



## Program Information Package

### Sea Kayak Guides Alliance Assistant Guide Upgrade Program



## Program Description

The 5-day Assistant Overnight Guide Upgrade course is designed for motivated certified Day Guides seeking to become certified Assistant Overnight Guides with the Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of BC (SKGABC). This course is accredited by the SKGABC and includes the Assistant Overnight Guide exam. Successful candidates will be awarded Assistant Overnight Guide 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 by email. Thanks for registering for our Assistant Overnight 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
- SKILS Medical Form – please bring a completed copy to your program



# 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' ages ranged from 18 to 65. Many participants already work as SKGABC Level 1 Guides and are looking to be able to guide on overnight kayak expeditions, while others are looking forward to gain further guide training as it may have been several years since they did their SKGABC Level 1 Guide course. Others still are simply looking for a more comprehensive and challenging trip with a strong educational component.

## 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 and safety of other participants;
- Looking after your health;
- Planning for and preparing meals;
- Leading activities.



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

### **1) Interpretive Assignment**

Each participant must prepare and present an interpretive program of approximately 15 minutes in length at an appropriate point during the program. Topics will be assigned one month prior to the course.

### **2) Leader of the Day**

Each day you will have responsibilities 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...

### **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, weather interpretation, rescue, problem solving, and conflict resolution.

## **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

## Prerequisites

All participants must be certified as SKGABC Level 1 Guides.

## Transportation

You are responsible for all transportation to and from the course as well as during the course. BC Ferries provides several links to Vancouver Island from the BC Mainland. Schedules and fare information are available online at [www.bcferreries.com](http://www.bcferreries.com). If you are heading up island and need transportation, the Island Link Bus [www.islandlinkbus.com](http://www.islandlinkbus.com) is a public transportation option. During the course, we will transport kayak and gear rentals as well as coordinating carpooling among participants to minimize transportation costs and carbon emissions.



## Meeting Location

We will be meeting in Tofino at 8:30am on the first day of the course.

## Meals

All participants must provide their own food and cooking equipment on the AOG Upgrade course. SKILS will provide fresh water bladders for the course duration. 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

On day one, we will meet under the covered pavilion in Village Green Park in Tofino, located at the corner of Campbell Street and Third Street. There is typically parking on Third Street or adjacent, on Neill Street, behind the skate park. Please bring paper and pen to take notes. On our trip, the coastline of Clayoquot Sound will be our classroom. We will be camping on Vargas and Meares Islands. 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 diversity 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 in Ucluelet and in Clayoquot Sound

- Water containers
- Group tarps
- Instruction manuals
- VHF radios
- Group First Aid Kit
- Flares

## What You Are Responsible For

You are responsible for providing the following items for yourself:

- Food and snacks for yourself to eat during 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 Tofino.
- Parking your vehicle for 5 days at the Tofino Municipal Parking lot during the overnight trip.

Kayaks, immersion gear and some camping equipment can be rented through SKILS. Please contact us at <https://skils.ca/rentals/> if you are interested in renting some of our equipment. You must rent the equipment at least 7 days before the program starts.

## 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 **drysuit** or **wetsuit** with them 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://skils.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](http://www.charts.gc.ca) or your local paddling retailer. You can also rent a chart and chart case at <https://skils.ca/rentals/>.

- You will need CHS Chart 3673 Clayoquot Sound

**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
- ❑ 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
- ❑ \*Chart case – large Ziploc bags will work, but not very well
- ❑ Orienteering Compass
- ❑ \*Marine Compass

### ***Camping Gear***

- ❑ Tent
- ❑ Sleeping bag – 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
- ❑ \*Feminine hygiene products – bodily clocks can change with increased exercise, please be prepared for this.

