



Paddle Canada

Basic Kayak Skills

Introduction to foundational sea and flat water kayaking skills.

Course Description

With a focus on foundation skills and knowledge, Basic Kayak Skills inspires students to go out on short paddling excursions in calm and sheltered waters.

General Learning Outcome

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to confidently paddle in class-0 or calm, sheltered waters in the company of peers with similar abilities.

Prerequisites

None.

Course Length

8 hours of instruction (1 day)

Environmental Conditions and Sea State

Conditions should not exceed water class-0.

Class-0: Non-challenging protected waters with limited wind effect, little or no current, easy landings, and ready access to land-based assistance. Wind and sea state is calm to rippled (< 8 knots).

Assessment

Assessment will be through practical exercises with a focus on developing the participant's awareness of their personal roadmap to future learning.

Learning Outcomes

Re-entry Skills

Wet Exit

While under water, the student will release the spray skirt and exit the kayak in a controlled and confident manner.

Assisted Re-entries

The student will:

- wet exit and re-enter the kayak in deep water with assistance from another paddler, and
- demonstrate the re-entry as both a swimmer and the assistant.

Paddling Skills

Lifting and Carrying a Kayak

- The student will demonstrate an ability to lift and carry a kayak in tandem with another person safely.

Launching and Landing

- The student will enter and exit a kayak safely from either a beach or dock of low or medium height.

Emptying the kayak

- The student will empty the kayak in shallow water, for example, after a capsize, entering or exiting the kayak at the shoreline.

Forward Stroke

- The student will paddle forward on a short journey (200 metres or more) in a straight line under control without the use of a rudder or skeg.

Stopping

- The student will stop the kayak without changing the kayak's heading while paddling at a moderate speed.

Reverse Stroke

The student will:

- paddle in reverse over a short distance (50 metres or more) in a straight line without the use of a rudder or skeg, and
- look behind them periodically.

Forward Sweep Stroke

The student will:

- use forward sweeps to turn the kayak in each direction, and
- attempt to use edging to assist with turning.

Reverse Sweep Stroke

The student will:

- use reverse sweeps to turn the kayak in each direction,
- attempt to use edging to assist with turning, and
- strive to look where they are going rather than watching their blade.

Pivots

The student will:

- use both forward and reverse sweep strokes to pivot the kayak in both directions, and
- attempt to edge their kayak to assist with turning.

Draw Stroke

The student will use a draw stroke to move the kayak sideways 2 metres.

Low Brace

The student will simulate a capsize and demonstrate proper low brace technique to recover.

Edging

The student will:

- demonstrate the beginnings of good edge control to assist in turning, and
- paddle forward for 5 metres with the kayak tilted on edge.

Knowledge

Kayak Part Names and Outfitting

The student will:

- state the basic name and purpose of the different features of a kayak, and
- outline the potential risks of paddling a kayak without deck lines, toggles/grab loops or bulkheads.

Paddling and Safety Equipment

The student will:

- list the minimum safety equipment for kayaking as required by Transport Canada as well as its proper use, and
- list other important yet optional safety equipment they might consider bringing including an extra paddle or paddlefloat.

Injury Prevention

The student will participate in various warm-up procedures that can help prevent common injuries.

Sunsense

The student will outline the positive effects of sun safety clothing, including hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen.

Collision Regulations

The student will state the basic collision regulations as they pertain to interactions between sea kayakers and other maritime operators.

Navigation

The student will:

- demonstrate the basic concepts of navigation in the context of a short paddle (2 to 3 hours) in protected waters, including:
- piloting as it relates to observing landmarks so they can keep track of their location, and
- keeping track of time to identify how quickly the paddlers are progressing and when to turn back.
- conclude that navigation is an essential aspect of kayaking and a topic that is developed in later levels.

Risk Assessment and Mitigation

The student will:

- describe common paddling hazards,
- explain how to avoid or reduce exposure to make safe decisions,
- use a simple risk assessment framework to identify the risks of paddling in sheltered waters,
- explain the basic concepts of hazards, risks, mitigation and benefits, and
- identify basic paddling hazards.

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