

Level 3 Skills Course

This course develops seamanship and leadership in multi-day touring. The participant in Level-3 will

- develop practical leadership, risk assessment, decision-making, judgment, group management and seamanship in the context of a multi-day journey.
- participate in a multi-day journey that includes changing conditions and varying terrain.
- develop the skills necessary to lead a small group of paddlers on an overnight journey.
- develop the skills outlined in Level-2 to a higher standard of proficiency.

Prerequisites	Paddle Canada Level-2 Skills certification or equivalent skill and knowledge Extended trips of 2 or more days totalling 10 overnights Wilderness first aid (16 hours) with CPR is strongly recommended VHF radio operator's licence is recommended Bronze Medallion swimming and lifesaving (or equivalent) is recommended
Course Length	4 days with an excursion that includes 2 or more adjacent overnights
Class Ratio	1 instructor : 4 participants 1 instructor + 1 assistant: 6 participants
Minimum Staff & Certification	Instructor: one Level-3 Instructor Optional assistant(s): one Level-2 Instructor
Location	Exposed coastline with frequent landing opportunities
Conditions	Winds moderate (12–19 knots) Combined sea state less than 1 metre Surf < 1 metre Current < 3 knots Combined sea state near 1 metre with a moderate, occasionally rough sea state

Overview

Rescue Skills	Paddling Skills	Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted Rescue • Unassisted rescue • Towing • Hypothermia • Communication • Scenarios • Rolling • All in rescue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward Paddling • Reverse Stroke • Sweep Strokes • Draw/sculling draw • Low/high brace • Stern rudder • Bow Rudder • Bracing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment • Kayaking resources • Journeying & Seamanship • Navigation/Ded Reckoning • Safety • Knots

Rescue Skills

Exercise scenarios must engage the necessary decision-making to maintain or improve the safety of the entire group and should include:

- Typical yet uncommon difficulties such as seasickness, shoulder injuries, broken paddles, panic, fear, and hypothermia.
- Situations with more than one cause and that include complexities such as multiple capsizes, personal injury, hypothermia, loss of equipment, leaking kayaks, and missing persons.
- Problems that occur in camp or during launching or landing on shore.

In Level-3, the development of a paddler's rescue skills should be practiced in simulated incident scenarios. These scenarios should require the participant to demonstrate leadership and independent thought, working through simulated but realistic situations, making choices and engaging other members of the group to aid in the rescue. Scenarios can extend to include returning an incapacitated paddler to shore and remediation of simulated hypothermia and calling for external assistance.

Rolling — the paddler will practice rolling the kayak in open water with calm or choppy sea conditions. A roll on only one side will be required and typically the participant should be able to complete a roll on demand 3 out of 4 times. Rolling in open water is a requirement for certification.

Towing — choose the most appropriate towing technique and attach a tow to a kayak quickly and effectively. Lead simulated incident scenarios that involved more than one kayak towing. Practice releasing a tow under simulated difficult conditions. Towing exercises should incorporate other rescue skills in realistic simulated rescue scenarios.

Rescue scenarios should include towing a paddler and kayak away from exposed shore with current or breaking waves. The paddler may be in or out of their boat.

Towing safety drills should include towing in waves or current and releasing the towline while the line is under stress or after capsize.

Hypothermia — Causes, effects and treatment (e.g., more in-depth understanding, the additional concerns with an overnight trip).

Communication — Describe emergency procedures for communication with Coast Guard, police and the commercial and public boating community. Understand and demonstrate the proper use of a variety of one-way signalling devices such as, paddles, whistles, horns, and mirrors and two-way communication devices such as VHF radios, FRS radios, and cellular phones.

Scenarios — Activities that use safety and rescue equipment can include

- Exit the kayak and, with a simulated injury to a shoulder, access communications equipment and call for help.
- Call a simulated mayday.
- Call a simulated pan-pan.
- In a timely manner, tow a paddler and kayak away from a simulated urgent situation such as near rocks and breaking waves or in current.
- Use of first aid and first aid supplies while on the water and on shore, dealing with injuries such as leg cramp, an eye struck with a paddle, seasickness, anxiety or fatigue.
- Application of boat repair while on the water and on the shore, such as repair of broken rudder cables, leaky skeg box, or a lost hatch cover.

