



GLACIER RANGER DISTRICT
USDA Forest Service, Chugach National Forest



Sea Kayak Operator Task Book

Task Book Assigned To:

Duty Station:

Task Book Initiated By:

Date Initiated:

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this task book is to lead employees through the Chugach National Forest sea kayak operation training program. The program identifies and develops the skills needed to operate a sea kayak safely in the performance of Forest Service work. It references manuals and literature that must be reviewed prior to certification and includes a task book of required skills and knowledge for safe sea kayak operation.

Certification Process

The process for sea kayak certification at this unit involves:

- Task book is initiated by an instructor or supervisor.
- Trainee completes task book requirements for Class A, B or C sea kayak operator in the presence of a Class C sea kayak operator.
- Sea kayak licensing examiner (Class C operator) recommends operator certification
- District Ranger or Forest Fleet Manager approves certification

Task Book Initiation

The task book has been initiated based on completion of:

- Review and sign the sea kayaking Job Hazard Analysis
Date and Signature _____
- Review sections 15.16- Paddle Craft in the Health and Safety Code Handbook
Date and Signature _____

Responsibilities

The **Trainee** is expected to have demonstrated proficiency for a task prior to requesting signoff by a Class C operator. It is the trainee's responsibility to acquire these skill through reference materials, practice, and/or practical experience.

Class B or Class C operators can instruct trainees in the required skills.

Only Class C operators can approve demonstration of skills by initialing and dating a trainee's task book.

Upon task book completion, a Class C operator may recommend certification by the District Ranger or Forest Fleet Manager.

Verification / Certification of Completed Task Book For Sea Kayak Operation

Licensing Examiner Verification

I verify that _____ has successfully completed this task book and has shown proficiency in all skills needed to operate a sea kayak safely and effectively at the _____ level.

Licensing Examiner Signature and Date

Licensing Examiner Printed Name, Title, Duty Station, and Phone Number

Agency Certification

I certify that _____ has met all requirements needed to operate agency sea kayaks.

Certifying Official's Signature and Date

Certifying Officer's Name, Title, Duty Station, and Phone Number

Certification Definitions and Required Elements

Overview:

The intent of this task book is to lead a prospective kayak operator for the Glacier Ranger District through a knowledge and skill set training program that will ultimately certify the operator to use sea kayaks to support field work. Certification levels are composed of task book elements which must be completed by the prospective operator and signed as satisfactorily completed by a Class C sea kayak operator. Final task book certification will be approved by the a Class C operator and agency certifying official. Some elements from the task book require successful demonstration while others require learning/familiarization sessions with a higher level operator.

In some cases, lower level certified kayak operators may operate in conditions and parameters above their certification level while under the supervision of a higher level certified operator.. Higher level kayak operators will assume a supervisory role in regard to all decisions pertaining to paddling while operating with a lower level operator. Higher level operators at no point will encourage or pressure a lower level operator to paddle in conditions that a lower level operator is uncomfortable with. Any decision to operate in conditions or parameters that exceed those of the lower level operator must be discussed prior to embarking and documented in a tailgate safety session.

Class A sea kayak operators are approved for use of sea kayaks under certain restrictions but are not approved for internal guiding or instruction.

Class B sea kayak operators are approved for use of sea kayaks under certain restrictions and are approved as internal guides and instructors.

Class C sea kayak operators are approved for use of sea kayaks under certain restrictions and are approved as internal guides, instructors and licensing examiners for task book elements and verification of task book completion. Class C operators can recommend sea kayak operator certification to District Ranger or Forest Fleet Manager.

District employees do not need to be certified at any level to operate a sea kayak if accompanied by a Class B or C sea kayak operator. In this case the Class B or C level operator assumes responsibility for the safety of district employees with regard to on the water activities and is responsible for maintaining appropriate guide to client ratios.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HIGHEST LEVEL KAYAK OPERATOR TO ENSURE THAT LOWER LEVEL OPERATORS ARE NOT EXPOSED TO UNACCEPTABLE RISKS.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LOWER LEVEL KAYAK OPERATOR TO COMMUNICATE CLEARLY ANY CONCERNS OR RESERVATIONS REGARDING POTENTIAL PADDLING ACTIVITIES AND TO REFUSE RISK IF IN DOUBT.

Class A Basic Sea Kayak Operator

Scope of certification:

- allows use of sea kayaks for fieldwork, including extended kayak trips
- Operator must be accompanied by another USFS certified kayak operator or with a certified professional sea kayak guide.

The following weather and sea state restrictions apply:

- Conditions will not exceed Force Three on the Beaufort Scale.
- Adjacent coast is not obscured by weather.
- Crossings are not permitted above Beaufort Scale Force Two conditions or if weather conditions are forecasted to deteriorate during the crossing.

