

OCEAN RIVER ADVENTURES



SEA KAYAKING LEVEL 1 SKILLS

(2 days) Everything you need to 'Get out there'!

This comprehensive, enjoyable, two-day course teaches you everything you need to know to confidently embark on day-long sea kayaking trips in sheltered waters. During this course, you'll further develop your kayaking strokes and rescue skills, and you'll add important new skills to your repertoire, including turning on edge, towing, and self-rescue technique. You will also learn to interpret marine weather forecasts, plan routes using marine charts, and read tide tables. Upon completion of this course, you'll be well on your way to safely enjoying the lifelong sport of sea kayaking. This course teaches you the necessary components for **Paddle Canada Sea Kayaking Level 1 Skills Certification**. Register early, because this is a popular course that fills up quickly.

Prerequisites

Before taking this course, we recommend you have Paddle Canada Sea Kayaking Introduction to Kayaking Skills Certification or equivalent skills and experience; i.e., you should be familiar with basic paddling skills, including forward and reverse paddling, and drawing your kayak sideways. As well, you should know how to complete a wet exit, how to be rescued by another kayaker, and how to rescue a capsized kayaker.

Itinerary

Day One: For Spring/Fall Courses Dates

If you have registered in a **Spring/Fall Course Date**, you will meet your instructor(s) and other participants **at Braefoot Centre, 1359 McKenzie Avenue, Victoria, BC**. Please arrive 10–15 minutes early for your program.

The course begins with a theoretical session in the classroom. During this classroom session, you will learn how to interpret marine weather forecasts, read nautical charts, and predict ocean tides and currents.

There is free parking available at the centre's parking lot. If you are parking a vehicle, we cannot be responsible for damage to or loss of your personal items.

If you are bringing your own kayak for the program, you may wish to make arrangements to drop off your kayak in advance of the program (i.e., the day before, before 3pm), so that we can store it on the trailer for you and transport it during the course. Please contact our Adventure Centre to make these arrangements.

If you are renting a kayak from us, your kayak will be reserved for you and stored on our trailer. It will be transported to the pool for you to be available for the evening session.

Following a dinner break, we will meet for the evening session at **6:30 pm** at **Crystal Pool**. Again, please try to arrive 10-15 minutes early. Please meet at the rear of Crystal Pool, on the opposite side of the building from the front doors. Because this is after regular pool hours, you will not be entering or exiting using the front doors; rather, we'll come and go using the back doors where we are able to load our kayaks and gear. Access to the rear of the building is gained via a service lane off Queens Avenue. Parking is not permitted on this service lane. Parking is available in a parking lot on the west or north side of Crystal Pool, or on Queens Avenue.

If you are providing your own kayak for the program, please ensure it is clean and free of sand or gravel before bringing into the pool building.

Please **remove your street shoes** before entering the pool deck through the back entrance. This can be a bit challenging if you are carrying a kayak. Usually, there are people "on deck" to whom you can pass your kayak. Approximately half the people can be outside, and half the people can be inside while we load the kayaks into the pool building. If everyone chips in, things run quite smoothly. When on the pool deck, most people wear paddling shoes, such as sport sandals (with heel straps), running shoes, wetsuit booties, or reef shoes.

Change rooms are located halfway up each side of the pool deck. The Women's Change Room is found on the right side of the pool, whereas the Men's Change Room is located on the left side of the pool. Lockers are available in the change rooms for 50 cents (at the time of writing).

During this "pool" session, you will review your rescue skills and learn new rescue skills, such as how rescue yourself using a paddle float.

Day One: For Summer Course Dates

If you have registered in a **Summer Course Date**, you will meet your instructor(s) and other participants on the first day of your course **at Thetis Lake** (see below for directions). Please arrive 10-15 minutes early for your program.

To get to Thetis Lake from Victoria, take HWY-1 north toward Duncan. Take EXIT 10, toward VIEW ROYAL/COLWOOD. Once off the HWY, stay in left lane, which becomes ISLAND HWY/HWY-1A. Take the first right onto SIX MILE RD and follow this road to Thetis Lake Regional Park. Once inside the park, follow the narrow road through the park PAST the main parking lot. TAKE A HARD LEFT and continue to follow the narrow winding road through the park and continue past the main swimming beach. Follow the narrow road UNTIL IT ENDS in a small parking lot very near the water at what is known as 'Second' Beach or 'Canoe' Beach. Limited parking is available at this small parking lot. Alternately, you can park at the main parking lot and walk to Second Beach following the narrow road (approximately 10 minutes). Pay parking is available for \$2.25 (at the time of writing).

We cannot be responsible for damage to or loss of your personal items, so please ensure valuables are stored securely. You can store your valuables in the watertight storage compartments (hatches) of your kayak. If you are doing this, place your valuables in a small bag, sack, or pack lined with a plastic bag to ensure dryness.

