

Sea Kayaking Courses with Kayak Essentials

BCU 4 Star Sea Kayak Training Pre-course Notes

Overview

The BCU 4 Star Leader award is designed for those who wish to lead a group of 4 paddlers (not including themselves) 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.

Successful performance at this level also indicates that a candidate has the personal skill level and leadership ability 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.

The BCU 4 Star Leader Training course aims to prepare candidates for the responsibilities that leaders face in these conditions; to provide practical training in the essential personal skills, safety/rescue techniques, navigation considerations and other relevant areas - as described below.

BCU Guidelines

The current syllabus and guidance notes for the BCU 4 Star Sea Kayak Leader award are available on the BCU website. All candidates for the training course should consult these notes, to consider their readiness to attend.

Prerequisites:

It is desirable that candidates for the BCU 4 Star Leader training course hold the BCU 3 Star sea kayak award. If a candidate does not hold this award, they should be certain that their sea kayaking experience and paddling ability is sufficient to allow them to complete the training course, which will take place in moderate sea conditions as described above. If in any doubt, please contact us to discuss your experience before booking.

Booking:

Candidates wishing to book a place on a training course should provide the following:

1. Completed Booking Form
2. Course Fee (see general guidelines)

3 weeks prior to course date:

At this point we will establish course numbers, receive confirmed bookings and confirm dates. We will also provide any specific pre-course information and/or tasks.

Course Content:

The information contained in the BCU Guidance Notes for the 4 Star leader award will act as a reference point for the training content of this 3-day course. Please consult these BCU guidelines at:

www.bcu.org.uk/tests-and-awards

The detailed programme for each training/assessment course will be influenced by group size/ability, client aims/objectives, weather/tidal considerations and training venues. At the start of each course, an appropriate programme for the course will be discussed and agreed in the light of these considerations.

The following elements will be covered during the 3-day course:

BCU Coastal Navigation and Tidal Planning:

Details of the training content of this 1-day course are available on the BCU website.

Incident Management:

The training course will explore a repertoire of rescues, adaptable to a range of conditions, such as areas of moderately rough water, lee shores, confined areas and longer distances. Additional issues such as loaded sea kayaks, damaged equipment and injured paddlers will also be considered.

Towing: training content will include effective strategies for towing a casualty from areas of rougher water to a point of shelter. Solutions will emphasise flexibility and the ability to drop and pick up the tow with ease, including single and multiple tows.

Leadership:

This core element of the course will focus on strategies and approaches for different situations, based on the leadership model of: Anticipation, Communication, Route Choice and Positioning. Practical leadership scenarios will be explored in the context of a sea journey in qualifying conditions.

Leadership situations involving groups in moderate sea conditions will be explored.

Personal Skills:

The ability to paddle effectively and capably in 4 Star conditions is a core skill for the 4 Star Leader. The training course will allow students to gauge their current paddling skills against the standards required for the award, and will include personal skills training in: effective forward paddling, paddling skills in moderate sea conditions, manoeuvring in confined spaces and rolling skills. Candidates should already have rolling skills in calm conditions.

Sample Programme:

Day One:

Meet, course introductions, paperwork, logistics, discuss and agree detailed programme.
Personal skills and leadership considerations

Day Two:

BCU Coastal Navigation and Tidal Planning course

Day Three:

Incident management training
Course review, feedback and action planning

Course fees are based on the assumption that candidates will provide their own sea kayaking clothing and equipment. If you require the use of a sea kayak and/or any other equipment for the duration of the course, please contact us for guidance at the time of booking.

Timings and sequence of specific sessions may vary according to group, weather and other considerations. Please refer to the sea kayak pre-course information sheet for other details.

If you have any questions prior to the course, please do not hesitate to contact us at:

info@kayakessentials.co.uk