

Scope

HASK offers a progressive set of skills courses to meet the needs of sea kayakers ranging from beginners to paddlers with several years of experience.

HASK training is focused on the sea kayaking skills required to paddle the club's typical paddle locations on the Texas coast and inland water bodies. This excludes white water paddling, but includes large rivers and lakes, bays and bayous, surf, and open water paddle trips.

HASK training is broadly characterized as:

- Coastal Kayak strokes and maneuvers
- Coastal Kayak safety and rescue
- Coastal Kayak day trip leader

In addition to teaching skills, HASK aims to make training enjoyable for all. The club recognizes that members have varying levels of experience and skills, and will make all reasonable efforts to provide and appropriately advertise training at various skill levels. Our goal is to allow students to proceed at their own pace, to learn skills and succeed/develop proficiency before moving on to the next level. Points of paddling style will not be prioritized above student enjoyment of training. The primary objective is a happy student with a safe and effective stroke. Students will develop more paddling style with practice and further coaching.

Eligibility

HASK training is offered primarily to HASK members and is promoted via the club events calendar. Members aged under 14 may participate in training with a parent or guardian present.

HASK training may be opened to non-members if a course has vacancies after members have had the opportunity to enroll.

HASK is not specifically organized to train special needs paddlers. HASK does have enough contacts with the Houston area paddlesports community to help special needs paddlers get the resources they need.

Alignment with national standards

HASK training is aligned with the American Canoe Association coastal kayaking training courses. Training sessions will meet the established ACA guidelines for ACA instructor-to-student ratio.

HASK also provides opportunities for members who are ACA-accredited instructors to develop their instructor skills and maintain accreditation.

Training program coordination

The annual HASK training program is subject to Board endorsement.

Implementation is delegated by the Board to the Safety Director and Training Coordinator who will recruit assistants to help coordinate and deliver the program.

Scheduling training

HASK training will be organized when water temperatures are warm enough to make the training experience enjoyable for most paddlers.

Diversity of trainers

There are a limited number of professional sea kayak instructors in Texas which limits the capacity of HASK to offer diversity of trainers. Students respond differently to different trainers, and this affects the quality of the learning experience and the student’s enjoyment of the class.

Recognizing this, HASK will seek to provide diversity among the trainers and will ask trainers to specifically consider the needs and physical limitations of smaller or lighter paddlers and those having less upper body strength.

Types of Training and Locations

Formal training on-water

Formal training sessions will be paddle sessions that are dedicated to learning and refining skills. The table below outlines the types of locations used for formal courses.

Training course	Prerequisite	Trainers	Typical location	Target frequency (formal courses)
Basic strokes and rescues	None	Experienced paddlers (may be ACA qualified instructors)	288 Lake, Buffalo Run,	1/year
Strokes and rescues refinement	Basic strokes & rescues	Experienced paddlers (may be ACA qualified instructors)	288 Lake, Buffalo Run,	1/year
Lumpy water	Basic strokes & rescues	Experienced paddlers (may be ACA qualified instructors)	Galveston Bay, San Luis Pass	1/year
Surfing	Basic strokes & rescues	Experienced paddlers (may be ACA qualified instructors)	Surfside Beach	Several / year
Rolling	Basic strokes & rescues	Experienced paddlers (may be ACA qualified instructors)	288 Lake, Buffalo Run,	1/year
Rivers in long kayaks	Basic strokes & rescues	Experienced paddlers (may be ACA qualified instructors)	Brazos above I-10 or similar	By demand
Trip Leader Assessment (ACA course)	HASK Board nominees	ACA accredited, external to HASK	Galveston Bay	By demand (~ every 1-2 years)

Informal training on-water

Practicing new skills is just as important as formal classes to improve paddle skills. Informal training sessions will be scheduled on the HASK calendar at local venues such as 288 Lake or Buffalo Run.

These sessions will provide a more relaxed environment to work on skills, and to socialize.

By agreement with Trip Leaders, and given a suitable venue, it is planned to offer some short practice opportunities before selected day paddles (e.g. arrive early, and practice skills before the day tip safety briefing).

A “group management, scenarios and rescues” paddle may be scheduled occasionally if there is sufficient interest. This supports the formal Trip Leader training course and provides opportunities for participants to practice and hone skills *already learned* during formal training sessions.

Off-the-water training

The Safety Director is expected to incorporate positive and negative experiences from HASK activities into the training program. This includes addressing specific experiences from trips in future Trip Leader training.

Safety talks at HASK meetings are also part of the training program, and can cover topics such as:

- Avoiding collisions with power boats
- Calling for help in an emergency
- Hypothermia
- Hyperthermia
- Rules of the road
- Crossing channels
- Paddling clothing (hot and cold weather)
- Weather for kayakers
- Day trip safety equipment
- Kayak paddles
- Hand held VHF marine radio
- Basic navigation
- Leave no trace / awareness of nesting birds
- Getting along with fishermen
- Day paddle nutrition and hydration
- Responsibilities towards other trip members

Disclaimer

HASK reserves the right to cancel training for safety reasons. HASK also reserves the right to refuse training to any individual who demonstrates unsafe, unsuitable, disruptive or offensive behavior, who refuses to follow instructions or who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Participant Responsibilities

Participants are responsible for:

- Showing up on time for training
- Contacting the training leader to cancel within 24 hours or as specified if unable to attend.
- Bringing the appropriate gear and equipment in good working order.
- Following leader instructions.
- Making sure they don't jeopardize the safety or comfort of others.
- Having an awareness of personal limits. Participants should never attempt strokes or rescues that make them feel uncomfortable.