

Advanced Sea Kayak Leader Assessment Notes

Technical Syllabus

Part A - Personal Paddling Skills

Through the blending of their body, boat and blade positions, the paddler must be able to skilfully control their kayak in advanced conditions.

The paddler must keep their paddling actions within the 'safety box' and perform strokes in advanced conditions on both sides.

Paddlers must be able to paddle forwards efficiently and have the skill to support, turn, roll, control and manoeuvre their kayak efficiently and effectively in advanced conditions.

A.1 Launching and landing

Paddlers must show the ability to launch and land themselves and the members of their group safely in a variety of conditions. This could involve beaches, rocky inlets, headlands and dumping surf.

They must also show the ability to land an injured paddler safely.

A.2 Efficient and effective forward and reverse paddling

Paddlers should demonstrate efficient and sustained forward paddling in advanced conditions throughout a day's journey. This must include a following sea, head sea, a quartering sea and a beam sea.

Paddlers must demonstrate accurate and efficient reverse paddling in a range of environmental conditions.

A.3 Efficient and effective manoeuvring and control

Paddlers must effectively manoeuvre their kayaks in a range of situations and conditions.

A.4 Navigation on the water and in poor visibility

Paddlers must demonstrate the ability to:

- Keep a compass course on open water and make good a course using transits.
- Fix their position using a combination of bearings and transits.
- Navigate in poor visibility or the hours of darkness.
- Plan alternative/escape routes whilst afloat which take into account wind and tidal conditions.
- Identify features from the map or chart and recognise navigation marks.

A.5 Roll in rough water

Paddlers must perform a roll in rough water. If the paddler fails the first roll then they would be expected to self-rescue and perform a roll later in the assessment. A 'competent' roll is a requirement to pass. Ideally the ability to roll on both sides is desirable; however, the paddler must capsize both sides, but only needs to roll up on one side.

Part B – Safety and Rescue

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

Paddlers must have a good repertoire of rescues and be able to adapt them to a range of conditions. They must be able to rescue a loaded sea kayak with assistance only from the casualty.

B.2 Self-rescue

Paddlers must have knowledge of a variety of self-rescues and be able to demonstrate one. This part of the assessment must take place in conditions of sea state 4. The paddler must be able to empty their kayak without landing or accepting external assistance.

B.3 Be conversant with different methods of towing

Paddlers must have a towing system ready for use at all times, and must show effective strategies for towing a casualty to a point of shelter.

They must be aware of the need for flexibility and be able to drop and pick up the tow with ease. They should demonstrate single and multiple tows.

Part C – Safety, Leadership & Group Skills

C.1 Skilful application of leadership principles

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

Paddlers must exercise appropriate and effective group control whilst on the water and choose a leadership style and position appropriate to the prevailing conditions during the journey.

Paddlers must not pass on the responsibility of decision making to a third party. At all times they must be concerned for the comfort and welfare of the party throughout the whole journey. This duty of care must be practiced and extended to the journey both on and off the water. Paddlers must be made to realise the importance of planning and adapting, as the ability of the weakest member of the group must always be taken into consideration.

Within the assessment the importance of effective group control cannot be over-emphasised.

C.5 Demonstrate the capability to manage a range of incidents

Paddlers must be equipped and prepared to deal with any incidents which could occur during the course of the journey and have easy access to the following:

- A variety of means for summoning help in an emergency including a VHF radio.
- A first aid kit and familiarity with the use of its contents.
- A repair kit. Paddlers should be able to carry out a repair on a kayak whilst afloat as well as being able to deal with more substantial damage to the equipment whilst ashore.

C.6 Provide guidance through top tips and handy hints

Although the British Canoeing Advanced Sea Kayak Leader Award is not a coaching award it should be recognised that paddlers must be made aware of the importance of being able to communicate effectively and pass on relevant information and advice to the group as required.

Part D – Theory

D.1 Equipment and design

Paddlers should show an understanding of the variety of technology which is available including VHF and GPS (to include latitude and longitude, speed and distance and entering a waypoint).

D.2 Safety (includes Coastguard and rescue services)

Paddlers should have knowledge of the role and responsibilities of the Coastguard and associated rescue services. Paddlers must be able to operate a marine band VHF transceiver and show good operating procedures for radio traffic. UK residents must understand the VHF radio licencing requirements.

D.3 Weather

Paddlers should know where to obtain relevant shipping and weather forecasts. They should also understand the probable sequence of weather which occurs during the passage of a depression.

Paddlers should have an understanding of the following:

- The formation of fog, onshore and offshore winds, the effect of relief and line squalls.
- The relationship between the pattern of isobars on a synoptic chart and the probable resultant wind speed and direction.
- The relationship between physical signs and the actual forecast.

Paddlers must have a good understanding of the behaviour of the sea and the effect the past, present and future weather may have.

D.4 Wellbeing, health and first aid

Paddlers should demonstrate sound judgement and the ability 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 should complement first aid training.

D.5 Access

Paddlers need to be 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

Paddlers should be aware of the environmental factors that affect the sea. These will include the effect of wind, tidal movement, swell and physical factors.

Paddlers should also show a basic knowledge of the wildlife which is likely to be encountered on the sea and be aware of times and areas when special consideration should be given.

D.7 Planning

Paddlers must be able to plan a two-day journey in an unfamiliar area, which includes an open crossing.

D.8 Group awareness and management

Paddlers must be aware of potential risks, safety precautions and safety thresholds pertinent to leading groups in advanced tidal waters and providers should question them on the following:

- 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 advanced 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 demonstrate an understanding of their roles and responsibilities as a leader on the sea.

D.13 Water features and hazards

Paddlers should be able to demonstrate the ability to perform 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.

Specific Guidance Notes for Providers

Paddlers should demonstrate an understanding of the sea and have significant experience to consistently make good decisions and reduce risk whilst efficiently and effectively achieving an objective.

The Advanced Sea Kayak Leader needs to:

- Be familiar with the characteristic features of swift moving water on the sea. This requires experience and understanding of the behaviour of the flow of the moving water and associated eddies and flow boundaries.
- Have an appreciation of wave shape in relation to the wind, power and energy in the wave (whether swell, surf or standing wave) and not just size, as required for safe judgement.

The paddler must be able to plan and carry out a suitable journey in the hours of darkness, demonstrating accurate navigational techniques and group management.

Paddlers must not rely on satellite based positioning systems during the navigation exercises when on assessment.

When assessing in advanced conditions on the sea the choice of location is of the utmost importance. In strong winds the group ideally needs to be in a location where the whole group can run directly downwind to sheltered waters. Only when Advanced Sea Kayak Leader paddlers and providers have satisfied themselves as to the strength of the group as a whole should they venture out on a committing area of the coast.