

BCU Three Star Sea Kayak

Guidance Notes

Aim

To recognise the level of skill, understanding and knowledge demonstrated (whilst journeying in a moderate tidal environment as part of a led group with winds no more than Force 4) is of the standard of an able improving sea paddler and beyond that of the beginner.

The nature of the assessment is that of continuous evaluation throughout a suitable day journey.

Equipment

The candidate must have personal equipment, appropriate for a competent member of a group undertaking a day's journey on the sea, including;

A closed cockpit kayak or sit on top suitable for touring.

Appropriate personal clothing (this may include a helmet)

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.

Anyone operating within sensitive environments has a responsibility to the environment and wildlife. Consequently, the candidate should be mindful of the local wildlife, its habitats and preservation. They must also have knowledge of, and abide by, relevant codes of practice.

Part A - Personal paddling skills

The candidate will demonstrate their ability to skilfully control their kayak in the prescribed conditions through blending their body, boat and blade positions.

This will incorporate the application of the various practical techniques listed below.

The paddler should keep their actions within the "safety Box" and perform strokes on both sides.

If the kayak is fitted with a rudder, it must be disabled for the duration of the assessment. It is required that boats should be fitted with total buoyancy (e.g. watertight compartments/airbags)

1. Lifting and carrying, launching and landing and securing.

Demonstrate good, safe lifting and carrying techniques appropriate to moving a kayak from a vehicle to the launch site, using team work where necessary to limit the risk of accident and injury. The candidate should be able to launch safely and efficiently from any simple launch site with the boat afloat (e.g. pier, steps, rocky shoreline, and beach).

Securing: Secure the kayak to a trailer; kayak rack or roof rack using straps or rope. Any system is acceptable, but if rope is used it must be an efficient recognised knot.

2. Efficient forward paddling;

Effective range of forward paddling technique including;
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 push and pull ratio of the arms. The candidate will be observed throughout the test and should show good style at cruising speed with sufficient power in the stroke to paddle against wind

3. Reverse paddling; Accurate and efficient reverse paddling utilising coastal features and other kayakers.

4. Stopping:. Forwards and reverse; from cruising speed stopping in a controlled manner within a minimum number of strokes.

5. Maintaining Direction;

Edging, If the candidate is participating in a sea kayak they should show effective edging strategies to control the kayak whilst travelling both forwards and reverse.

Stern Rudder. The paddle blade should be placed in the water, towards the stern. The candidate should be able to keep the kayak running straight, with the paddle kept on one side of the kayak whilst maintaining speed e.g. used to run through a narrow gap.

6. Changing Direction;

Turning the kayak 360 degrees in both directions by using alternate forward and reverse sweep strokes, in conjunction with edging to assist this manoeuvre
Paddle blade covered, reaching out to full arm extension, elbow slightly bent.

Turning whilst on the move.

Turning 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.)

Training note;

For vertical paddle strokes 90 degrees may be difficult to achieve the importance is that the turn is initiated with a vertical paddle stroke.

7. Moving Sideways, both static and on the move,

An efficient sideways movement must be evident without the kayak turning, using a variety of techniques;

Body well rotated, paddle shaft upright, blade submerged.

8. Supporting,

High and low recovery strokes. To be performed with the kayak well off balance also to be performed on the move, and forward paddling to be resumed thereafter.

9. Rolling on flat water.

Rolling: An effective Roll to be performed, on one side only, following a full capsized. Failed attempts do not disqualify the candidate, however, a successful roll must be seen.

Sit on Top – Self rescue, get back on to the sit on top unaided.

Part B - Safety and Rescue:

1. Contact Tows and use of towline

Candidate must demonstrate a push or pull contact tow.

The candidate will also demonstrate a simple tow using a towline and demonstrate an emergency release. The candidate must indicate that they are aware of the inherent dangers of towing.

2. Deep water rescue.

Perform a safe and timely deep-water rescue of a capsized kayaker, use of appropriate dialogue with the person whilst maintaining control of the rescue.

Capsize the kayak, and then following the directions of an able rescuer demonstrate an ability to re-occupy their rescued kayak.

3. Eskimo Rescue.

Candidate to act as both rescuer and victim.

Both kayak and paddle presentation must be demonstrated. The rescuer is expected to move in from a realistic distance. A first time recovery must follow, but 2 attempts may be made; the rescuer must approach from a safe angle at a sensible speed. The rescuer should not approach from right angles to where the hands and body are located.

Part D -Theory

Be aware of: Safety precautions applying particularly to kayaking on the sea e.g.;

- The general effects of wind (particularly offshore), swell, tide and geographical feature
- National Coastguard organisations and rescue services
- Potential hazards (environmental and other water users)
- Hypothermia/First Aid – have 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.

-Access – Be aware of regional and national access issues and legislation as well as our basic freedom to paddle on the sea. Be aware that some harbour authorities have the right to charge kayakers, and do so.

- Planning – Be able to identify basic coastal features using a map and chart. And have the ability to interpret tide tables and use tidal constants.
- Weather – have knowledge of the various sources of appropriate weather forecasts and how to interpret these in terms of a proposed day's journey

Three Star sea standard is the appropriate level of performance for paddlers to begin working towards the Four Star Sea.