During this session at the lake, you will review your rescue skills and learn new rescue skills, such as how to rescue yourself using a paddle float. Wetsuits will be available for you to wear; however, Thetis Lake warms to a comfortable temperature in the summer and you may choose to not wear a wetsuit. **After a lunch break, we will continue the course either at Thetis Lake or at Braefoot Centre, 1359 McKenzie Avenue, Victoria, BC** (or alternate, depending on weather conditions and instructor preference). If the afternoon session is at Braefoot Centre, there is free parking available at the centre's parking lot. In this theoretical session, you learn how to interpret marine weather forecasts, read nautical charts, and predict ocean tides and currents.

Day Two: For All Course Dates

On the second day of your course, you will meet your instructor(s) and classmates **at Ocean River Sports**. From here, we will travel to a local launching location. Alternately, for convenience, your instructor may ask you to meet at an alternate location based on the current weather forecast. Paddling locations may be the Victoria waterfront, Oak Bay, Cadboro Bay, Haro Strait, or Brentwood Bay. See the section below entitled “**Launching Locations**” for directions to various “put-ins” in our area. The instructor(s) will transport the kayaks to the “put-in,” and course participants will drive themselves to the put-in for a great day of paddling on the ocean. During this session, you will build on your foundational kayaking strokes, learn new strokes, and gain practical experience paddling on the ocean. Please bring a plenty of water and a lunch. Be prepared to pack your lunch in your kayak as lunch is usually eaten at a beach! Expect to paddle for approximately 3-4 hours with plenty of time for snacks and rest stops.

We caution you that due to unsafe weather conditions or other reasons, our return may be delayed. As such, please do not make time-sensitive plans following your course.

For your safety and enjoyment, we ensure that groups with more than 5 participants are led by two experienced instructors. Our minimum group size is 3 participants and 1 instructor; our maximum group size is 10 participants and 2 instructors.

Don't forget to share your memories and photographs with us—we'd love to hear from you.

Launching Locations

McNeil Bay, 15 minutes east of downtown Victoria

To get to McNeil Bay from Victoria, follow Fairfield Road east. Fairfield Road changes to Denison Place. Continue east on Denison Place and merge onto Beach Drive east. Continue east on Beach Drive to the intersection of Oliver Street. McNeil Bay is the body of water on the south side of Beach Drive. There is free parking on the street.

Oak Bay Marina, 15 minutes east of downtown Victoria

To get to Oak Bay Marina from downtown Victoria, follow Fort Street east to Oak Bay Avenue. Follow Oak Bay Avenue east to Newport Ave and continue southeast on Newport Avenue to Windsor Road. Turn east on Windsor Road, then turn south onto Beach Drive. Oak Bay Marina is located immediately on the east side of Beach Drive. There is free roadside parking in the area, or you may park in the southwest corner of the Oak Bay Marina parking lot, where you will find steps down to a small pocket beach. This pocket beach serves as our meeting location.

Willows Beach, 15 minutes east of downtown Victoria

To get to Willows Beach from downtown Victoria, follow Fort Street east to Oak Bay Avenue. Follow Oak Bay Avenue east to Newport Ave and continue southeast on Newport Avenue to Windsor Road. Turn east on Windsor Road, then turn north onto Beach Drive. Follow Beach Drive north to Dalhousie Street. Turn east on Dalhousie Street. There is a large parking lot at the base of Dalhousie Street with free parking. Willows Beach is located at the steps down from this parking lot.

Gyro Park on Cadboro Bay, 20 minutes east of downtown Victoria

To get to Gyro Park from downtown Victoria, follow Fort Street east to Cadboro Bay Road (Fort Street changes its name to Cadboro Bay Road). Follow Cadboro Bay Road to the village of Cadboro Bay, then turn south (right) on Sinclair Road to Gyro Park. There is ample free parking in the large parking lot at the beach.

Smugglers Cove, 20 minutes east of downtown Victoria

To get to Smugglers Cove from downtown Victoria, follow Fort Street east to Cadboro Bay Road (Fort Street changes its name to Cadboro Bay Road). Follow Cadboro Bay Road past the village of Cadboro Bay. Cadboro Bay Road changes into Telegraph Bay Road. Turn south on Seaview Road.

Follow Seaview Road for a short distance, then turn south again onto Tudor Avenue. Follow Tudor Avenue south to McAnally Road, and continue south on McAnally Road until it reaches the water. Here you will find a small beach at Smugglers Cove. There is limited free parking on the side of the road.

