



ACA Core Skills Checklist

OBJECTIVE: Provide students with the fundamental canyoneering skills necessary to join a competently led group into canyons rated up to 3A/B III and supervised introduction to technical canyoneering skills.

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

ASSESSOR'S NAME: _____

RECOMMENDATION: PASS CONDITIONAL PASS NO PASS

	DATE	SCORE
Logistics and Safety		
Understand the ACA Canyon Rating System and different types of canyon terrain, as well as the special issues related to that terrain (i.e. swift water canyons, dry and semi-dry canyons, slot canyons, pothole escape problems, long committing canyons, permit requirements).		
Using The ACA canyon rating system and canyon beta; estimate necessary rope lengths, list required technical gear and personal equipment for a selected canyon.		
Understand common causes of accidents in canyoneering and precautions that can be taken to avoid them.		
Understand how to find/read/interpret weather reports, cloud formations, changing weather patterns.		
Identify and describe variables that contribute to flash flood risk. Describe flash flood warning signs. Describe appropriate responses to an impending flash flood including identifying canyon exists and high ground.		
Demonstrate how to activate an SOS on a Personal Locating Beacon (PLB).		
Leave No Trace Ethics		
Read the ACA's Canyons booklet www.canyoneering.net/docs/booklet.pdf		
Understand and apply low impact canyoneering practices.		
Understand and apply techniques to avoid rope grooves/damage in soft rock.		
Understand and apply appropriate methods for human waste disposal.		
Rope and Equipment Care		
Understand and apply good rope care practices.		

	DATE	SCORE
Demonstrate coiling a rope; (a) Alpine coil, (b) Canyon coil.		
Stuff and use a rope bag.		
Understand and apply good equipment care and handling practices.		
Basic Knots		
Tie and inspect; Figure Eight knot; (a) on a Bight, (b) Follow-through.		
Tie and inspect; Ring Bend in webbing (aka Water knot).		
Tie and inspect; Clove hitch.		
Tie and inspect; Munter hitch (aka Italian hitch, Dynamic hitch).		
Tie and inspect; Girth hitch.		
Tie and inspect; 3-wrap Prusik hitch.		
Tie and inspect; secure bend to connect two load-bearing ropes for rappelling (i.e. Double Fisherman bend, Figure Eight bend).		
Tie and inspect; Valdostain tresse (tied with a VT or equivalent).		
Intro to Anchors and Rigging		
Evaluate and rig existing fixed artificial anchors (bolts) using the acronym EARNEST (Equalized, Angle, Redundant, No Extension, Strong, Timely).		
Identify, Evaluate, and rig single-point natural anchors (i.e. tree, boulder, arch) using a. simple webbing wrap, b. cinching wrap (i.e. wrap 2 pull 1, Girth hitch). Explain the pros and cons of each and demonstrate how to securely back up & test single point anchors.		
Set up and use a releasable/contingency system for rappel. Explain the hazards/risks of using releasable systems and steps that should be taken to avoid accidents and mitigate risks.		
Identify & explain the variables and situations (scenarios) that dictate safely setting rope length to the height of a rappel. Demonstrate setting the rope length for safe descent for each scenario using appropriate communication and applicable rigging techniques.		
Set up and use edge protection to protect rope from abrasion and soft rock from rope grooves/damage.		
Identify, assess and mitigate basic rope retrieval challenges (crossed ropes) including minimizing or avoiding rope grooves/damage in soft rock.		
Prep ropes for retrieval & Successfully retrieve rope and prep for transport (Coil or Bag).		
Signals / Communication		
Understand and use proper verbal for commands for belaying, rappelling, and up/downclimbing.		
Understand and use proper hand signals.		
Climbing, Spotting, Handlines		
Move on 3rd and 4th class terrain (scrambling - rock climbing terrain).		

