

4 STAR LEADER SEA KAYAK

Assessment Guidance notes; (in conjunction with the syllabus)

Aim

Successful performance at this level indicates that a candidate has the personal skill level and leadership ability required to;

- Lead a group of 4 (not including themselves) paddlers, on short (six to eight miles, of at least three hours paddling). journeys in moderate tidal water environment with winds not exceeding force 4/sea state 4.
- Perform competently practical skills in force 4/5 winds sea state 4 and be capable of paddling 15-20 miles/day in 3 star conditions.
- judge the conditions and the standard of the group and make appropriate decisions about the planned route along with the need to modify plans as required.

The 4 * award is a leadership award and not a coaching award. It is not suitable for introducing beginners to the sport.

4 Star sea is a pre-requisite for those wishing to attend a Level 3 Sea kayak training course.

Pre requisites;

1 day BCU Coastal Sea Navigation and tidal planning course or similar NGB structured theoretical nav course. course.

Due to the nature of this test and its important remit for leadership it is necessary that candidates show 2 days/18 hrs of training in leadership, safety and rescue. Such experience may be gained on a scheduled course or by informal training endorsed by an active A4 sea kayak coach or above. It is also strongly recommended that further endorsed training be undertaken in different sea areas and a variety of environmental conditions.

VHF, when considering a means of summoning emergency assistance the leader must clarify, in the areas they paddle, the necessity to carry a VHF set. If carried the leader must have attended a formal VHF operator's course as per legal requirements.

Candidates should understand what their role as a leader is to be; and that following assessment they must have in place personal insurance, knowledge of child protection guidelines including checks where necessary and maintain evidence of currency.

Assessment Location/conditions; (moderate tidal conditions)

Moderate Tidal waters/sea – The definition involves:

A stretch of coastline or estuary in close proximity to the shore, with available landings at every 1-2 miles /1 hr and areas where it is not easy to land. Up to a max of 2 knots tide but not involving, tidal races, or overfalls, winds of force 4, Beaufort sea state 4 (if offshore the greatest of caution must be exercised); The upper reaches of some estuaries.

Launching and landing through moderate surf

Moderate Surf – Beaches that are free of significant hazards (strong rips or undertow, tidal streams, rocks or groins). An area of beach must be marked out with to contain the group and prevent any loss of communication. The area selected must not interfere with other beach users – swimmers and surfers in particular; small to moderate waves – 1 metre maximum.

Candidates should not rely on a nose clip to perform assessment elements of the syllabus unless for proven medical reasons.

The features outlined in the syllabus are necessary to assess/train for appropriate Leadership, group management and personal paddling.

The candidate is required to judge the conditions and the standard of the group and make appropriate decisions about the planned route along with the need to modify plans as required.

While operating within remit a long featureless sandy beach would not be suitable venue for assessment.

For reasons of safety and to allow accurate assessment the group should be made up of a minimum of 3, 3 star paddlers or equivalent experience .

Equipment

The candidate must be appropriately equipped as a competent leader of a group undertaking a day's journey. Good awareness and sound understanding of additional sea kayak specific equipment is expected. This will allow the candidate to deal with a variety of situations involving members of the group, their equipment and craft.

The award must be undertaken in a sea kayak. A modern sea kayak could be described as a directionally stable closed cockpit kayak, which is designed for the demands of open sea conditions. With internal buoyancy created by watertight bulkheads accessed through waterproof hatches.

Personal and group equipment appropriate for the remit of the award and relevant to the assessment environment, and may include

Appropriate personal clothing and relevant personal protective equipment.

Spare clothing

Food and Drink

Suitable equipment with which to summon outside assistance.

Towline

Knife

Whistle

First aid kit

Repair kit

Spare paddles

Shelter and bivy bag

Appropriate navigation equipment

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 - Practical Skills;

If the kayak is fitted with a rudder, it must be disabled for the purpose of the test.

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

Knowledge and use of trim, skegs should be shown.

This will incorporate application of the practical techniques listed below.

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

- 1. Launching and landing.** Show an awareness of boat packing techniques appropriate to the conditions. Be able to launch and land in a variety of situations including: moderate surf and rocky shores, ensuring minimal damage to person and equipment.
- 2. Efficient forwards paddling.** Demonstrate efficient and sustained, forward paddling in conditions up to sea state four throughout a day's journey.