The following parameters apply:

- Open water crossings of up to two miles are permitted but require a go-no-go analysis, tailgate safety session, and float plan with Forest Dispatch. The float plan is not necessary if a Class B or C sea kayak operator is present.
- Kayaking must occur within an eighth of a mile of shore and will generally be as close to shore as possible unless specific circumstances require paddling away from shore but within the eighth of a mile limit.
- Operator may not assume responsibility or act in a guide capacity for other district kayak operators or district employees.
- Operator may not under any circumstances kayak in conditions exceeding Class A standards even if accompanied by higher level operators or certified sea kayaking guides.

Required elements from task book:

1-10 all, 11abc, , 12, 13, 15a, 17ab, 18ab, 20-24all

Additional required skills, experience or training:

Basic first aid and current CPR

Commented [t1]: I propose eliminating this requirement and going with earlier statement in 2nd paragraph under Overview, allowing lower level kayakers to operate at higher levels if Class B or C is present. We're only talking about crossings up to 2 miles and traveling 1/8th mile from shore.

Class B Intermediate Kayak Operator – (Minimum Standard for Glacier Ranger District Sea Kayak Rangers)

Scope of certification:

- Allows all activities approved for Class A sea kayak operators.
- Operator may assume responsibility and act in a guiding capacity for other USFS staff while using sea kayaks in support of fieldwork. In most cases other USFS staff will be certified kayak operators. In special cases subject to supervisor approval, operator may guide uncertified USFS staff for special purpose trips.
- Operator may provide sea kayak training to Chugach National Forest staff
- Operator may not and approve task book elements
- Operator may not verify completion of task book

Commented [t12]: This sentence should be made consistent with statement in paragraph 5, Overview, which says uncertified paddlers are OK, but does not specify supervisor approval.

The following weather and sea state restrictions apply:

- Conditions will not exceed Force Four on Beaufort Scale.
- Visibility will range from obscured to clear
- Crossings will generally not occur when the destination is predominantly obscured by weather.
- A go-no-go analysis, tailgate safety session, and float plan with Forest Dispatch are required for any crossing where the intended destination is alternatively obscured due to weather conditions or when weather is expected to deteriorate.

The following parameters apply:

- Paddling in conditions above Beaufort Scale Force Three requires a go-no-go analysis and tailgate safety session.
- Crossings over two miles require a go-no-go analysis and tailgate safety session.
- Crossings over 5 miles require a go-no-go analysis, tailgate safety session, and float plan with Forest Dispatch.
- Kayaking may occur away from shore for extended periods if shoreline remains predominantly in view..

Required elements from task book:

All elements of task book must be completed

Additional required skills, experience or training:

First aid and CPR

Minimum of two extended length sea kayaking trips in Alaskan marine waters that required planning, packing, camping and navigation (applicability will be determined by examiner).

Class C Advanced Kayak Operator

Scope of certification:

- allows all activities approved for Class A and B sea kayak operators
- Allows solo sea kayak operations in limited conditions (see below)
- Operator is a licensing examiner and may approve task book elements, verify task book completion, and recommend candidates for certification as sea kayak operators

The following weather and sea state restrictions apply:

- Conditions will not exceed Beaufort Scale Force Five
- Paddling in maximum allowable condition of Force Five requires go-no-go analysis, tailgate safety session, and a float plan with Forest Dispatch.
- Visibility will range from clear to obscured
- Adjacent shoreline will not be continuously obscured by weather;
- If adjacent shore is predominantly obscured by weather, operation requires a go-no-go analysis and tailgate safety session, and a float plan with Forest Dispatch is recommended.
- Crossings will generally not occur when the intended destination is predominantly obscured by weather.
- A go-no-go analysis, tailgate safety session, and float plan with Forest Dispatch are required for any crossing where the intended destination is alternatively obscured by weather conditions or when weather is expected to deteriorate.

The following parameters apply:

- Paddling in conditions above Beaufort Scale Force Three require a go-no-go analysis and tailgate safety session.
- Crossings over two miles require a go-no-go analysis and tailgate safety session.
- Crossings over five miles require a go-no-go analysis, tailgate safety session, and float plan with Forest Dispatch
- Kayaking may occur away from shore for extended periods if shoreline remains predominantly in view.

Class C Advanced Sea Kayak Operators may conduct limited solo operations with the following restrictions:

- Conditions must be Force Three or less on the Beaufort Scale;
- Solo operations are only permitted when the field partner is a Class C sea kayak operator and approves of the plan;
- a safety plan must be in place between field partners that is acceptable to both parties, ensures reliable communication, includes radio check-ins, and addresses potential risks;
- solo operations must include spare paddle, paddle float, pump, reliable and

accessible radios and batteries, bear mace, and all other required sea kayaking gear;

- except during crossings, operators should paddle within an eighth of a mile or less of shore;
- crossings of up to two miles are permitted in Beaufort Scale Force Two conditions with favorable forecast, safety plan with field partner, and float plan with field partner.
- crossings of up to three miles are permitted in Beaufort Scale Force Two conditions with favorable forecast, go-no-go analysis, safety plan with field partner, and float plan with Forest Dispatch;
- crossings of between one and three miles are permitted in Beaufort Scale Force Three conditions with favorable forecast, go-no-go analysis, safety plan with field partner, and float plan with Forest Dispatch;

Required elements from task book:

All elements of task book must be completed. Operator must meet all Class A and Class B requirements.

