



Level 1 Flat Water Kayaking Skills

Overview of the Flat Water Kayaking Skills Programme

The River Hamble Adventures Flat Water Kayaking Skills Programme will equip the kayaker to paddle skilfully and safely in a flat water environment. The skills are divided into 3 levels which represent a progression from complete novice requiring close supervision to an expert flat water paddler able to participate in self-led trips over extended distances.

Appropriate rescue skills are built into the syllabi at each level. These are listed under Skills in recognition that effective rescue techniques are as important as good paddling technique and require skill to perform.

Kayaking related knowledge is also part of the syllabi at each level, spreading important topics over the three levels.

Each level builds on the previous level. Therefore although it is not a prerequisite to have completed the previous levels paddlers will need to have the skills covered in the previous levels before continuing to the next.

This course is for kayaks of all kinds: sit on tops, closed cockpit kayaks and inflatables; it is not specific to the River Hamble. In assessing the skills, the assessor will make sensible allowances for the craft being paddled.

For each skill, key points are shown and in some cases assessment criteria. Successful candidates will be expected to demonstrate / be aware of the key points and meet or exceed the assessment criteria.

Level 1 Overview

On completion of the Level 1 course, candidates will have the basic paddling skills that will allow them to move boat in all directions. They will be able to exit the kayak in a controlled and calm manner and recover their equipment to the shore.

They would paddle under close supervision on very calm water with minimal flow.

In British Canoeing terms, this would equip them to paddle on Very Sheltered Water and is broadly equivalent to the Paddle Start Award.





Syllabus

Part A: Skills

Basic Manoeuvring

Forward paddling

Efficient forward paddling is at the centre of all paddling, and posture is at the centre of forward paddling. Although candidates at this level are expected to simply move the boat forward, but even at this early stage the importance of good posture and trunk rotation should be emphasised.

Key points	Evidence of trunk rotation Good posture
Assessment criteria	Kayak travels in straight line for 100m
Progression skill	Level 2 Forward paddling

Reverse paddling

As well as being a useful manoeuvring skill in itself, reverse paddling also facilitates the understanding of trunk rotation and is an excellent way to warm up ! Reversing in a straight line also requires continuous adjustment of paddle strokes and is a good foundation for later more technical skills.

Key points	Evidence of trunk rotation Looking over shoulder Paddle grip not changed
Assessment criteria	Kayak travels in straight line for 20m





Stopping

As well as a practical and important technique this will also require the candidate to keep the boat stable whilst executing a potentially destabilising technique.

Key points Kayak not destabilised

Assessment criteria Stop within 4 strokes

Turning

Sweep stroke

An essential stroke to control the boat, the focus at this level is on efficient use of the paddle and blade.

Key points Full semi-circle with paddle
Blade fully immersed with minimal splashing

Progression skill Level 2 Sweep stroke

Stern rudder

Although rarely used in practice, the stern rudder is useful in providing an opportunity to blend two strokes together (when executed as a continuation of a power stroke), and serves as another opportunity to encourage the candidate to gauge the blade angle by feeling pressure on the blade rather than looking.

Key points Blade fully immersed
Identifying blade angle from pressure on blade
Able to effect different degrees of turn





Draw strokes

T-draw

A very useful manoeuvring stroke, this is also an excellent opportunity to introduce candidates to the concept of identifying the blade angle by feel (rather than looking).

Key points	Blade fully immersed Looking to direction to travel Correct the blade angle by feel
Assessment criteria	Move 5m sideways with minimal yawing
Progression skill	Draw on the move, Sculling draw

Rescues

Capsize & swim to shore

Being upside down in the water can be intimidating and even people who are otherwise confident in water may panic when first capsizing. To pass Level 1, paddlers will need to overcome this – an essential prerequisite for all other rescue techniques.

Key points	Exit the kayak in a controlled and calm manner Keep hold of paddle as well boat
Assessment criteria	Capsize 10m from shore
Progression skill	T rescue





Part B: Knowledge

Hypothermia

Paddling in the UK often means paddling in cold weather and cold water ! Candidates should understand the factors that may lead to hypothermia, how to recognise it, how to mitigate the risk of it and how to treat it.

Weil's disease

Candidates should understand what Weil's disease is, how it is caught, the symptoms and the treatment. A pragmatic but prudent and well informed approach should be encouraged.

Tides

Candidates should have a basic understanding of what tides are, how they operate in their locality, an awareness of the difference between Spring and Neap tides and finally know where to find information about tide times.

Part C: Journey

Candidates will undertake a supervised journey of at least 1 hour on very sheltered water.

