



Program Information Package

Sea Kayak Guides Alliance Assistant Overnight Guide Program

Haida Gwaii

Program Description

The 10-day Assistant Overnight Guide course is designed for motivated individuals seeking to become certified as an Assistant Overnight Guide with the Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of BC (SKGABC) and recreational paddlers seeking to improve their intermediate paddling skills. This course is accredited by the SKGABC and includes the Assistant Overnight Guide exam. Successful candidates will be awarded Assistant Overnight Guide certification and Paddle Canada Level 2 Skills certification.



This package contains information to help you prepare for your course. Please take the time to read this material carefully. If you have any questions, contact us. Thanks for registering for our Assistant Guide Program; we look forward to paddling with you.

Paperwork Checklist

Please use the following checklist to ensure you have received and reviewed all the required documentation prior to the program start date:

- ✓ Assistant Guide Program Document – please review
- ❑ SKILS Waiver – please sign with your instructor at the beginning of the program
- ❑ Paddle Canada Waiver & please sign with your instructor at the beginning of the program
- ❑ SKILS Medical Form – please bring a completed copy to your program

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Program Objectives and Expectations

Who Should Take This Program?

Participants on our guide training courses represent a wide range of ages and interests. Past participants ranged from 16 to 65 years old. Many already work as guides and are seeking an internationally recognized guiding award.

While others are looking forward to working in the sea kayaking industry for the first time. Others are simply looking for a more comprehensive and challenging trip with a strong educational component which will allow them to more confidently go on trips with peers or family.

Expectations & Assessment

Throughout the course you will be actively encouraged to take a leadership role in the daily running of the program.

Responsibilities include;

- Managing your personal equipment.
- Managing the group equipment.
- Taking responsibility for your personal comfort and safety and the comfort of other participants.
- Looking after your health.
- Leading activities.



In addition to the above, you will be responsible for the following 4 leadership tasks.

1) Interpretive Assignment

Each participant must prepare and present an interpretive program of approximately 10-15 minutes in length at an appropriate point during the program. Below is a list of topics for your interpretive assignment. We will give you a specific assignment prior to the course. We recommend using humour and props for your presentation to make it engaging.

1. Prevention and treatment of Hypothermia.
2. Low-impact travel and camping in the marine environment.
3. Wildlife-viewing protocol and marine mammal regulations.
4. Marine distress signals and equipment.
5. VHF radio use, including mayday calls.
6. On water and back-country lightning risk management and avoidance.
7. Advantages and disadvantages of a variety of sea kayak designs and materials.
8. Rescue and safety equipment necessary for coastal kayak tripping, comparing Transport Canada Regulations (standard regulations and those for guided excursions) with SKGABC guide requirements.

9. Paddles, skirts and lifejackets for sea kayaking: features, designs and materials.
10. Collision regulations for kayakers.

2) Leader of the Day

The candidates will take turns being responsible for some facet of the program, including the timing of activities, launching and landing kayaks, group travel to and from activity sites, group travel on the water, and organizing activities. The course instructors will assign these responsibilities throughout the course. It is your role to take these responsibilities and carry them out to the best of your ability. The goal is to give you as much leadership experience as possible throughout the course. The instructors are there to help you if you get stuck.

3) Self-Evaluation and Feedback

Feedback is an integral part of the learning process. Throughout the course, you will be encouraged to evaluate your own performance and provide feedback to others. Please keep these guidelines in mind:

- Positive feedback is as important as constructive.
- Comment on one or two main issues.
- If it has already been said, don't say it again.
- Listen, listen, listen... [I'm not sure how relevant this is to the overall course. I would be tempted to delete this section, or make it a lot briefer, and move it later in the description]

4) Final Scenario

Towards the end of the course, you will be assigned responsibility for planning, running, and evaluating a leg of our trip. You will be presented with challenges during this leg designed to test some of the skills taught during the course. The goal of this final scenario is to bring together the various components of leadership, including technical boat handling, navigation, rescue, problem-solving, and conflict resolution.

SKGABC Program Objectives

All successful candidates will clearly demonstrate effective communication, leadership and judgment throughout all aspects of the examination and specifically during situations requiring instruction, scenarios, and other situations involving risk management.

Candidates should take the scenarios seriously, they are evaluated on how thoroughly they follow through in these scenarios and look after all group members.

Assistant Overnight Guides are expected to perform all skills with a high degree of proficiency while leading in class 1 waters and assisting in class 2 and/or 3 waters and demonstrating personal comfort suitable for class 3 waters.