	DATE	SCORE
Move on 5th class terrain (rock climbing terrain).		
Demonstrate chimneying, stemming, and bridging techniques.		
Spot a climber; climbing up, climbing down.		
Understand and use partner capture (climbing down) and partner assist (climbing up) techniques for short vertical problems.		
Understand and apply appropriate use of a hand line.		
Understand and apply appropriate use of a friction hitch safety on a hand line.		
Rappelling, Belaying, Self-Rescue		
Understand and explain the risk and tasks associated with being the first rappeller.		
Set up and use a self belay with a Valdostain tresse (tied with a VT or equivalent).		
Rappel; control speed while rappelling, apply brake to stop mid-rappel.		
Rig rappelling device for correct friction on 8mm to 11mm ropes, single and double strand, understand the variables that contribute to friction requirements.		
Rappel using different the starting positions that include a). traditional (standing) b). sitting c). soft start (body friction/smearing); explain when such a start should be used.		
Add friction while rappelling.		
Lock off rappel device while rappelling.		
Lock off while rappelling using leg wrap.		
Demonstrate proper bottom belay (Firemans belay).		
Demonstrate proper belay commands / verbal communication techniques.		
Demonstrate appropriate rappelling practices to minimize rope abrasion.		
Rappel with pack on and off. Describe scenarios for both situations.		
Use rope grab (friction hitch or mechanical ascender) and foot loop to remove tension from rappel device to free stuck gear while rappelling.		
Perform controlled rappel up to 150'+ Adding friction mid-rappel; communication - whistles or radios; hanging packs.		
Swimming, Jumping, Water Slides		
Create and use flotation with gear available.		
Swim 50 yards with gear, using floatation if necessary.		
Jumping into water (Max distance 5ft.) identify hazards, correct body position.		
Perform wet rappel disconnect in water.		
Water slides; identify hazards, correct body position.		

Recommendations After Training

- Students should continue practicing technical skills in low-risk conditions, such as on a low angle slab or on high-angle faces with a top-rope belay provided by a competent belayer.
- Students should descend canyons with competent leaders and mentors, starting with easy Class 2 and 3 canyons then progressing to intermediate Class 3 canyons.



ACA Aspirant Skills Checklist

OBJECTIVE: *Through training and mentoring, increase of technical personal skill sets and expanded situational awareness and to introduce group leadership roles, associated technical skills and instructional techniques.*

NOTE: *Skills Checklists are cumulative in nature. Students must know all the skills from the 'Core' Checklist in addition to the skills listed here.*

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

ASSESSOR'S NAME: _____

RECOMMENDATION: ___PASS ___CONDITIONAL PASS ___ NO PASS

	DATE	SCORE
Navigation, Map Reading, Canyon Topos		
Read contour lines on a topographic map; identify terrain features (hills, saddles, ridges, drainages), determine relative steepness of grade, identify potential high ground and canyon escape routes.		
Identify relative size of a canyon watershed using topo map.		
Orient a map with compass and terrain.		
Use GPS to determine grid coordinates, mark waypoints and go to waypoints.		
Plot grid coordinates on a topographic map.		
Prepare and use a canyon topo.		
Knot Craft		
Tie and inspect; Frost knot in webbing.		
Tie and inspect; Ladder with webbing.		
Tie and inspect; Bowline with Yosemite finish.		
Tie and inspect Inline knots; (i.e. Alpine butterfly, Directional Figure Eight).		
Tie and inspect; (a) Munter hitch, (b) mule hitch or two half hitches.		
Tie and inspect; (a) Klymhyst, (b) Asymmetric Prusik (with VT Prusik or equivalent)		

