

Technical Syllabus

Part A - Personal Paddling Skills

A.1 Lifting, carrying, launching and landing

Training should aim to develop good, safe lifting and carrying techniques appropriate to moving a kayak from a vehicle to the launch site, using teamwork where necessary to limit the risk of accident and injury. Training should include launching safely and efficiently from any simple launch site with the boat afloat e.g. pier, steps, rocky shoreline and beach.

A.2 Efficient forward paddling

Training should develop an understanding of the key points of good forward paddling technique i.e.

- Good trunk rotation, high paddling action with reasonably extended front arm. Good catch and power phase with early exit of the blade.
- Awareness of lower limb cycling action and the transfer of power through the feet as well as the push and pull ratio of the arms.
- Awareness of the relationship between posture, connectivity, power transfer and feel.

Training should allow paddlers to experience paddling in a variety of wind and tidal conditions relevant to the award. This will provide an understanding of the subtle changes required to effect efficient forward paddling technique when paddling into wind and/or tide, cross wind and/or tide and down wind and/or tide.

A.3 Efficient reverse paddling and stopping

Control over a figure-of-eight course: Training should develop the ability to paddle a reverse figure of eight course, as this requires paddlers to have developed a range of reverse paddling strokes and edging techniques.

A.4 Maintaining direction

Edging: The paddler should develop effective edging strategies to control the kayak whilst travelling both forwards and reverse.

Stern rudder: Stroke: the paddle blade should be placed in the water, towards the stern. Training should enable the paddler to keep the kayak running straight, with the paddle kept on one side of the kayak, whilst maintaining speed, e.g. to run through a narrow gap.

A.5 Changing direction

Static: Training should enable paddlers to turning the kayak 360 degrees in both directions by using alternate forward and reverse sweep strokes. In addition, coaches should help the paddler to understand how and when edging and leaning assists with this manoeuvre.

On the move: The coach should explore a variety of turning techniques that enable paddlers to turn the kayak through 90 degrees using combinations of both inside and outside edge, and vertical and horizontal paddle positions to avoid obstacles e.g. sweep, low brace turn,

bow rudder, cross deck bow rudder. The coach should highlight the importance of a sweep stroke to initiate the turn.

A.6 Moving sideways, both static and on the move

Paddlers should be trained to use a variety of techniques to move sideways both statically and on the move. Paddlers should understand why the body should be well rotated, the paddle shaft vertical and the blade submerged. Appropriate edging to help move sideways should also be understood. At this level, an efficient sideways movement should be evident without the kayak turning and if it does turn then the paddlers should be aware of how to correct it appropriately.

A.7 Supporting, both static and on the move

Paddlers should be trained to perform high and low recovery strokes with the kayak well off balance. Paddlers should also be able to perform these on the move, with forward paddling being resumed thereafter. The paddler needs to understand the importance of keeping their actions within their 'safety box'.

A.8 Rolling

Training should cover the skills required to perform an effective roll on flat-water, on one side only, following a full capsized. The coach should appreciate that this skill may be new, or may have been learnt in a swimming pool and rarely performed outside. It is therefore important for the coach to help paddlers transfer this skill into a flat-water environment outside.

Sit-on-top paddlers should be trained to self-rescue instead (training should highlight the importance of keeping both sides of the re-entry zone clear of equipment to assist safe self-rescue).

A.9 Securing

Paddlers should be made aware of systems used to secure a boat to a trailer, kayak rack or roof rack, using straps or rope.

The implications and dangers to tying off to anchors, buoys, navigational beacons should also be covered. The importance of carrying a knife and releasable systems should be highlighted.

Part B - Safety and Rescue

B.1 Deep-water rescue

Paddlers should be trained to perform a safe, quick and efficient deep-water rescue of a capsized kayaker, where the use of appropriate dialogue with the person whilst maintaining control of the rescue should be encouraged. Training should help paddlers to understand the manual handling issues related to performing deep-water rescues and as such a range of techniques should be explored so that the paddlers can select the most appropriate method.

B.2 Contact tows and use of towline

A variety of towing techniques should be explored. Training should enable paddlers to demonstrate a push or pull contact tow, a simple tow using a towline and a failsafe emergency release. The coach should highlight the inherent dangers of towing and rope in a marine environment with the importance of carrying an easily accessible knife being paramount.