Class 1: Gentle tours in non-challenging, protected waters with limited wind effect, little or no current, easy landings and ready access to land & assistance from a base.

Class 2: Tours in lightly populated areas with short crossings, moderate potential wind effects, gentle to moderate non-turbulent currents, easy to moderate landings and light surf beaches.

Class 3: Exposed water; sparsely populated areas with more committed crossings, moderate to strong currents with turbulence, moderate to strong wind effects, ocean swells, difficult landings, surf beaches.

paddling Skills

Candidates will demonstrate a range of paddling skills so that they can efficiently control the angle, motion, and tilt of their kayak. Strokes must be demonstrated on both sides. Strokes will be initially assessed in controlled conditions and then throughout the practical evaluation in varied water conditions.

Specifically, the candidate will perform the following skills:

- Basic strokes (forward, reverse, stopping, forward and reverse sweeps with edging, underwater recovery draw, low brace, low brace turn)
- Advanced Strokes (high brace, lean turns, sculling draw)
- Demonstrates safe & effective control in moving water (eddy turns, ferry glides).
- Demonstrates controlled surf landings and launchings

Rescue Techniques

- Candidates will demonstrate at least 2 self-rescue techniques.
- Candidates will demonstrate at least 3 assisted rescue techniques.
- Candidates will demonstrate towing or travel assist techniques appropriate to different distances, sea conditions, and situations.

Any or all of the above may be assessed in controlled conditions or at any time during the practical evaluation in varied water conditions and during leadership scenarios.

Specifically, the candidate will perform the following skills:

- Dry and accessible storage of safety equipment throughout the practical evaluation.
- Self-rescue with paddle float to the point of securing the skirt and beginning to pump out water within 2 minutes; use of stirrup optional.
- The following 3 assisted rescues: T Rescue, Parallel Rescue, Sling rescue / stirrup re-entry.
- Stern carry a swimmer for 50 metres.
- Open water boat switching.
- Solo boat towing.



Navigation

The candidate will use a variety of navigation tools including nautical charts, compass, Tide and Current Tables, and Chart One to plan a multi-day sea kayak trip.

Specifically, the candidate will perform the following skills:

- Identify symbols and scale.
- Use Chart One as a reference tool.
- Plot appropriate route plans with distances and time estimates.
- Follow route plans and adapt to conditions.
- Fix location using natural ranges and Lines of Position.
- Identify landmarks or waterways using the compass (chart to reality, and reality to chart).

Use Tide and Current Tables to predict tides and currents at primary and secondary ports and stations.

Be familiar with basic collision regulations (ie: right of way)

Weather

The candidate will use a variety of weather aids to make reasonable 6 to 12 hours weather predictions to be used within the context of a multi-day sea kayak trip.

Specifically, the candidate will perform the following skills:

Describe weather phenomena including small scale features (land and sea breezes, gap and corner winds, fog types).

Observe and describe current local weather trends (re: cloud, wind, and precipitation) and the relevance to trip and route planning.

Access the marine weather forecast and interpret the relevance to trip and route planning.

Emergency Signaling and Radio Use

The candidate will demonstrate proficiency with a variety of communication devices appropriate to the area of travel. Devices will include VHF radio and flares. Specifically, the candidate will perform the following skills:

Routine communications for logistics (e.g. using appropriate language, clarity, brevity, precision, etc.)

Proper communication procedures for an emergency call (to Coast Guard Radio or direct to JRCC)

Care and proper use of flares (including types, limitations, sequencing, and safe ignition).

Alternate one-way signaling options (e.g., smoke fire, signal mirror, strobe, EPIRB, PLB, etc.).

Leadership and Judgment

The candidate will demonstrate strong leadership skills in a variety of situations including rescue scenarios and during the daily routines of paddling and/ or overnight group travel. The candidate will demonstrate good judgment and preventative risk management for group safety both on and off the water. The candidate will combine a variety of problem-solving, rescue, and group management techniques to successfully resolve staged scenarios. Specifically, the candidate will perform the following skills:

Communicate effectively to individuals and group.

Detect and correct errors in client's forward stroke to prevent injury and improve efficiency.

Assert effective group control on land and water.

Awareness of individual and group needs.

Leadership through clear communication and decision-making.

Ongoing risk management and assessment.

Follow general safety practices and procedures for landing, launching, and on-water travel.

Follow general safety practices and procedures for on-land group management (site orientation, setting parameters, securing camp, etc.).