Paddling Skills

The skill set for Level-3 is the same as listed in Level-2; however, a higher standard of practice is expected. Sea conditions can be choppy and shorelines can be irregular to such a degree that conditions demand quick and effective maneuvering of the kayak. The paddler must demonstrate quick and effective linking of strokes and maneuvers for good boat control along a complex shoreline with rocks, kelp, built structures or other obstacles. Sea conditions must include breaking waves, current, or other conditions that place moderate demands on the paddler.

Launching and landing — Demonstrate a variety of boat launchings / landings from docks, rocky shores, small surf or other complex situations such as evacuation of a victim onto a rescue vessel such as a sailboat or other vessel with significant freeboard.

Forward paddling — Show efficient and sustained forward paddling during a journey of two or three days.

Bracing — Throughout the course, conditions and exercise scenarios should include conditions sufficiently demand that good bracing skills are a necessary asset. Exercises such as sculling for support while capsized are appropriate practice.

Knowledge

The extent of knowledge required for safe paddling at this level is governed by the conditions along a moderately exposed shore with frequent landing opportunities. The following list is not exhaustive and is provided here as a guide to the nature and extent of knowledge necessary for safe and enjoyable paddling in Level-3 conditions.

Equipment — Exercise scenarios should include the correct use of a wide variety of equipment such as

- Use of rescue and safety equipment such as deck lines, pumps, signalling devices, and spare paddles.
- Use of a general repair kit.
- Interpretation of charts and maps to plan and execute an extended trip.
- use of various knots such as clove hitch, bowline, figure of eight, and rolling hitch in fixed and quick release applications.
- organizing the gear and packing for an overnight journey.
- packing a kayak with a secure, balanced and stable load.

- That used for safety, rescue and communication must be accessible.
- Preparation of a float plan and an emergency response plan.

Kayaking resources — Use the sources of information necessary for planning and for completing a multi-day journey, such as: tide and current tables, guidebooks, navigation texts, *Chart 1*, hydrographic charts, topographic maps and global positioning systems (GPS).

Heritage — Describe at least one publicly renowned kayak expedition from the last 50 years.

Or, submit a list of at least 5 essential readings and resources for sea kayakers. The list must include at least one title / resource related to exploration and one related to technique. Identify one or two prominent North American designers / manufacturers / instructors and describe their impact on modern sea kayaking with specific reference to design, materials, resources, or technique.

Environment — Use a variety of resources to identify 1–3 natural objects (flora, fauna, rocks, stars, etc.). Each participant will share this information with the rest of the group in an informal presentation no longer than 5 minutes.

Or, use a variety of resources to learn about local cultural history (first nations, European, economic, exploration, etc.) and share this information with the rest of the group in an informal presentation no longer than 5 minutes. Describe the seven Leave No Trace Principles and practices given in the *Important Notes for All Courses* section of this manual, and work to integrate these principles and practices while on the trip.

Journeying and Seamanship

Journeying and seamanship refers to the knowledge, practical skills, equipment preparation, trip planning, risk assessment, decision-making, various judgments, and the actions that occur throughout the planning and completion of a trip.

For successful completion of Level-3, paddlers must have the prerequisite practical skills and equipment in place. Leadership and decision-making activities should predominate the course. The instructor should facilitate group and individual participation in a wide variety of risk-assessment, decision-making and other leadership roles.

Decision making — Engage in decision making independently and with the group, to maintain a safe trip. Communicate with the group to establish and maintain a float plan. Ongoing changes to the plan must be properly establish and well understood by the group.

Campsites — Prepare a campsite for safety and comfort during inclement weather. Choose a safe and sheltered camp area that deals with concerns such as

- high and low tide
- storm surge
- wildlife trails
- fire restrictions and hazards
- rising water levels

Build a safe and functional campsite that deals with

- tent placement and weatherproofing
- techniques for raising windproof tarps
- fire lighting for cooking and emergencies
- sanitary and safe kitchen area
- sanitary and appropriate latrine area
- minimizing the attraction of wildlife
- minimizing environmental impact

Assessment

The activities in Level-3 focus on leadership, risk assessment, decision-making, judgment, group management, and general seamanship in the context of a multi-day journey. Well-developed skills such as a strong forward stroke, effective bracing, maneuvering control in waves or current, and rescue skills including rolling and towing are necessary at this level.