	DATE	SCORE
Anchors		
Understand and apply good principles of anchor location; DEAR (Dry, Efficient, Accessible, Rope Retrieval)		
Understand and apply good principles of anchor identification, construction, friction, and testing.		
Identify, Evaluate, and rig single-point natural anchor (i.e. tree, boulder, arch,) a). using a cinching wrap - wrap 3 pull 2, b). redundant wrap (i.e. Basket with Overhand knot at focal point) Explain the pros and cons and demonstrate how to safely test single point anchors		
Identify, construct, rig, and evaluate/test multi-point natural anchors using EARNEST.		
Rope Retrieval: Mitigate standard rope retrieval challenges with "courtesy loop".		
Rope Retrieval: Anchor a partially retrieved rope (pull side)		
Rope Retrieval: Ascend a partially retrieved rope (rappel side)		
Rigging		
Set up and use releasable single rope system (contingency), including three parts: (1) friction mechanism to allow controlled lowering, (2) tie-off that is releasable under tension, and (3) identifying risks and setting safety to mitigate those risks.		
Set up and use blocked rope systems (carabiner blocks) for rappel. Explain the pros and hazards of using blocks and steps that should be taken to avoid accidents.		
Set up and use double rope system (Toss 'n Go) for rappel. Explain the pros and cons of double rope systems (toss 'n go).		
Describe methods for safely setting initial rope lengths for wet and dry landings i.e. estimating height, setting releasable, above water level.		
Demonstrate how to safely and efficiently reset / adjust rope length.		
Identify and demonstrate how to change abrasion points as needed to protect rope/webbing from abrasion and soft rock from rope grooves/damage.		
Lower a person, using hands free backup (i.e. friction hitch attached to the anchor or to the harness of the person in control of lowering; avoiding rope grooves in soft rock)		
Set up and use Static Courtesy Rigging to facilitate trouble-free rope retrieval. Explain purpose, proper usage, and application.		
Demonstrate safe rappel start off of extended courtesy rigging.		
Set up and use a safety line to protect a traverse.		
Belaying		
Set up and use a Self belay using alternate methods / techniques (auto-block). Understand and explain the pros and cons of using a self-belay .		
Belay a climber; climbing down, a.) using rope from human anchor (hip belay) 10ft or less, b.) using rope from fixed anchor.		
Arrest out-of-control rappeler via Bottom Belay.		
Signals / Communication		
Understand and use proper whistle signals.		
Use Radios to communicate verbal commands for belaying, rappelling.		

	DATE	SCORE
On Rope Techniques, Companion Rescue		
Shift Rappel from rappel line to top rope belay line.		
Ascend a fixed rope using friction hitches; single strand, double strand.		
Ascend a fixed rope using mechanical ascenders; single strand.		
Transition from rappel to ascend and from ascend to rappel.		
Pass a knot while rappelling. Pass a knot while ascending.		
Demonstrate rappelling on a Guided Rappel (set up by a competent person). Explain safety concerns and mitigation.		
Safely lower an incapacitated rappeler via Bottom Belay.		
Rappel with pack securely hanging from harness.		
Safely and effectively zip line gear over/around obstacle. Describe scenarios for usage.		
Perform controlled rappel up to 200'+- Adding friction mid-rappel; communication - whistles or radios; hanging packs.		
Canyon Leadership		
Identify and Assess Flash Flooding Risks associated with a selected canyon.		
Perform initial gear-up 'Buddy Checks' (Safety check) and at 'Buddy Checks' every rappel.		
Canyon Basic First Aid / CPR: a) Stabilize injury / Treat for Shock; b) Go for help; c) Basic injury management.		
Swimming, Swift Water		
Swim 50 yards with gear, without floatation.		
Jumping into water (Max distance 8ft.) identify hazards, correct body position.		
Describe basic and demonstrate Waterfall Rappelling Techniques.		
Describe waterfall/stream hazards; foot entrapment, strainers, siphons, undercuts, recirculating currents, and appropriate methods for dealing with them.		

Recommendations After Training

- Students should continue practicing technical skills in low-risk conditions, such as on a low angle slab or on high-angle faces with a top-rope belay provided by a competent belayer.
- Students should descend intermediate canyons with competent leaders and mentors, taking on progressively more anchor, rigging and problem-solving responsibilities.