Problem-solving for minor issues (equipment and clients).

Scenario management and resolution (including potential capsizes, illness and injury, missing client, equipment loss or damage).

Trip Preparation

The candidate will demonstrate an understanding of the stages and importance of trip preparation. Specifically, the candidate will perform the following skills:

Environmental Impact Awareness

The candidate will demonstrate an awareness of and explain the positive and negative impacts of commercial sea kayaking in coastal BC communities and environments. The candidate will demonstrate an awareness of and explain the potential negative impact by sea kayakers on coastal and marine ecosystems. Specifically, the candidate will describe or demonstrate the following skills:

- Guidelines and strategies for minimizing group impact while traveling on the water (marine life) and in camp (erosion, waste, vegetation, fresh water, visual, fire, wildlife, etc.).

- Proper human waste disposal (guidelines, strategies, concerns).

- Proper food storage and kitchen etiquette (scavengers and large carnivores).

- Harvesting considerations (regulations, client safety, and species/ecosystem impacts).



Safety Veto

Every person in the course has a safety veto. This means you have the right to pause the course, question the safety of the lesson, and/or opt out of the lesson or the program. The environmental challenges of this course push on the boundary between excitement and anxiety. This can create stress and fear; articulating these concerns and dealing with them in the context of a peer group is an essential component of the training.

Program Logistics

Transportation

You are responsible for all transportation to and from Masset in Haida Gwaii. Pacific Coastal Airlines flies to and from Masset. During the course SKILS can transport the participants, kayaks, gear rentals to various classroom locations. SKILS will also have a van and trailer to facilitate transportation.

We will also coordinate carpooling among participants to minimize transportation costs and carbon emissions. It may be possible to hire SKILS to drive you from Queen Charlotte City to Masset before the start of the course.

Accommodation

Days 1 through 5 are based at the Hidden Island RV & Campground in Masset. Camping fees are included in the course price. Since the course starts at 8:30 in the morning, you might want to stay at Hidden Island RV & Campground in Masset the night before the course begins; this is included in your course fees. From Hidden Island RV & Campground, we use nearby on water locations as well as one day in the surf on North Beach. On days 6 through 10, we'll be camping out on the north shore of Graham Island on an overnight expedition. We return to Masset on day 10. The course ends at 1630 on day 10. Accommodation after the course is at your own expense.

Meals

All participants must provide their own food and cooking equipment on the AOG course. SKILS will provide freshwater bladders for the course duration. Participants are encouraged to bring extra snacks to fill in the holes and satisfy personal tastes. Bring your cooking and kitchen equipment to prepare your meals. Please make sure your meals are nutritious and **quick** to prepare. The course is intense and fun. It covers a lot of material with little downtime during the course. We recommend you not plan any personal activities in the evening. This course requires your full commitment during the morning, afternoon and evening.

Our Classroom

Graham Island will be our classroom. These stretches of coastline are varied and offer us the diversity we need to complete our training. We will have the opportunity to experience this beautiful shoreline as we learn to paddle in currents, surf, navigate, and lead trips.

What SKILS Will Provide

SKILS will provide the following:

- Permits and camping fees
- Group camping equipment
- Instructional Books
- VHF radios for the instructors
- Group First Aid Kit
- Group Repair Kit
- Kayak Transportation during the course

What You Are Responsible For

You are responsible for providing the following items for yourself:

- ❑ Food and snacks for yourself to eat during the entire course, including the out trip.
- ❑ Stoves, cooking pots and utensils.
- ❑ Personal camping gear (please see suggested packing list below)
- ❑ Kayak and accessories (please see suggested packing list below)
- ❑ Transportation to and from Masset.
- ❑ Your own evacuation cost (if required in an emergency).

Kayaks, immersion gear and some camping equipment can be rented through SKILS. Please contact us if you are interested in renting some of our equipment. <https://skils.ca/rentals/>

Packing List

Outlined below is a detailed kayak touring packing list. To ensure your comfort during the course and to maximize your ability to participate in all aspects of the program please follow this list as closely as possible. Please do not bring cotton clothing. *Indicates optional items.

Immersion Clothing

All participants must have a **dry suit** or **wet suit** on this course. You will spend many days exposed to wind, waves, and currents. You will also be asked to participate in extended scenarios, which will require you to be in the water. As a result, you will spend a lot of time wet! When choosing what to wear while paddling, please bear in mind that you will need to wear your immersion gear at all times on the water, and we will usually go on the water every day during the course. If you want to rent a kayak, drysuit, wetsuit or any other gear, please check our website at <https://skills.ca/rentals/>

Charts/Maps and other Resources

Navigation and weather interpretation are important components of this course. In order to participate effectively, you will need some specific resources. These resources are available online from www.charts.gc.ca or your local paddling retailer.