Telegraph Cove, 20 minutes east of downtown Victoria

To get to Telegraph Cove from downtown Victoria, follow Fort Street east to Cadboro Bay Road (Fort Street changes its name to Cadboro Bay Road). Follow Cadboro Bay Road past the village of Cadboro Bay. Cadboro Bay Road changes into Telegraph Bay Road. Continue east on Telegraph Bay Road to its terminus. There is free parking in the small parking lot at the beach.

Brentwood Bay, 25 minutes north of downtown Victoria

To get to the launching location at Brentwood Bay from Victoria, follow Hwy 17 north to Keating Cross Road. Turn west (left) onto Keating Cross Road and follow this to West Saanich Road. Turn north (right) on West Saanich Road and follow this through the town of Brentwood Bay. At the roundabout, turn west onto Verdier Avenue. Follow Verdier Avenue until it ends at the Brentwood Bay–Mill Bay Ferry terminal. On the south side (left side) of Verdier Avenue, you will find a small park, with a ramp at the backside of the park that leads to the water. You can park your vehicle temporarily at the park to unload. For longer term parking, you can park at select locations on the north side of Verdier Avenue or on side streets in the area. There is no fee for parking, but read the signage to ensure you do not park in a “no parking” zone.

Weather

Weather in southern Vancouver Island is classified as sub-Mediterranean, and this area boasts the mildest climate in Canada. This means our weather is warm, but not too warm, and surprisingly dry. In spring and fall, we often get a mix of sun and cloud—certainly reasonable weather for sea kayaking, as your spraydeck covers the bottom part of your body and can keep it dry even during some rain. Combine this with a light raincoat and hat and you should be comfortable. If you are concerned about being outdoors in cooler weather with the possibility of rain, consider registering in a program that takes place during the summer, rather than the spring or fall. Summer is comfortable paddling weather, with temperatures from 18° to 32°C (65° to 90°F). The average monthly rainfall in summer is less than 2.5 cm (1"). Actually, this particular region is in a rain shadow. However, while this region is in a rain shadow, we're very close to the rainforest, which dominates the northern Pacific coast. This means that neighbouring areas experience plenty of rain. As such, you must be prepared for the possibility of rain by bringing adequate clothing. Usually, rain doesn't last very long. We take this all in stride in the great outdoors! Programs run rain or shine.

Equipment List

Kayak and Paddling Gear

You will need a sea kayak and paddling gear for your program. You can either rent these from us for an additional fee, or you can provide your own sea kayak and paddling gear if you already own or have access to these.

If you are **renting a sea kayak and paddling gear** from Ocean River Sports (or if a sea kayak and paddling gear are included in the price of your program), you will be provided with the following items as one complete package:

- Sea kayak.
- Paddle.
- Sprayskirt.
- PFD (Personal Flotation Device): Canadian Coast Guard approved.

- Whistle.
- Hand pump.
- Throw-line (buoyant heaving line at least 15 meters in length).
- Paddle float.
- *Spare paddle (optional)
- *Sponge (optional): for drying out hatches

If you are **providing your own kayak and paddling gear** for your program, you must provide the paddling gear listed above, and your sea kayak must meet the following requirements**: (1) is suitable for open sea conditions; (2) has positive buoyancy when capsized; (3) is able to adequately carry gear as required for the program; and (4) has perimeter lines. Please note: recreational kayaks that do not meet the above requirements are not suitable for our programs. If you have questions about the suitability of your kayak, please contact us. If your program takes place in an indoor pool, please ensure your kayak and gear are clean of dirt, sand, and debris.

**Exceptions: (1) whitewater kayaks are permitted on our *Rolling* course; and (2) surf skis or Olympic-style kayaks with bulkheads or flotation bags are permitted on our *Perfect Your Forward Stroke* course.

What Ocean River Sports Provides for Your Program

Ocean River Sports provides the following equipment and supplies for your program.

Immersion Clothing

Ocean River Sports will provide the following immersion clothing for you to wear:

- Wetsuit.
- Paddling jacket.
- *If you like, you may wish to provide your own wetsuit and paddling jacket or drysuit. If you are providing your own, please ensure that it is comfortable for paddling for extended periods and will keep you warm during immersion.

Safety Gear

- First aid equipment.
- VHF Marine Radio.

Navigation Equipment

- Shared charts of the paddling areas.
- Chart 1: Symbols, Abbreviations and Terms.
- Tide and Current Tables Volume 5: Juan de Fuca Strait & Strait of Georgia.
- Orienteering (hiker's) compass.

What You Provide for Your Program

Overview

Please read the following equipment list carefully, as it indicates what you will need to bring with you on the program. Please avoid wearing cotton clothing as it keeps you cold when it's wet, and takes

a long time to dry. Please wear clothing designed for outdoor wear and made from Merino (wool), silk, or synthetic materials, such as Capilene™, polyester, polypropylene, or nylon.

