the group they are paddling with.

B.1 Have knowledge of, and demonstrate skilful application of, appropriate rescue skills

Paddlers should work with a range of rescues and be shown how to adapt them to the prevailing conditions. Including dealing with incapacitated paddlers.

B.2 Self-rescue

Paddlers should be trained in a variety of ways to get back into their kayak from the water unaided.

B.3 Be conversant with different methods of towing

During training a variety of towing techniques should be demonstrated and practised in moderate conditions on open water e.g. tandem tow, rafted tow, contact tow, anchored tow etc.

The variety of tows should be over a reasonable distance and include sections of following, beam and quartering seas and wind from all directions.

The use of the towline quick release mechanism must be demonstrated and practised under load.

The provider must make paddlers aware of the inherent dangers of towing.

Part C – Leadership

- C.1 Skilful application of leadership principles (e.g. CLAP)**
- C.2 Appropriate leadership strategies, judgement and decision-making**
- C.3 Safety awareness and risk management**
- C.4 Exercise appropriate group control and management and show concern for the general welfare of other group members**

All of the above are about paddlers being able to effectively lead a group in moderate tidal water. Paddlers should experience:

- Identifying hazards.
- Choosing suitable routes for the group.
- Being an active member of the team.
- Prompt and suitable decision-making.
- Positioning during communication and pre-empting issues.
- Use of signals for effective communication.

It is important that paddlers learn how to add to the group dynamic, which enables swift decision-making, clear communications and positive outcomes.

Training should develop the ability to judge the conditions and the standard of the group and make appropriate decisions about the planned route along with the need to modify plans as required.

C.5 Incidents

Training should look at a wide variety of incidents and enable paddlers to work on the practical aspects of dealing with the situations with various pieces of equipment. Thus preparing them to manage any incidents, which could occur during the course of a journey.

Training should highlight:

- The process of maintaining an overview of the situation so that the safety and well-being of the whole group is never forgotten, including:
 - Various strategies for group control, communication, leadership styles and positioning.
 - Moving groups in more challenging situations.
 - Incidents that involve people e.g. seasickness, hypothermia, injuries etc.
 - Incidents that involve equipment e.g. boat repair, paddle repair, lost hatch etc.
 - Incidents that involve rescue in different circumstances and conditions thereby requiring a working knowledge of a variety of approaches.

- The necessity of carrying and having easily accessible:
 - A suitable means of summoning help in an emergency e.g. PLB, a range of flares, mobile phone, VHF etc.
 - A first aid kit and familiarity with the use of its contents whilst afloat as well as being able to deal with more substantial issues whilst ashore.
 - A repair kit. It should be possible to repair on a kayak whilst afloat as well as being able to deal with more substantial damage to equipment whilst ashore.

C.6 Provide guidance through top tips and handy hints

Training should develop the ability to pass on tips to group members to improve paddling ability and confidence, as well as giving sufficient information in order to achieve the days proposed objectives. For example, the leader may need to give paddlers top tips to allow them to get through a challenging area.

Part D – Theory

Training should provide paddlers with an awareness of potential risks, safety precautions and safety thresholds pertinent to leading groups on moderate tidal waters.

D.1 Equipment and design

The provider should endeavour to provide paddlers with knowledge and experience of using a range of equipment including the most up-to-date. The provider should also provide paddlers with an understanding of how and why modern equipment has evolved and which use each piece of equipment best serves. Training should help paddlers develop their knowledge of the range and application of sea specific equipment e.g. kayaks, skegs and rudders, paddles, clothing, towlines, emergency communication and navigation resources.

D.2 Safety (includes Coastguard and rescue services)

Operation of marine band VHF transceivers and familiarity with good operating procedures for radio traffic. Potential hazards (environmental and other water users).

D.3 Weather

Paddlers should be aware of a variety of sources of weather forecast. Through training they should be able to interpret such weather forecasts and be mindful of the conditions actually experienced, showing an understanding of the impact of various weather conditions on the sea environment.

D.4 Wellbeing, health and first aid

Linked with sound judgement, providers should ensure paddlers are trained to deal with the most likely injuries that may occur as part of paddlesport activities on the sea. It should be evident that paddlers can deal with an incident and see it through to its conclusion (including simple evacuations, dealing with emergency services and group care). This training should complement any other first

aid training where it exists. Paddlers should be encouraged to hold a current recognised two day first aid certificate.

D.5 Access

The provider needs to make paddlers aware of the range of access issues that exist throughout the UK and where they can find additional information as well as our basic freedom to paddle on the sea.

D.6 Environment

An appreciation of the environment we paddle in is a key underpinning principle for many in paddlesport. The provider should help paddlers to gain maximum enjoyment from this natural environment and give advice on how to protect it. Awareness level knowledge of typical coastal flora and fauna.

D.7 Planning

Training should provide paddlers with the ability to plan a day journey in an unfamiliar area using appropriate resources e.g. pilots, guidebooks, charts, maps etc. Paddlers need to know what questions to ask themselves and others and how to go about organising a day out, both on and off the water and produce a route card that can be communicated to the coastguard.

D.8 Group awareness and management

Training should develop an awareness of potential risks, safety precautions and safety thresholds pertinent to leading groups on moderate tidal waters. Training should cover:

- The likely effect and interaction of tide, tidal stream and wind.
- National Coastguard Organisations and rescue services.
- Potential hazards (environmental and other water users).
- Personal, legal and ethical responsibilities.

D.9 General knowledge

Paddlers should have a knowledge and awareness of the history of sea kayaking and current developments.

D.10 Navigation

Paddlers should be able to navigate accurately on journeys in the moderate tidal water environment using appropriate pilotage skills. For example:

- Understand buoyage
- Identify position by using a variety of methods
- Maintain a course, calculate distance and estimate paddling time

D.11 Show basic knowledge of collision regulations and sound signals

D.12 Leadership responsibilities

Paddlers should understand their roles and responsibilities as a leader on the sea.

D.13 Water features and hazards

Training should cover dynamic risk assessments as well as an understanding of hydrology and how to use this while leading on the sea. This will include for example, understanding the characteristics of swell, tidal flow, and surf.