CHS Chart 3892: Masset Harbour and/et Naden Harbour

Log Books

Throughout this course you will need to record and access navigation, weather, and other information. We strongly recommend you bring a **Rite in the Rain notebook** (available at many outdoor retailers – bound and numbered is best) as an excellent water-resistant central location to keep track of this information. Pencils write well in these notebooks even when wet. Please bring a couple of pencils.

Kayaking Equipment

- Seaworthy kayak – Your kayak should not be leaking, must have positive buoyancy and able to carry enough gear for 5 days.
- Paddle and *Spare paddle
- Sprayskirt
- Foam PFD - Canadian Coast Guard or ULC approved. It can not be an inflatable PFD.
- Whistle
- Hand pump
- *Sea kayak towline – The towline should be between 5 and 15 metres long and have a quick release.



- Helmet – Helmet must be designed for surf kayaking or whitewater kayaking; bicycle helmets don't offer sufficient protection.
- *Stirrup – 4.5 m loop of buoyant 3/8 inch rope
- Paddle float

Navigation Equipment

- 2 pencils for chart work
- *Marine Compass
- *Chart case – large Ziploc bags will work, but not very well
- Orienteering Compass

Camping Gear

- ❑ Tent
- ❑ Sleeping bag – we recommend 3 season bag with synthetic insulation
- ❑ Sleeping mat
- ❑ Tarp with thin cord
- ❑ *Pillow case/camp pillow

Bathroom

- ❑ Toothbrush and toothpaste
- ❑ Sunscreen and lip balm with high SPF protection (30 +)
- ❑ Toilet paper
- ❑ Small first aid kit
- ❑ *Camp towel
- ❑ Hand sanitizer
- ❑ *Pads/ Tampons/ menstrual cup – body clocks can change with increased exercise, please be prepared for this.

Immersion Clothing

- ❑ Wet suit and paddling jacket or dry suit suitable for extended cold water immersion on the west coast. You will be paddling in this gear for extended periods of time, so make sure it fits well.
- ❑ Neoprene booties or other immersion footwear
- ❑ Paddling gloves or poggies

Personal Clothing - Torso

- ❑ Rain Jacket
- ❑ 2 fleece or wool sweaters/jackets
- ❑ 2 synthetic long underwear tops
- ❑ 1 synthetic t-shirt
- ❑ 1 wind breaker

Personal Clothing - Legs

- ❑ Rain Pants
- ❑ 1-2 pairs of pants – At least one should be made of nylon

- ❑ 1-2 pair of synthetic long underwear bottoms
- ❑ 1 pair of synthetic shorts
- ❑ Bathing suit

Personal Clothing - Feet

- ❑ 3-4 pairs of warm synthetic and/or wool sock
- ❑ *2 pairs of liner socks – Polypropylene or wool are common materials
- ❑ *1 pair of camp shoes like cros
- ❑ 1 pair of rubber boots or waterproof shoes or sneakers with waterproof socks

Personal Clothing - Head

- ❑ 2 wool or fleece caps
- ❑ 1 Brimmed hat or baseball cap
- ❑ * Buff to protect your face from the sun

Personal Clothing - Hands

- ❑ 1 or 2 pairs of fleece or wool gloves

Miscellaneous Gear

- ❑ Headlamp or Flashlight with extra batteries
- ❑ Wristwatch to know the time (super important)
- ❑ Rite in the Rain Notebook
- ❑ 2 pencils and/or pens
- ❑ Water bottle
- ❑ Pocket Knife
- ❑ Sunglasses with good UV protection and a retainer strap
- ❑ Spare garbage bags and Ziploc bags
- ❑ Lots of snacks for the entire program
- ❑ *Binoculars
- ❑ *Flares
- ❑ *VHF Marine Radio
- ❑ *GPS
- ❑ *Thermos

Packing Your Gear

You will need to waterproof at least your clothing and sleeping bag. Depending on how watertight your kayak is, you can pack the rest of your gear loose or in Ziploc's inside nylon stuff sacks. Here are two packing methods that work well. In fact, we usually use a combination of the two when we pack. Remember to leave room for group gear.

