



Participant Assessment Tool: Level-1 Kayak Skills

Paddle Canada Waiver Collected

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 1:	Student 2:	Student 3:	Student 4:	Student 5:	Student 6:

Paddle Canada Course Number: _____

Instructor Name(s): _____

Re-Entry Skills	P=Pass W=Weak F=Fail					
solo re-entry						
assisted re-entry as a swimmer						
assisted re-entry as a rescuer						
contact tow for 25 meters						
understand re-entry differences in single vs double kayak						
Paddling Skills						
launching and landing						
forward stroke						
stopping						
reverse stroke						
stern rudder (neutral, pry & draw)						
Edge control						
edging for course correction (inside and outside edge)						
forward sweep on edge						
reverse sweep on edge						
pivots on edge						
low brace						
Moving sideways						
pulling draw stroke						
sculling draw stroke						
Knowledge						
<i>During a half-day kayak journey the participant will demonstrate the following:</i>						
equipment and equipment care						
communication						
route planning and basic navigation						
weather						
sea state comprehension						
risk assessment and mitigation						
cold issues and sun safety						
impacts of kayakers on the environment						
vehicle boat tie down						
Other knowledge						
history and heritage						
kayaking community and resources						
Student Outcome:						
<small>(Pass, Conditional, Incomplete) (if a conditional pass was awarded conditions have to be clearly documented below and shared with the student)</small>						
Instructor Notes:						

Please Note: This checklist is based on the Paddle Canada Sea Kayaking Manual (published in 2025). For up to date skills and requirements please consult the most recent manual.

Paddle Canada Level-1 Skills Overview

Launching and Landing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> launch and land a kayak at each of a beach and/or a low dock, and demonstrate the proper body mechanics to lift and carry a kayak with a partner to prevent injury. 	Forward Stroke <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate efficient forward paddling, with good speed and control over 200 metres. paddle forward in a straight line without the aid of a rudder or skeg, show upright posture and effective torso rotation, and add edge to help maintain course. 	Stopping <p>The participant will travel at a moderate speed, and then stop the kayak within 4 strokes (2 on each side) without changing heading.</p>	Reverse Stroke <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate controlled reverse paddling with edging while looking back for a clear and safe route, and demonstrate effective torso rotation. 	Sweep Strokes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> start from a static position and use a series of forward and reverse sweeps to pivot the kayak 360 degrees in both directions, turn the kayak with a forward (or reverse) sweep stroke and edging while moving with speed, show efficient placement of the paddle and demonstrate unwinding of the trunk participants will attempt to push with their lower body towards the direction of travel. 	Draw Stroke <ul style="list-style-type: none"> move the kayak sideways 3 metres using the pulling draw stroke from a static start, move the kayak sideways 3 metres using the sculling draw stroke from a static start, use either a pulling draw or sculling draw, move the kayak on a diagonal (forwards or reverse and sideways at the same time) from a static start demonstrate draw strokes with a near vertical paddle shaft and effective torso rotation.
Towing <p>The participant will demonstrate a simple contact tow without the use of a towline for approximately 25 meters.</p>	Assisted Re-entry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> wet exit then re-enter the kayak with assistance from another paddler while in deep water, demonstrate as both swimmer and assistant practice both the T-rescue and the raft, re-enter and pump techniques. understand the differences between the re-entry of a single and a double kayak. 	Solo Re-entry <p>The participant will wet exit and re-enter a kayak in deep water without the assistance of another paddler</p>	Stern Rudder: Draw & Pry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use stern rudder strokes to turn the kayak in calm conditions - including use of a stern rudder in neutral to maintain direction use of a stern pry use of a stern draw demonstrate effective torso rotation while also looking forward for solid paddle placement attempt to apply appropriate edging for assistance in turning, and will understand the best environmental conditions to apply this stroke (e.g. turning downwind, or to keep going straight on small following waves). 	Edge Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate confident edge control (on both sides) that assists turning, hold the edge consistently throughout the turn, maintain course using edging to correct boat heading as needed, and begin to intentionally incorporate edging into their strokes and should be gaining confidence with this skill. 	
Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use of various types of signals within the paddling group (e.g., hand, paddle and sound), outline how one could summon help if needed using various signalling and communication methods including cell phones, VHF radio, and flares, understand the importance of knowing the best communication tools to use based on the paddling location and the situational needs identify the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of communication tools. 	Equipment and Equipment Care <p>state the key features, attributes, and care of paddling equipment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sea kayak, paddle, spray skirt designs, bailing devices, lifejackets, paddling clothing, equipment required by Transport Canada and additional safety equipment necessary for sea kayaking (beyond Transport Canada regulations) the purpose and application of both a rudder and a skeg. demonstrate how to outfit a sea kayak for proper fit and comfort including adjustment of foot pegs, backband, and thigh braces, demonstrate knowledge of different boat shapes and their effect on the kayak in the water, and organize gear and packing for a day-long outing with a focus on choosing gear needed to participate safely and waterproofing techniques as necessary. 	Route Planning and Basic Navigation Techniques <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe and use the concepts of basic nautical navigation needed for a safe day trip including piloting, handrails, backstops, time, distance, speed, and direction, and use a chart or topographic map to plan an appropriate day trip as well as follow their route during the course of said day trip and be prepared to identify their position when asked. 	Weather <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate knowledge of basic weather concepts such as wind direction and wind speed and their effects on navigation and sea state, state the influence of weather on a kayaker on a day-long excursion, be familiar with the different sources of weather information available appropriate to where they will be paddling, and be aware of the importance of getting a weather forecast in relation to risk management. 		
Sea State <ul style="list-style-type: none"> state how waves form in terms of fetch, wind strength and basic shoreline effects, and be aware of local tools available for predicting water conditions that will be encountered on a day trip (tide tables, river, or lake levels). 	Risk Assessment and Mitigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> apply a risk assessment framework for route planning and simple incident response, review the concepts of hazards, risk, exposure, vulnerability, mitigation & benefits, demonstrate ability to plan and manage risks in a day-long journey with peers in class 1 conditions, create a float plan and explain its importance in helping to manage risk, and respond effectively to a simple on-water scenario as an active member of the responding group. 	Vehicle Boat Tie Down <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate safe methods for lifting and lowering a kayak off the roof of a vehicle, and demonstrate various methods of tying a sea kayak on the roof of a vehicle for both racks and foam blocks. 	Half-day Kayak Journey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> go on a minimum ½ day kayak journey, and apply day tripping skills covered in Level-1 in the context of an actual short journey. 		
Impact of Kayakers on the Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> give examples of the negative impact kayakers have on the local environment and how best these can be mitigated, and state the core principles of Leave No Trace practices. 	Cold Issues and Sun Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the cause of hypothermia, identify symptoms of hypothermia, outline basic treatment for hypothermia, give examples of proper thermal clothing choices for weather and water temperature, and outline the positive effects of sun safety clothing, including hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen. 	History and Heritage <p>The participant will participate in a brief discussion on the history of the kayak.</p>	Kayaking Community and Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be made aware of local kayaking community (clubs, outfitters, provincial paddling associations, etc.) as well as get information on how to get connected be made aware of other sources of information such as books, videos and websites 		

Please Note: This is only an overview of the skills taught in this course. It is based on the Paddle Canada Sea Kayaking Manual V27 (published in 2025). Please see the full manual for up to date skills and requirements as well as for more details including course setup, pre-requisites, as well as important teaching notes on each skill.