

## Basic Kayak Skills Participant

Introduction to foundational sea and flat water kayaking skills.

### Course Description

This is the primary starting point of the Paddle Canada Sea Kayak skills progression. 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), minimum 6 hours instruction on the water.

### Class Ratio

1 instructor:6 participants

### Minimum Staff & Certification

One Basic Kayak Instructor is required to teach this course.

### Environmental Conditions and Sea State

Conditions should not exceed water class-0.

**Class-0 environment:** 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*

The student will release the spray skirt and exit the kayak in a controlled and confident manner.

General description:

□ Developed through a series of challenges that

increase confidence and skill, the student will be able to capsize the kayak while underway and braced inside the cockpit.

### **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.
- Aids such as a stirrup may be used.
- The spray skirt must be in place for the capsize.
- The re-entry is complete when the excess water is removed from the cockpit, the swimmer is back in the boat, the spray skirt is reattached and the paddler has regained sufficient stability to continue paddling effectively.

### **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.

General description:

- The blade should enter the water at or near the toes, be fully submerged and leave the water at or just past the hips.
- It is important that torso rotation be introduced and encouraged at this level in order to develop proper technique early on. However, not all Basic participants will

have the ability or the confidence to consistently use effective torso rotation.

### **Stopping**

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

General description:

- Use small reverse strokes (when travelling forward) on alternating sides.

### **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.

General description:

- The blade should enter the water just behind the hips and leave the water around the knees.
- Ensure full paddle blade submersion for maximum efficiency using the back of the blade throughout the stroke.

### **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.

General Description:

- The paddle blade should be fully submerged just below the surface, and placed near the boat at the toes.
- Maintaining both arms in an extended position with minimal elbow flex, face the direction the bow is moving and sweep the blade away from the boat in an arc.
- Blade exit is dependent upon how much turn is required along with keeping a moderate cadence. Students should be encouraged to remove the blade from the water at or just past the hip.

### **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.

General description:

□ The stroke should start with the paddle in the stern quarter out at a comfortable distance.

□ Using torso rotation, place the paddle blade near the stern of the kayak and sweep

it forward towards the toes just below the surface of the water in a wide arc. Paddle blade should exit the water at or past the knees.

### 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.

Teaching note:

□ While students should be encouraged to demonstrate the stroke with a vertical paddle shaft and effective torso rotation, at this level emphasis should be placed on boat movement rather than strict paddler form.

### Low Brace

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

General description:

□ The back of the blade should be against the surface of the water with elbows directly above the wrists.

□ Pushing the paddle on the surface of the water arrests further tipping into the water while recovery of balance is due to righting the kayak with the lower body.

### 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.

Teaching note:

- Ensure hazard evaluation includes:
  - Group – Size, Ability, Preparedness
  - Environment - Water/Air Temp, Wind & Waves, Launch/Land Options
  - Equipment – Seaworthy Boats, Safety Gear Including Transport Canada requirements, Clothing, etc.