



Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of British Columbia

Level Three Guide Exam Information and Itinerary

Certification Overview

Level Three Guide candidates must satisfy the examiners that they have solid boating skills (paddle strokes, rescue competency, paddling fitness) and the outdoor skills, knowledge, resourcefulness and experience necessary to be fully responsible and reliable leaders. They are expected to have high competency with all aspects of guiding clients by sea kayaks in remote and wilderness settings.

Format

Participants must come fully prepared to:

- Lead on water sessions
- Rescue and be rescued at any time
- Camp out and prepare their own meals
- Move to another location to obtain suitable conditions

Exam Length

Three full days – do not plan on having any “spare time”. Your Exam is done as a practical three day/two-night trip in class 2 / 3 waters.

Evaluation

The exam has two main components. A written exam (100 multiple choice & short answer questions) and a practical examination requiring on-water leadership and route decisions, navigation, stroke & rescue demonstrations, and problem-solving scenarios. Each participant is evaluated during specific leadership positions, and is otherwise observed for exemplary skills, attitude, organization, comfort, and safety practices.

Passing

A minimum grade of 75% is required on the written exam.

The practical exam is divided into sections (e.g., paddling techniques, rescues, navigation, weather, leadership, etc.) and each section has multiple components graded as “pass, weak, or fail”. One “fail” or “weak” for a component (e.g. fails “fixing location” in the Navigation section) results respectively in a fail or weak mark for that section. Three weak components in a section results in a “fail” for that section. To pass the practical exam, no more than 2 sections can be considered weak. A failed section results in a failed practical evaluation.

Conditional passes may be granted at the discretion of the examiners and with provisions for re-examination of specific sections within 30 days. Failed candidates must wait 6 months before re-examination.

Equipment

Participants will **need** the following for the exam:

- Sea worthy sea kayak
- Paddle & spare paddle
- PFD
- Spray deck
- Tow line
- Rescue stirrup/loop
- Paddle float
- Manual hand held pump
- Hand held compass
- Deck-mounted compass (optional)
- Area chart (1:40,000)
- Wet suit or dry suit
- Helmet
- Change of warm dry clothing
- Pen, paper, clip board or equivalent
- Food & water for three days
- Overnight gear (sleeping, shelter)
- Other safety/emerg. gear normally carried

Optional equipment, but highly recommended (the more the better):

- VHF radio
- Relevant tide and current information
- Flares

Itinerary

The specific order for conducting the exam is flexible and ultimately at the discretion of the examiners. The following itinerary is an outline of a standard format. All exams will consist of the same content, however presentation may vary.

Day 1 – Start time 8:30 a.m.

- Registration & administration (waivers, medical forms, etc.)
- Written exam (about 1.5 h)
- Packing & equipment inspection
- Pre-trip safety talk and kayak outfitting
- Teaching the basics (getting in/out, strokes, in the event of a capsize, etc.)

Lunch

- Intermediate and advanced paddling techniques
- Practical rescue exams (solo / assisted / group)
- Towing (solo & tandem)

Dinner break

- Practical weather exam – recording and understanding weather forecasts

Day 2 – Start time 8:00 a.m.

- Navigation assessment (on land) – plotting & fixes
- Paddling in current and/or surf
- Group management in the current and surf zones

And for the rest of the exam...

- Leadership – participants will take turns leading the group, dealing with scenarios and problems as they arise, as well as being observed for the following:
 - Managing group dynamics & communication skills
 - On-water group management
 - Risk assessment
 - Route planning
- Camp craft skills (securing shelter, fire lighting)
- Knowledge of flares and radios

Day 3

- Leadership cont'd (as above)
- Wrap up & individual debrief
 - ***End time will vary depending on the number of participants in the exam & conditions. Ideally, this will not be later than 5 p.m., however it may go later. Consists of individual debriefing and recognition of pass or fail.***

Note

- Do not make any other plans during the exam period
- All fees must be paid prior to exam commencement
- A medical form & liability waiver must be read, filled out and signed prior to exam
- Participants must come fully prepared and equipped for the exam
- Participants must be prepared to relocate during the exam and must not rely upon examiners to provide transportation