



Advice To Coaches on: Canoeing Safety Test

Published and Distributed By:

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A resource for BCU Coaches....

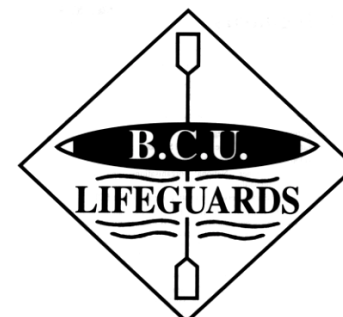


CT/016/00/1-US

Updated: 01/30/01



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Canoeing Safety Test



Purpose of Award

This award has two purposes. Firstly, to provide a paddler with the necessary safety awareness which will enable them to ensure the safety of themselves and others. Secondly, to provide a paddler with rescue skills which can be used to help themselves and/or others in difficulty.

Validity

This award is valid for 3 years from the date of the test. A current award is a pre-requisite for the BCU Level 1 Coach and Level 2 Coach awards.

Structure

The syllabus consists of three training modules and an assessment. It is expected that the training modules will take approximately 4 hours to complete and the assessment will take approximately 1 1/2 hours with a single candidate. All four parts may be taken in a single day or separately over a period of 6 months. In the latter case, a suitably qualified trainer must sign the candidate's logbook for each module. The training modules are mandatory and must be completed before the assessment. However, the training modules do not need to be repeated for renewal of an award that is still current.

Trainer/Assessor

A Canoe Lifeguard Trainer or a Canoeing Safety Test Assessor can train and assess up to 8 candidates. A Level 2 Coach with three years experience or a Level 3 Coach can be appointed as a Canoeing Safety Test Assessor after they have directed two Canoeing Safety Tests (including each of the training modules and the assessment) under the supervision of a qualified assessor.

Pre-Requisites

Hold the BCU 2 Star (Improvers) Test for the craft the candidate is paddling. Be able to swim 50m in normal canoeing clothing suitable for the prevailing conditions, including a buoyancy aid if normally worn. A First Aid certificate is not a pre-requisite. However, the holding of a First Aid certificate, such as the BCU Aquatic First Aid, is strongly recommended to all paddlers. Be at least 14 years of age. (Note. The Junior Canoeing Safety Test is the appropriate award for those under 14 years of age.)



1.THEORY

When the assessment is for a renewal, ensure the questions cover any areas of theory where current thinking might be different to the time of the original assessment. There should be at least two questions drawn from Module 1, “General Theory and Skills”, and at least one question drawn from the other two training modules. As a rough guide, these are expected to take about 10 minutes per candidate.

2. Practical

- b. If the candidate uses their own throwline, it must conform to current guidelines.
- c. For the Eskimo rescue, the participants should not agree beforehand whether a paddle or bow presentation will be used.
- d. The casualty may or may not be conscious.
- e. Although the candidate is expected to paddle their usual craft, there is no reason why the craft being rescued needs to be similar to the candidate’s.

3. Unknown Incidents

The key word is simple. Casualties may be unconscious, injured/unwell (e.g. suffering from hypothermia) or in difficulty (e.g. a struggling swimmer or capsized canoeist). Optionally, there can be an additional participant (with canoeing skills up to 2 Star) who will assist as directed by the candidate. Candidates are expected to use first aid techniques where appropriate. However, a candidate should not be failed for poor first aid techniques, although their shortcomings should be pointed out and they should be strongly encouraged to get a first aid certificate. Each candidate must be in charge and demonstrate correct decisions throughout the assessment. Candidates must not have prior knowledge of the incident. Thus, if the same incident is used for each candidate, they must be assessed separately. The candidate is required to deal with the previously unknown situation in an appropriate manner.



Venue

Assessments should be conducted on placid water, grade 1 rivers, and sheltered coastal waters or similar. Training modules can also be conducted in swimming pools, although it is recommended that at least some of the training take place in an outdoor environment.

Syllabus

This award may be taken in any open cockpit kayak, closed cockpit kayak or open canoe and the certificate will be endorsed appropriately. Where there are specific requirements for candidates in open cockpit kayaks, closed cockpit kayaks or open canoes, this is indicated using the abbreviations OCK, CCK and CN, respectively. However, for brevity the syllabus often uses the term’s “canoeist” and “canoeing” generically. Similarly, references to buoyancy aids can be taken to also include lifejackets.