### ***Immersion Clothing***

- ❑ Wetsuit or drysuit 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 pogies

### ***Personal Clothing - Torso***

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

### ***Personal Clothing - Legs***

- ❑ Rain Pants
- ❑ 2 pairs of pants – At least one should be made of nylon
- ❑ 1 pair of fleece or wool pants
- ❑ 1 pair of synthetic long underwear bottoms
- ❑ 1 pair of synthetic shorts
- ❑ Bathing suit



### **Personal Clothing - Feet**

- ❑ 3 pairs of warm synthetic and/or wool sock
- ❑ 2 pairs of liner socks – Polypropylene or wool are common materials
- ❑ 1 pair of camp shoes – Sneakers work well
- ❑ 1 pair of rubber boots
- ❑ 1 pair of sport sandals

### **Personal Clothing - Head**

- ❑ 2 wool or fleece caps
- ❑ 1 Brimmed hat or baseball cap

### **Personal Clothing - Hands**

- ❑ 1 or 2 pairs of fleece or wool gloves

### **Miscellaneous Gear**

- ❑ Headlamp or Flashlight with extra batteries

- ❑ Rite in the Rain Notebook
- ❑ 2 pencils and/or pens
- ❑ Water bottle
- ❑ Pocket Knife
- ❑ Sunglasses with good UV protection and a retainer strap
- ❑ Wristwatch to know the time (super important)
- ❑ Spare garbage bags and Ziploc bags
- ❑ Lots of snacks for the entire program
- ❑ Hand sanitizer
- ❑ \*Buff to protect from the sun.
- ❑ \*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 Ziplocs 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. You will need 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.

**Stuff Sack with Garbage Bag Liner Method** - Stuff sacks lined with garbage bags have been used by kayakers for years and were the packing vessel of choice prior to the invention of dry bags. Lined stuff sacks actually do take up less room than dry bags and can be easier to pack. When using this method, line a stuff sack with a garbage bag and pack as you would a dry bag. Squeeze the air out of your gear and the bag, then twist the garbage bag top up to close it. Do not tie the garbage bag or use twist ties; simply tuck the twisted end of the garbage bag down into the stuff sack before drawing the top closed. This technique is reliable but not durable so make sure you bring extra bags with you. You can improve the durability of this system by adding a 2nd stuff sack into the garbage bag creating a plastic sandwich.

*Some suggestions for packing –*

- o Multiple smaller bags are better than a few larger ones. 5 and 10 L bags are best. 20 litre bags are very hard to pack into small hatches.
- o One hatch of your kayak will be reserved for group gear and food; please consider that you will have the equivalent of one hatch for personal gear.
- o A large duffel bag or ikea bag is useful for transporting all your small bags to and from the water.
- o 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](http://www.skils.ca).

## Course Outline

Shown below is a generic outline for the AOG Upgrade training but please be ready for change and uncertainty 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.



<b>Pre-Course</b>	Online classroom work
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	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Afternoon</b>	<b>Evening</b>
<b>Day 1: Tofino and Clayoquot Sound</b>	Introductions Paperwork Leadership & risk management review Packing	Traveling On Water Communication Navigation Setting Up Camp Tarpology	Weather Wildlife Interactions
<b>Day 2: Clayoquot Sound</b>	Traveling, navigation and Leadership Scenarios	Strokes and Rescues review and polishing	Cockpit Bags Weather Navigation exercises Leadership Responsibilities Group management
<b>Day 3: Clayoquot Sound</b>	Leadership Scenarios, Traveling, Weather	Traveling, Surfing	Water Treatment



<b>Day 4: Clayoquot Sound</b>	Leadership Scenarios Traveling Weather	Exam	Exam
<b>Day 5: Clayoquot Sound</b>	Paddling in Currents Leadership Scenarios Traveling	Debrief, Feedback to Participants 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 prior to 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 already used the SKILS online classroom for your SKGABC Level 1 Guide course or a 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 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@skills.ca](mailto:info@skills.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.

## Where to stay in Ucluelet and Tofino

We suggest the following places:

Surf Junction Campground: 1-877-922-6722 or [www.surfjunction.com](http://www.surfjunction.com)

C&N Backpackers Hostel: (250) 726-7416 or [www.cnnbackpackers.com](http://www.cnnbackpackers.com)

Little Beach Resort: (250) 726-4202 or [www.littlebeachresort.com](http://www.littlebeachresort.com)

Surf's Inn Guesthouse: (250) 726-4426 or [www.surfsinn.ca](http://www.surfsinn.ca)

Pacific Rim Motel 1-800-810-0031 or [www.pacificrimmotel.com](http://www.pacificrimmotel.com)

You may find these links useful while shopping for an accommodation provider.

[www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com)

<https://www.discoverucluelet.com>

<https://pacificrimmotel.com>

<https://www.airbnb.ca/>



Thank you for enrolling in our AOG Upgrade training program. If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact us at [info@skills.ca](mailto:info@skills.ca). We look forward to playing on the water with you!