ACA Assistant Canyon Leader Skills Checklist

OBJECTIVE: *The development of intermediate level canyoneering / problem solving skills, basic canyon leadership techniques, group efficiencies, and competence in straightforward companion rescues.*

NOTE: *Skills Checklists are cumulative in nature. Students must know all the skills from the 'Core' and the 'Aspirant' Checklists in addition to the skills listed here.*

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

ASSESSOR'S NAME: _____

RECOMMENDATION: ___ PASS ___ CONDITIONAL PASS ___ NO PASS

	DATE	SCORE
Anchors		
Construct, evaluate, rig, test, backup, and use dead man anchors.		
Construct, evaluate, rig, test, backup, and use Carin anchors.		
Demonstrate how to backup / test a marginal anchor.		
Apply sequencing and friction to utilize otherwise marginal anchors.		
Set up and use human anchors. Explain why, when, and how to properly sequence this type of anchor.		
Rigging		
Set up and use releasable twin rope system (jester, joker), including three parts: (1) friction mechanism to allow controlled lowering, (2) tie-off that is releasable under tension, and (3) identifying risks and setting safety to mitigate those risks.		
Set up and use Dynamic Courtesy Rigging to facilitate hands free rappel start and trouble-free rope retrieval. Explain why, when, and proper usage and how to avoid rope grooves in soft rock.		
Core Rope Work		
Set up and use a top-rope belay system a.) from human anchor (hip belay) 10ft or less, b.) from fixed anchor.		
Demonstrate use of simple lift-shift systems to help someone on rappel free stuck gear.		
Tension and securely tie off a guide rope at the bottom using mechanical advantage.		
Set up and use a retrievable guided rappel system tensioning from the bottom.		
Protect traverse and rappel with a retrievable safety line.		
Set up and use a counter-weight rappel, anchoring from bottom.		

	DATE	SCORE
On Rope Techniques, Teamwork, Companion Rescue		
Use drop loop 2:1 to provide lift for rappeler to free stuck gear.		
Convert static single rope rigging (e.g. block) to lower. Use hands free backup (i.e. friction hitch) when lowering.		
Demonstrate tandem rappel (aka assisted rappel).		
Demonstrate the following advanced partner capture techniques: a) Foot Capture; b) Partner Capture; c) Human Ladder		
Perform a Dynamic Belay (Lowering while maintaining belay).		
Perform controlled rappel free hanging and/or up to 250'+ - Adding friction mid-rappel; communication - radios; hanging packs.		
Participant Coaching / Teaching		
Coach / Teach a person to basic rappel.		
Coach / Teach a person to basic bridge; stem; chimney, and downclimb.		
Belay a climber; climbing up, a.) using rope from human anchor (hip belay) 10ft or less b.) using rope from fixed anchor.		
Emergency Response		
Activate EMS system Non-Life threatening (Local SAR; Emergency Contacts).		
Activate EMS system Life Threatening or Time Critical (Local SAR; Emergency Contacts).		
Contact Rescue - Rappel on secured rope to provide assistance to person stuck on rappel; provide foot loop to free stuck gear (Not a pick-off).		
Canyon Leadership		
Weather – interpret Radar, Water Vapor, & Infrared Satellite Imagery		
Perform Pack Checks (for selected canyon) – check for appropriate: Water; Food; Clothing; Footwear; Equipment; First Aid Supplies; Technical eBag (extra hooks, Webbing, Rapides, Potshot, etc.).		
Model / Teach: basic bridging; stemming; chimneying.		
Manage participant fearful of rappelling (from bottom).		
Set Safe zones / gates – move group from safe zone to safe zone (keep group together).		
Recognize and treat symptoms of Hypothermia .		
Recognize and treat symptoms of Hyperthermia .		
Wilderness First Aid - perform: a) Splint a lower leg injury; b) Stabilize & Horizontal Evacuation.		
Problem Solving Scenarios		
Scenario 1: Shirt / Hair stuck in rappelling device.		
Scenario 2: Tangled roped and/or rope doesn't touch the ground.		
Scenario 3: Late start - move group expeditiously.		
Scenario 4: Horizontal Evacuation of lower leg injury - stable patient; normal conditions.		