Additional required skills, experience or training:

First aid and CPR

Minimum of two full seasons of professional sea kayaking in Alaskan marine waters, or other comparable experience approved by final examiner.

Basic Skills and Knowledge	Evaluator: Initial and Date upon Completion of Task
1. Completion of a Sea Kayaking In Alaska Introduction a. Cold water immersion b. Weather, tides and glacial features c. Marine mammals and other animal hazards	
2. Introduction to sea kayaks and related equipment a. District kayaks, fiberglass, plastic and folding b. Safety features c. Care and maintenance d. Specialized paddling gear (spray skirts, pogies, pumps, paddle float) e. Paddles, proper stowage of spare paddle	
3. PFD Introduction a. Features b. Proper fitting	
4. Introduction to specialized clothing and layering a. Layering, dry suits, paddle jackets, bibs, hats, gloves, footwear	
5. Introduction to communication equipment	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Marine VHF's b. Satellite Phone c. Bendix King Radios 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Communication Protocols <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Filing float plans properly b. Radio protocols, communication with staff, district and vessels c. Emergency use and protocols d. Check in policy e. Opening float plan while in the field 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Introduction to navigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Tide books, planning using tides, currents and use with charts b. Nautical Chart use c. GPS and compass navigation 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Familiarity with Marine Rescue equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use of signaling and tracking equipment (such as PLB, VHF, strobes, dye markers, signal mirrors, flares and smoke signals) b. c. Checking signal devices, demonstrate operation and maintenance d. Survival strategies, loss of kayak or essential gear or with kayak 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Shore Rescue Situations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Survival equipment and use b. Survival techniques and rescue procedures for shore based rescue 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Demonstrate ability to effectively propel and maneuver kayak <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Forward stroke, back stroke, sweep stroke, turning, stopping b. Lateral movements c. Maneuvering close to other kayaks for rescue or aid d. Paddle set up (feathered or un-feathered) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Demonstrate landing and launching techniques <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Launching from beach under light conditions b. Launching from dock or boat c. Knowledge of launching from beach under moderate conditions d. knowledge of launching from beach under surf conditions 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Demonstrate ability to perform wet exit while maintaining control of paddle and kayak 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Demonstrate ability to perform paddle float self rescue 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Demonstrate ability to perform flooded kayak rescues assisted and unassisted 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Demonstrate ability to rescue capsized victim <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. T-rescue b. Double kayak rescue c. Sling rescue for injured, incapacitated or overweight paddlers d. Knowledge of capsized entrapment techniques "hand of god" rescue e. f. 	

g.	
16. Demonstrate use of towing systems a. Towing kayak	
17. Demonstrate ability to perform support strokes a. Low brace b. High brace c. Knowledge of roll techniques, but proficient roll not necessary.	

Additional Skills	Evaluator: Initial and Date upon Completion of task
18. Demonstrate Go-No-Go decision making process a. Wind, waves, sea state, travel route and risk assessment b. Weather assessment, possibility for change c. Travel strategies for rough water paddling d. Understanding of Beaufort Scale for Kayaking	
19. Demonstrate open water crossing procedures a. Conditions evaluation, Go-No-Go process b. Preparation of kayaks, gear and emergency equipment c. Crossing strategy, emergency procedures d. Opening crossing float plan and protocols	
20. Bear mace storage and use during patrols	
21. Firearm transport and carry protocols for patrols	
22. Effective packing and unpacking of gear	
23. Preparation of kayak for travel a. Deck layout, emergency equipment placement b. Food and water access c. Navigation equipment, charts, GPS, compass d. Spare paddle stowage	
24. PFD preparation and maintenance a. Essential equipment check, batteries, expiration dates, function tests	

Beaufort Scale for Kayakers (Derived from Kayaking and Camping In Prince William Sound by Paul Twardock).

Force	Wind Speed	Wave Height off shore	Description of water	Signs on land	Category	Kayaker experience level
0	0-1	0	Calm	No movement	Calm	Beginner
1	1-3	.25'	Ripples, no crests	Smoke drifts	Light air	Beginner
2	4-7	0-1'	Small wavelets, no crests	Leaves rustle	Light breeze	Beginner
3	8-12	1-2'	Large wavelets, occasional white cap	Leaves in constant motion	Gentle breeze	Intermediate
4	13-18	2-4'	Small waves, regular white caps	Dust blowing, branches moving	Moderate breeze	Advanced
5	19-24	4-8'	Moderate waves, many whitecaps	Small trees sway	Fresh breeze	Very advanced

Note: Scale goes to force 12 however kayaking is not allowed under any circumstances above force 5