

3 Star Sea Assessment Notes

Technical Syllabus

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

The paddler will demonstrate their ability to skilfully control their craft 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. Sit-on-tops should be fitted with thigh braces.

A.1 Lifting and carrying, launching and landing

Paddlers should demonstrate good safe lifting and carrying techniques appropriate to moving a kayak from a vehicle to the launch site, using teamwork where necessary to limit the risk of accident and injury. Paddlers 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.

A.2 Efficient forward paddling

Paddlers should demonstrate an 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 as well as the push and pull ratio of the arms. The paddler will be observed throughout the test and should show good style at cruising speed with sufficient power in the stroke to paddle against wind.

A.3 Efficient reverse paddling and stopping

Paddlers should show accurate and efficient reverse paddling, utilising coastal features and other kayakers.

Paddlers will be required to stop both forwards and reverse from cruising speed, stopping in a controlled manner within a minimum number of strokes.

A.4 Maintaining direction

Edging: The paddler should show effective edging strategies to control the kayak whilst travelling both forwards and backwards.

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

A.5 Changing direction

Static turns: Paddlers should be able to turn the kayak 360 degrees in both directions by using alternate forward and reverse sweep strokes, in conjunction with edging to assist this manoeuvre. Providers will be looking for the paddle blade to be covered, reaching out to full arm extension, elbow slightly bent.

Turning whilst on the move: Paddlers should be able to turn 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.

Providers should note that for vertical paddle strokes 90 degrees may be difficult **to achieve, the importance is that the turn is initiated with a sweep stroke.**

A.6 Moving sideways, both static and on the move

Providers will be looking for an efficient sideways movement without the kayak turning, using a variety of techniques. The body well rotated, paddle shaft upright, blade submerged.

A.7 Supporting, both static and on the move

Paddlers should be able to perform high and low recovery strokes with the kayak well off balance. These should also be performed on the move, with forward paddling being resumed thereafter.

A.8 Rolling

Paddlers should be able to perform an effective roll in flat-water, on one side only, following a full capsized. Failed attempts do not disqualify the paddler, however, a successful roll must be seen.

Sit-on-top paddlers should perform a self-rescue.

A.9 Securing

Paddlers should be able to 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.

Sit-on-top paddlers should demonstrate safe securing to a buoy and use of anchor and drogue.

Part B – Safety and Rescue

B.1 Deep-water rescue

Paddlers should perform a safe and timely deep-water rescue of a capsized kayaker, using appropriate dialogue with the person whilst maintaining control of the rescue.

Paddlers will be required to capsize the kayak and then, following the directions of an able rescuer, demonstrate an ability to re-occupy their rescued kayak.

B.2 Contact tows and use of towline

Paddlers must demonstrate a push or pull contact tow. Paddlers will also demonstrate a simple tow using a towline and demonstrate an emergency release. Paddlers must indicate that they are aware of the inherent dangers of towing.

B.3 Eskimo rescue

Paddlers are required 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 two 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.

The Eskimo rescue is only applicable to sit-on-top paddlers using boats with thigh straps.

Part C – Safety, Leadership & Group Skills

C.1 Personal risk management

Paddlers should demonstrate a practical application of the theory of D.1 Equipment and D.2 Safety from the theory below.

C.2 Awareness of others

Paddlers should demonstrate the judgement required to safely operate as a group member. They should be able to identify hazards and choose suitable routes, e.g. a safe route around rocks. They should know the use of suitable equipment for a day's journey, including equipment to look after themselves (see D.1 below). They must demonstrate good group etiquette i.e. staying together, whilst also giving other group members enough space. Paddlers must also show an awareness of the importance of what is happening to them and others around them during their journey. They are not directly responsible for others but should work together and help each other through appropriate communication and positioning techniques.

C.3 Paddle as part of a led group

Paddlers must provide evidence (written or verbal) of a range of appropriate sea conditions. For example: bays, harbours, beaches, estuaries, stretches of coastline in close proximity to the shore with easy landing, all with winds not above force 3. Also including launching and landing through small surf (up to 1m trough to peak maximum). This does not include fast tidal streams, tidal races, or overfalls.

Paddlers should also be involved in the trip planning of the assessed trip, and understand the importance of map/chart work and strategies for keeping together in a range of conditions.

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

Part D – Theory

The provider should satisfy themselves that the paddler has a good general knowledge of the theory below. A question or two of a similar level should be asked under each heading.

D.1 Equipment

Sample questions:

What items of personal equipment would be appropriate for a competent member of a group undertaking a day's journey on the sea?

Can you name two different types of paddle?

When would you use a paddle leash?

How do you stow kit in your sit-on-top?

What is the importance of additional buoyancy?

How do the various materials used by boat manufactures affect their performance?

D.2 Sea safety

Sample questions:

What safety precautions apply particularly to kayaking on the sea? For example:

- The general effects of wind (particularly offshore), swell, tide and geographical features
- Informing National Coastguard organisations and rescue services
- Potential hazards (environmental and other water users)

D.3 Weather

Sample questions:

Where can you source appropriate weather forecasts for the sea?

What are the important elements to interpret with regards to safety on a proposed day journey?

D.4 Wellbeing, health and first aid

Sample questions:

What are the signs and symptoms of hypothermia?

How do you prevent hypothermia?

What are the most important things to do if someone is hypothermic?

What should you do if someone has a heart attack whilst out paddling?

D.5 Access

Sample questions:

What are the regional and national access issues and legislation regarding access?

What access rights do we have to the sea?

Do harbour authorities have a right to charge kayakers or not?

D.6 Environment

Sample questions:

What is the most disturbing/distressing wildlife encounter you have had whilst paddling on the sea?

What should you do if you find litter in a small inaccessible cove that you have lunch in?

Are there any key wildlife issues where you paddle most? For example, birds nesting, seal pup season.

What is the effect of you paddling too close to the cliffs during nesting season? Why is it such a problem? Are there any local codes of good practice?

D.7 Planning

Paddlers should be involved in the planning of the assessed trip and be able to identify basic coastal features using a map or chart, and have the ability to interpret tide tables and use tidal constants.

Including:

- Basic knowledge of tidal times, constants and effects of wind on simple tidal water e.g. wind against tide, offshore winds
- Understanding of spring and neap tides
- Basic understanding of the effect of topography on tidal flow

D.8 Group awareness

Sample questions:

You have been buddied up with a partner and they are struggling to paddle in the choppy water, as a more confident and possibly experienced paddler in what position can you offer them the most 'help'?

- Behind and downwind of them
- Forward and downwind of them
- Forward and up wind of them so as to help them keep the most stable course

What is meant by the term 'shepherding' when assisting a buddy to turn down wind?

D.9 General knowledge

Sample questions:

Name two manufactures or models of sea kayak.

How does joining British Canoeing help you and help canoeing generally?

How did the development of sea kayaks differ to that of the open canoe?

D.10 Navigation

During the assessed trip paddlers should be able to:

- Show basic recognition of main buoyage
- Identify position by using a grid reference and latitude and longitude
- Use a compass to paddle on a bearing
- Calculate distance and estimate paddling time

D.11 Show basic knowledge of collision regulations and sound signals