1. General Theory and Skills

This training module covers the following topics:

- a. The safety features of canoes/kayaks, buoyancy aids, and other canoeing clothing and equipment.
- b. The hazards that may be encountered on placid water, grade 1 water, and/or sheltered coastal waters or estuaries.
- c. The effects on paddling and paddlers of different weather conditions, e.g. rain, wind, fog, etc. In particular, the effects on the paddler of sudden immersion in cold water and/or prolonged exposure to the cold, precautions which will reduce those effects, and what to do if someone becomes dangerously cold.
- d. The use of simple signals for “come to me”, “go left”, “go right”, “stop”, “go back” and “acknowledge”.
- e. How to handle a basic canoeing emergency, including the safety of the rescuer(s) and how to summon help.
- f. The various services and other assistance which could be called on during an incident.
- g. Good lifting techniques. This includes not only emptying boats in deep water, but also safe handling of craft on land, for example, onto a roof rack. (See BCU Guidelines)
- h. The value of holding a first aid certificate and where one can be obtained.



2. Lifesaving

This training module covers the following topics:

- a. How to coach a swimmer in difficulty to shore. How to perform a safe reaching rescue, using either a rigid or non-rigid aid. Throwing a buoyant object to a casualty. Wading to get nearer to a casualty.
- b. How to correctly pack a throwline into its bag and then use it to execute a throwline rescue over a distance of 15m with sufficient accuracy to land within reach of a casualty.
- c. How to coil an unpacked throwline and then use it to execute a throwline rescue over a distance of 15m with sufficient accuracy to land within reach of a casualty.
- d. How to safely approach a struggling swimmer when paddling. How to effectively transport a casualty using various techniques such as the bow tow, bow carry, stern tow and stern carry and the suitability of these techniques in different situations.

3. Canoe/Kayak Rescue Skills

This training module covers the following topics:

- a. Deep water rescue techniques for dealing with a capsized canoe/kayak, including returning the casualty to their craft and the suitability of a variety of rescue techniques ('X' rescue, 'H' rescue, 'T' rescue, 'The Curl', etc.) for different situations (solo or assisted, different craft, different paddlers, etc.).
- b. (CCK only) Eskimo rescues, including both paddle presentation and bow presentation.
- c. (CN only) Exiting the canoe in deep water, leaving it upright and without losing contact, and re-entering without assistance.
- d. Towing systems and alternative methods of getting a tired canoeist to land with their craft including an effective release of a towing system in an emergency.
- e. How to execute an "all in rescue".
- f. How to rescue a paddler in an upturned CCK in deep water, either as a swimmer or from another canoe/kayak.

4. Assessment

Candidates must present themselves suitably equipped for the assessment and normal canoeing kit should be worn throughout the practical parts of the assessment.



4.1 Theory

- a. Answer a selection of questions to show an understanding of the theory covered by the training modules.

4.2 Practical

- b. Demonstrate a throwline rescue of a struggling swimmer in deep water over a distance of 10m. There is a time limit of 60 seconds for the throwline to land within reach of the casualty, but there is no limit to the number of attempts allowed within that period.
- c. (CCK only) Demonstrate an Eskimo rescue, both as a casualty and a rescuer. (CN only) Exit from the canoe in deep water, leaving it upright and without losing contact. Re-enter without assistance.
- d. Rescue a paddler in an upturned CCK in deep water.
- e. Demonstrate a deep-water rescue of a capsized craft, placing the casualty back in their craft. (OCK only, this may be performed with the assistance of another paddler of a similar standard.)
- f. (OCK, CCK only) Capsize the kayak, retaining all equipment. Swim the upturned kayak, etc. 50m to shore. (CN only) Capsize the canoe, retaining all equipment. Swim with the canoe 50m to shore.

4.3 Unknown Incidents

- g. Deal with a simple canoeing incident involving up to two casualties.

NOTES FOR TRAINERS AND ASSESSORS

Modules 1 and 2 are expected to take about 1 hour each. Module 3 is expected to take about 2 hours. The assessment is expected to take about 90 minutes with a single candidate. In Module 3, part a, it is expected that the trainee will be introduced to the difficulties of dealing with a variety of different craft. The assessment is intended to ensure that the candidate has understood the training material and can apply the knowledge and a selection of skills when called upon to do so. The emphasis is on the candidate's ability to deal with a variety of situations by selecting and using suitable, safe techniques, rather than a rote demonstration of all possible skills. Ultimately, the examiner is assessing the candidate against two questions: "are they safety aware?" and "could they apply their knowledge and skills to save another's life in a basic water borne emergency?" Thus, while maintaining an overall balance, the assessor is encouraged to vary the actions of the casualties so that there is an element of the unknown throughout the assessment.