3. **Reverse Paddling.** Demonstrate accurate and efficient backward paddling in the environment.
4. **Maintaining Direction and Changing Direction and Moving Sideways.** Steering and Turning the kayak . Using a range of techniques demonstrate the ability to handle the kayak in waves from all directions and the interface between flow and eddy. (caused either by wind or tide)
5. **Support strokes.** To be performed with the kayak well off balance. These should be seen in realistic conditions where the recovery stroke or brace is needed e.g surf, rough water, waves.
6. **Rolling.** Demonstrate any effective roll performed in sea state 4 (not set up).

Practical Navigation – Demonstrate an ability to;

- plan by interpreting maps, charts and sources of tidal information for the purpose of navigation.
- Use a variety of simple techniques to navigate accurately (avoiding danger areas) along coastlines, on small crossings (up to 2 nmiles) and in poor visibility using a combination of dead reckoning tidal timing and a compass.
- use a handheld Global positioning system receiver if carried, (employing either Navstar or Galileo) in an effective way to aid navigation and obtain a position fix.

Part B - Safety and Rescue

1. **Rescues.** The candidate should have a range of rescues and be able to adapt them to the prevailing conditions including putting incapacitated paddlers back in their kayak.
2. **Self Rescue.** The candidate must be able to get back into their kayak from the water unaided in calm conditions.
3. **Towing and use of towline.** Candidate must demonstrate the use of a variety of towing techniques (including tows where a casualty requires the support of a non-towing paddler) in moderate conditions on open water (e.g. tandem tow, rafted tow, contact tow anchored tow etc.). The demonstration will be over a reasonable distance and will include sections of following, beam and quartering seas. The use of the towline's emergency quick release mechanism must be demonstrated under load. The candidate must be aware of the inherent dangers of towing.

4. **VHF**, when considering a means of summoning emergency assistance the leader must clarify, in the areas they paddle, the necessity to carry a VHF set, if carried the leader must have attended a formal VHF operator's course as per legal requirements. If carried the candidate must provide the necessary paperwork.

Part C - Leadership Incidents

The candidate should demonstrate sufficient ability to deal with the following whilst maintaining an overview of the situation so that the safety and well being of the whole group is never forgotten;

1. Various strategies for group control, (Groups of up to 4 people) – including positioning, appropriate leadership styles etc.
2. Incidents that involve people – e.g. seasickness, hypothermia, injuries etc.
3. Incidents that involve equipment – e.g. Boat repair, paddle repair, lost hatch etc.
4. Incidents that involve rescue – in different circumstances and conditions thereby requiring a working knowledge of a variety of approaches.
5. Although not a coaching award candidates must be able to pass on sufficient information to group members in order to achieve the days proposed objectives. For example the candidate would need to guide and encourage group members around small headlands where the sea state increased. They would need to have the skill to pass on tips to improve the group members overall paddling ability and confidence.
6. The ability to judge the conditions and the standard of the group and make appropriate decisions about the planned route along with the need to modify plans as required

The candidate must carry and have easily accessible;

- suitable means of summoning help in an emergency.
- A first aid kit and be familiar with the use of its contents, whilst afloat as well as being able to deal with more substantial problems whilst ashore.
- A repair kit. It should be possible to effect a repair on a kayak whilst afloat as well as being able to deal with more substantial problems to the equipment whilst ashore.

The candidate should be equipped and prepared to manage any incidents, which could occur during the course of the journey.

Theory

Be aware of potential risks, safety precautions and safety thresholds pertinent to leading groups on moderate tidal waters.

- The likely effect and interaction of tide, tidal stream and wind
- National Coastguard organisations and rescue services
- Potential hazards (environmental and other water users)
- Basic collision regulations and sound signals.
- Personal, Legal and Ethical responsibilities.

Hypothermia/First Aid – Hold a current recognised 8-hour first aid certificate.

Access – be aware of regional and national access issues and legislation as well as our basic freedom to paddle on the sea.

Planning – Be able to plan a day journey in an unfamiliar area using appropriate resources and tidal planning. e.g. pilots, charts, maps etc.

Weather – Be aware of a variety of sources of weather forecast. Be able to interpret such weather forecasts and be mindful of the conditions actually experienced, showing an understanding of the impact of various weather conditions on the sea environment.

History – Have a knowledge and awareness of the history of sea kayaking and current developments.

Knowledge of the advantages, range and application of sea specific equipment (e.g. kayaks, skegs and rudders, paddles, clothing, towlines, emergency communication, and navigation resources).

Awareness level knowledge of typical coastal flora and fauna.