

## **BCU 4 Star Leader Sea Kayak. Training Guidance Notes (in conjunction with the syllabi)**

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.

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

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.

**Training at this level will raise the candidates experience, skill, knowledge and understanding of the moderate tidal water environment in winds not exceeding force 4 sea state 4. The enhanced duty of care as a leader/guide, dynamic risk assessment child and vulnerable adult protection issues.**

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.

**Venue** if the conditions /geography are unavailable during training courses then students must be actioned planned to experience the required conditions prior to assessment.

**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

### **Candidates Kayak & Equipment**

- Candidates need to be trained in how to
- Appropriately equip themselves 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
- Evaluate any equipment they use and the importance of how it should be maintained and carried or worn when in use.

#### **1. Kayak and paddle**

- 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.
- Ideally through training the candidates will experience a wide range of sea kayaks and paddles including sit on tops and doubles. Where this is not possible during the training course it must form part of the student's action plan.

#### **2. Personal clothing, Spare clothing and waterproof kit bags.**

- Through training candidates need to develop the skills so that they can choose appropriate personal clothing relative to the prevailing conditions.
- They should also have knowledge of suitable alternatives available and how it may be carried within their boat.

#### **3. Buoyancy aid and helmet and P.P.E.**

- Training should enable candidates to identify the appropriate P.P.E. and key features of all safety equipment and how it should be worn and awareness of issues related to International and European Kite mark standards.

Use of Helmets; Due to the nature of the sea environment it is not mandatory that helmets are worn at all times. However students and candidates must be trained in the decision making process and demonstrate sound judgement for when they should be carried/worn.

#### **4. First aid kit, repair kit and emergency equipment for group use.**

Training should provide candidates with knowledge of and simple but effective solutions to, the most common or most likely incidents that they may have to deal with.

### 5. Food and drink

- Candidate should be provided with the knowledge of how to choose appropriate food for the trips to be undertaken.
- They also need to be made aware of the importance of good hydration and the benefits that might be gained from a hot drink.

The following items of equipment should be available during training;

### 6. Shelter and bivvy bag

### 7. Spare clothing

### 8. Suitable equipment with which to summon outside assistance.

### 9. Towline

### 10. Knife

### 11. Whistle

### 12. First aid kit

### 13. Repair kit

### 14. Split paddles

### 15. A range of appropriate navigation equipment

Training should provide candidates with the knowledge of the practical use of each of the above items of equipment

### Practical Part A:

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

Through the blending of their body, boat and blade positions the students will be coached in their ability to skilfully control their kayak in the prescribed conditions To knowledge of ; use of trim, skegs as appropriate to the craft should be shown.

Training will incorporate application of the practical techniques listed below.

The paddler should be encouraged to keep their paddling actions within the "Safety Box" and perform strokes on both sides.

### Launching and landing.

- Training should include awareness of various boat packing and customising techniques appropriate to the conditions and the equipment to be carried.
- A look at launching and landing at a variety of situations including: small surf and rocky shores, ensuring minimal damage to person and equipment and the safety of the group

1. **Efficient forwards paddling.** Throughout training students will be encouraged to work on their efficient and sustained, forward paddling in a variety of conditions up to sea state four. Students have to be trained in the selection of a variety of paddle size and shape to enable efficient and sustained forward paddling
2. **Reverse Paddling.** Accurate and efficient backward paddling in a range of environmental conditions
3. **Maintaining Direction**  
**Changing Direction**  
**Moving Sideways**  
**Steering and Turning** Training should include a range of control techniques to demonstrate the ability to handle the kayak in waves and wind from all directions and the interface between flow and eddy.(caused by either wind or tide)
4. **Support strokes.** During training a range of realistic conditions, where the recovery stroke or brace is needed for support should be included e.g surf, rough water, waves
5. **Rolling.** Training must move the student from rolling on flat water to an effective roll performed in state 4 (not set up).
6. **Practical Navigation – training should include**
  - planning by interpreting maps, charts and sources of tidal information for the purpose of navigation
  - a variety of simple techniques to navigate accurately (avoiding danger areas) along coastlines, on small crossings (up to 2 n miles) and in poor visibility using a combination of dead reckoning tidal timing and a compass.
  - Awareness of using a handheld Global positioning system receiver (employing either Navistar or Galileo) in an effective way to aid navigation and obtain a position fix.

### Part B - Safety and Rescue

Training should provide candidates with a broad awareness of the dangers and problems associated with paddling and leading on the sea.

Training should provide candidates with simple solutions to common problems that they may encounter whilst paddling. This should include undertaking dynamic risk assessments for them and the group they are paddling with.

1. **Rescues.** The students should work with a range of rescues and be shown how to adapt them to the prevailing conditions. Including dealing with incapacitated paddlers
2. **Self Rescue.** The student should be trained to get back in their kayak from the water unaided.
3. **Towing and use of towline.**
  - During training a variety of towing techniques should be demonstrated and practised in moderate conditions on open water. e.g. tandem tow, rafted tow, contact tow, anchored tow etc. (including tows where a casualty requires the support of a non-towing paddler)

- The variety of tows should be over a reasonable distance and will include sections of following, beam and quartering seas and wind from all directions.
  - The use of the towlines' emergency quick release mechanism must be demonstrated and practised 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.

### Part C - Leadership

**Incidents** – The students should look at a wide variety of incidents and work on the practical aspects of dealing with the situations with various pieces of equipment. and prepared to manage any incidents, which could occur during the course of the journey.

- The process of maintaining an overview of the situation so that the safety and well being of the whole group is never forgotten.
  - Various strategies for group control, leadership styles and positioning
  - Moving groups in more challenging situations
  - 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
  - Incidents that involve people – e.g. seasickness, hypothermia, injuries etc.
  - Incidents that involve equipment – e.g. Boat repair, paddle repair, lost hatch etc.
  - Incidents that involve rescue – in different circumstances and conditions thereby requiring a working knowledge of a variety of approaches.
  - Passing on tips to group members to improve paddling ability and confidence and sufficient information 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.
- The necessity of carrying and having easily accessible;
  - A suitable means of summoning help in an emergency e.g. a range of flares, mobile phone, VHF etc.
  - 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 affect a repair on a kayak whilst afloat as well as being able to deal with more substantial problems to the equipment whilst ashore.

### Theory

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

- Equipment - When training candidates the training coach should endeavour to provide students with knowledge and experience of using a range of equipment including the most up to date. They should also provide them with an understanding of how and why modern equipment has evolved and which use each piece of equipment best serves.
- 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 – Linked with sound safe judgement coaches should ensure candidates are trained to deal with the most likely injuries that may occur as part of paddlesport activities on the sea. It should be evident that they can deal with an incident and see it through to its conclusion, including simple evacuations, dealing with emergency services and group care. This training should complement any other first aid training where it exists. Students should be encouraged to hold a current recognised 8-hour first aid certificate.
- Access – Coaches need to make trainees aware of the range of access issues that exist throughout the UK and where they can find additional information 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. The candidate needs to know what questions to ask themselves and others and how to go about organising a day out both on and off the water and produce a route plan that can be communicated to the coastguard.
- 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 an 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).

- Environment - An appreciation of the environment we paddle in is a key underpinning principle for many in paddlesport. Trainees should be helped to gain maximum enjoyment from this natural environment and how to protect it.
- Awareness level knowledge of typical coastal flora and fauna.