Ocean River Sports stocks many of the items listed below. If you need advice or would like to purchase gear, check out our website at www.oceanriver.com or call us! Our contact information is located at the end of this document.

*indicates optional item.

Personal Gear

- Eyeglass retainer strap if you wear glasses.
- If you wear glasses or contacts, please bring an extra set in case of loss; also, don't forget contact lens solution and a carrying case for your contacts or glasses.
- Sunglasses. Include a strap to secure them.
- Sunscreen: waterproof, sweat-proof, SPF 30 or higher.
- Lip sunblock.
- 2 pens for writing notes.
- Notebook for taking general notes
- *Nose plug or diving mask, which can prevent the uncomfortable sensation of getting water 'up your nose.' Part of your training will involve intentionally capsizing your kayak under controlled and safe conditions. Nose plugs are available at Ocean River Sports or stores that sell swimming accessories.
- *Waterproof or disposable camera.
- *Moist towelettes for a quick, waterless cleanup.
- *Extra car keys in case you lose yours.

Clothing

- Swimsuit and towel. A merino, silk or synthetic long underwear top can optionally be worn. Underwear can provide additional warmth, even when wet, and protection from the sun. Females may wish to wear nylon shorts over their swimsuit.
- Comfortable outdoor pants and/or shorts (depending on time of year), such as what you would wear for a light hike.
- Long-sleeved, non-cotton shirt or long underwear top to protect from the sun.
- Warm fleece pullover or Merino (wool) sweater to keep you warm in cooler weather.
- Hat for sun, rain, or warmth, depending on the weather. A broad-brimmed hat works best.
- For your hands, you may wish to wear cycling-type gloves to help prevent blistering. These should be snug-fitting, as loose-filling gloves may actually cause blistering. To keep your hands warm in cooler weather, you may wish to wear wool gloves inside dishwashing gloves, or purchase neoprene gloves or pogies (a special paddling mitt).
- Extra gloves (wool or fleece) to wear at lunch or after paddling.
- Windbreaker (e.g., nylon jacket that can shed the wind).

- Rain jacket (with a hood, if you don't have a broad-brimmed rain hat). Gore-tex™ or other breathable material works well.
- Rain pants.
- A change of warm clothes placed in a marine dry bag (available at Ocean River Sports) or small backpack or duffle bag. If you are using a small backpack or duffle bag, your clothes can be waterproofed with large Ziplock™ bags or garbage bags (this ensures you have dry clothes to change into after paddling or if you capsize).
- Footwear for wearing while paddling (that can get wet); e.g., sport sandals (with heel strap), running shoes, wetsuit booties, or reef shoes with good soles.
- A change of footwear for wearing before and after paddling, such as a trail running shoe, light hiking shoe, or rubber boots. Waterproof footwear is preferable.
- Wool or fleece or cap (in the spring or fall; significant body heat is lost through the head and neck).
- Additional warm fleece pullover or Merino (wool) sweater to keep you warm in cooler weather.
- *Baseball cap.

Food and Water

- Water bottle (filled): large enough to hold about 1 liter or 1 quart of water so you can keep yourself well-hydrated.
- Lunch/dinner for each day
- Snack(s).
- *Thermos with a warm drink.
- *Hand sanitizer

Preparing for Your Program

Kayaking requires some upper body strength and endurance. If you are lacking this, it is rarely a problem as we don't paddle huge distances, and usually folks get by quite well with only occasional minor muscle aches. However, if you feel you could use some upper body conditioning before your trip, exercising with light weights can be quite helpful. Concentrate mainly on shoulder strengthening exercises, focusing on endurance rather than strength.

Medications

Please note that you will require a **current tetanus shot** (less than 10 years old). This is very important, as tetanus is a naturally occurring bacteria that lives in the soil. If you do not have up-to-date tetanus inoculation, you may contract tetanus through a scratch or cut, and require immediate evacuation. A simple tetanus shot, easily accessible at most medical facilities, removes the risk of contracting tetanus. **You will not be permitted to participate in the program without a current tetanus shot.**

Please be sure to let us know of any limitations of which we should be aware. Please duplicate and separate the quantities of any medications you will need during your program, and give your duplicated medications to your instructor, who will carry them. This will provide an additional source of medications should the primary set become wet, damaged, or lost. If you are prone to any health disturbances, e.g., easily infected cuts or severe migraines, please remember to bring any preventive medications. If you have any questions about medications, contact your doctor.

Swell or wind waves can be encountered on the ocean. If seasickness is of concern to you, your doctor or pharmacist may be able to recommend medication to help. Also, anti-nausea (drug-free) wristbands work well for many people if put on at the beginning of a paddling day. Please note that seasickness occurs only rarely in sea kayaking. Be sure to let us know if you anticipate that seasickness will be a problem for you.

Contact Us

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