Dry Bag Method Dry Bags are specially designed for paddle sports and are available at most sporting goods stores. Depending on the design of the closure system, they do not always keep all the water out. You may want to test your bags in the shower before your course to know how well your gear will be protected. Packing is much easier with multiple smaller bags than with a few larger bags. We recommend two 20 litre bags for your sleeping bag and for your bulky clothing, as well as two or three 10 to 15 litre bags for the rest of your water sensitive clothing and gear.

Some suggestions for packing –

- A large duffel or IKEA bag is useful for transporting all your small bags to and from the water.
- A large Tupperware or Rubbermaid container is good for storing wet gear in your car.



The Leaders

SKILS staff members are industry leaders and professionals with extensive guiding and instructional experience and certification. For profiles on each of our staff members, please visit our website at www.skils.ca.

Course Outline

Shown below is a generic outline for the AOG training but please be ready for change in how your program will unfold. Factoring the skills and experience of the program participants, the requirements of the course, and the elements you will be playing in, your instructors will strive to take advantage of any and all learning opportunities as they arise. The program will be altered to provide participants with as rich, unique, and rewarding an experience as possible.

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Day 1: Masset	Goals and Expectations Introduction Wildlife Interactions Orientation to Industry Intro to Weather	Strokes and Rescues Rolling	Weather Recording
Day 2: Masset	Weather Introduction to Navigation	Strokes and Rescues Rolling	Recording the Weather
Day 3: Masset	Navigating with tides and currents	Strokes and Rescues Rolling	Lap Bag Safety Gear On-Water Communication
Day 4: Masset	Navigating with tides and currents	Playing in the currents	Chart 1
Day 5: North Beach	Kayak Surfing Launching and Landing Protocols	Kayak Surfing	Expedition Packing Orientation to leadership Scenarios
Day 6: Kayak Expedition along north side of Graham Island.	Group Travel Leadership Scenarios On water navigation	Group Travel Leadership Scenarios On water navigation Towing	Weather Risk Management Leadership Campcraft
Day 7: Kayak Expedition along north side of Graham Island.	Group Travel Leadership Scenarios Compass work On water navigation	Group Travel Leadership Scenarios On water navigation	Weather Campcraft
Day 8: Kayak Expedition along north side of	Group Travel Leadership Scenarios	Group Travel Leadership Scenarios	Weather Campcraft

Graham Island.	On water navigation	On water navigation	
Day 9: Kayak Expedition along north side of Graham Island.	Review Session	Guide Assessment	
Day 10: Returning to Masset	Group Travel Leadership Scenarios On water navigation	Feedback to Participants The course ends at 1630.	

Program Preparation

In our experience, a little preparation goes a long way. Please take the time to organize your course materials early and spend some time reviewing the material. It is a good idea to review your paddling skills before the course, especially if you haven't paddled over the winter. A trip or two to the lake or pool is recommended to test your sea legs as well as the equipment you plan to use on the course.

You need to complete some theoretical learning prior to your course via our online classroom, which contains a lot of interactive videos, readings, and quizzes where you can test your learning. If this is your first time, plan to spend 40 hours of online work in the classroom. If you have already used the SKILS online classroom for any Paddle Canada Level 2 skills or higher course, plan to spend only 20 hours in the online classroom. In case you have limited time or have to deal with an unforeseen life situation, we would like to suggest you triage your workload in the online classroom as such;

- Don't do the Above and Beyond sections which are optional.
- Make sure you do all the quizzes that are not in the Above and Beyond sections. The quizzes are very important

Most of the reading in our online classroom is from our training manuals. You will receive a free copy of these books at the start of your course. If you don't have access to the internet prior to the course, or you prefer reading books instead of a computer screen, we can ship you the hard copies of the training manuals in advance, or send you a link to download the eBooks. The cost of shipping the hard copies is Ca \$25 plus 5% GST if you are within Canada and will vary to other countries.

If you read the hard copies of the training manuals in lieu of most of the online lessons, you will need to read the following pages

Navigation, Sea State and Weather. A Paddler's Manual. Freedom of the Seas Volume 1. Second Edition
Read pages 13 to 54, pages 62 to 118, pages 126 to 218, pages 226 to 236 and pages 242 to 251

Sea Kayak Touring and Leadership Manual. Freedom of the Seas Volume 2.
Read pages 19 to 194, pages 205 to 274, pages 297 to 390 and pages 408 to 427.

You will be sent a link to access the online classroom 30 days before your course starts. Let us know by emailing us at info@skils.ca if you want to start work in the online classroom before that so you can learn at your own pace without a time constraint.