B.3 Eskimo rescue

Paddlers should be trained to be proficient as both the rescuer and the victim. They should work on an efficient and safe means of approaching a capsized paddler. Paddlers must be made aware of the need not to crush the hand of the victim against the side of the boat and yet be able to quickly and accurately move in to help from approximately 5m away. Both bow and paddle presentation should be practised.

The Eskimo rescue is only applicable to sit-on-top paddlers using boats with thigh straps.

Part C - Safety, Leadership & Group Skills

C.1 Personal risk management

Training should cover the practical application of the theory of D.1 - Equipment and D.2 - Safety from Part D below.

C.2 Awareness of others

The coach should highlight the importance of awareness; both of what is happening to the paddler and to others around them. Paddlers should understand that although they are not leaders responsible for others, they should work together and help each other through good communication and positioning (e.g. shepherding) techniques.

C.3 Paddle as part of a led group

Through training it is important the paddlers experience a range of conditions. For example, bays, harbours, beaches, estuaries, stretches of coastline in close proximity to the shore with easy landing, all with winds not above force 3. This should also include launching and landing through small surf (up to 1m trough to crest maximum).

Paddlers should also be involved in the trip planning, and understand the importance of map/chart work and strategies for keeping together in a range of conditions. They should be introduced to the judgement required to safely operate as part of a led group. They should experience identifying hazards and choosing suitable routes. As a group, they should carry suitable equipment for a day journey and demonstrate good 'etiquette' i.e. staying together, whilst also giving other group members enough space.

Part D - Theory:

The coach should provide background theory as appropriate throughout the training.

D.1 Equipment

The coach should provide paddlers with an understanding of how and why a range of equipment appropriate for a competent member of a group undertaking a day's journey on the sea has evolved and how best to use it. The equipment should include:

- A closed cockpit kayak or sit-on-top, suitable for sea touring
- Paddle
- A set of spare paddles between the group
- Appropriate personal paddling clothing and equipment
- Spare clothing
- Food and drink
- A means of summoning external assistance and awareness of its limitations
- Towline
- Knife
- Whistle
- Basic first aid kit
- Basic repair kit
- Exposure bag or emergency shelter
- Sun hat, sunglasses, sunscreen

D.2 Sea safety

Training should provide paddlers with an awareness of safety precautions that are applicable to kayaking on the sea. For example:

- The general effects of wind (particularly offshore), swell, tide and geographical features.
- National Coastguard organisations and rescue services.
- Potential hazards (environmental and other water users).

D.3 Weather

The coach should provide paddlers with the knowledge of the various sources of appropriate weather forecasts and how to interpret these in terms of a proposed day journey.

D.4 Wellbeing, health and first aid

The coach should provide paddlers with a basic understanding of the signs and symptoms of hypothermia. The possession of a first aid certificate is recommended but the ability to help with basic first aid issues is essential.

D.5 Access

Paddlers should be aware of regional and national access issues and legislation as well as our basic freedom to paddle on the sea. They should also be aware that some harbour authorities have the right to charge kayakers, and do so.

D.6 Environment

The coach should help paddlers to understand that anyone operating within sensitive environments has a responsibility to the environment and wildlife. Consequently, paddlers should be mindful of the local wildlife, its habitats, and preservation. They must also have knowledge of, and abide by, relevant codes of practice.

D.7 Planning

The coach should provide paddlers with the knowledge to be able to identify basic coastal features using a map and chart, and the ability to interpret tide tables and use tidal constants. Including:

- Basic knowledge of tidal times, constants and effects of wind on simple tidal water e.g. wind against tide, offshore winds
- Understanding of spring and neap tides
- Basic understanding of the effect of topography on tidal flow

D.8 Group awareness

The coach should provide opportunities throughout the training that highlight the need for group awareness and explore tactics whereby 'buddies' can provide support (physically and/or psychologically if required) through communication and positioning techniques (notes in section C2 and C3).

D.9 General knowledge

Paddlers should have an awareness of the diverse nature of paddlesport and the rich history paddling has, within both sea paddling and the other disciplines.

D.10 Navigation

The coach should provide paddlers with the knowledge to be able to:

- Show basic recognition of main buoyage
- Identify position by using a grid reference and latitude and longitude
- Use a compass to paddle on a bearing
- Calculate distance and estimate paddling time

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