Specialized Skills for Class A/B Canyons

OBJECTIVE: Provide students with the advanced personal and group canyoneering skills needed to become effective problem-solvers in Class A/B canyons.

Class A/B Canyons — Pothole Escape		
Escape a pothole using partner assist techniques.		
Escape a pothole using counter-weight techniques (pot shot; pack toss). Toss single Pot Shot as simple pothole counter weight, simple ascend out.		
Escape a pothole using aid hooking techniques.		

Specialized Skills for Class C Canyons

OBJECTIVE: Provide students with the advanced personal and group canyoneering skills needed to become effective problem-solvers in Class C canyons.

Class C Canyons — Core Skills		
Assist swimmer(s) while maintaining separation with sequencing, tag lines, throw bags, and/or flotation devices..		
Jumping into water (Max distance 10ft./10ft. Min depth) identify hazards/depth, correct body position (“Pencil” technique).		
Cut self off of entangled rope in water (10 sec max)		
Swim for 4 minutes without floatation.		

Recommendations After Training

- Practice technical skills in low-risk conditions, such as on clean and low angle “slab” type environments or on vertical terrain with an effective Top or Bottom (Fireman’s) Belay.
- Students should descend intermediate to advanced canyons with competent mentors, taking on progressively more anchor, rigging and problem-solving responsibilities.



ACA Canyon Leader Skills Checklist

OBJECTIVE: *To be effective in the safe leadership of a canyoneering group, competent in mitigating technical challenges, confident in environmental/situational risk assessment, and capable in an emergency.*

NOTE: *Skills Checklists are cumulative in nature. Students must know all the skills from the 'Core', 'Aspirant', and the 'Asst. CL' Checklists in addition to the skills listed here.*

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

ASSESSOR'S NAME: _____

RECOMMENDATION: ___PASS ___CONDITIONAL PASS ___NO PASS

	DATE	SCORE
Anchors		
Understand correct placement of fixed artificial anchors (Bolts) considering rock type and quality, bolt selection (i.e. Bolt type (glue-in vs. expansion, diameter, length).		
Construct, evaluate and rig chock anchors (chock stones/logs, knot chocks). Explain the pros and cons to using knot chock anchors.		
Safely Rig and use transient anchors including back up and test (Pot Shots, Sand Trap, hooks).		
Core Rope Work		
Demonstrate proper techniques for multi-pitch rappels; security, sequencing, rope management.		
Tension a guide rope: (a) at the top with piggyback system using mechanical advantage or counter-weight, (b) at the bottom using an appropriately set human anchor.		
Set up and use a rappel deviation (aka redirect).		
Set up and use combination rappel-lower to avoid multi-pitch rappel or dynamic edge protection (utilizing hands free backup).		
Set up and use "tail up" retrievable rigging systems (i.e. fiddle stick) with backup. Plan for contingencies, such as someone stuck on rappel (i.e. top rope belay, rescue rope on standby). Explain pros and cons of 'tail up' rigging and identify situations where is should or should not be employed.		
Set up and use retrievable rigging systems for LMAR; (a) retrievable webbing, (b) macrame/CEM. Use secure rigging system for all and backup/test for LMAR.		
Perform controlled rappel free hanging and/or up to 300'+ - Adding friction mid-rappel; communication - radios; hanging packs.		

	DATE	SCORE
Rescue Rigging and Rescue		
Describe and demonstrate an understanding of how various rigging and belay systems can facilitate or hinder rescue.		
Demonstrate multiple ways to create a Progress Capture Device (PCD) for hauling systems.		
Demonstrate basic understanding of mechanical advantage systems using pulleys for hauling. Understand and explain how various haul systems can increase or decrease the load held by the anchor and amount of effort required.		
Demonstrate cut and lower rescue system utilizing rescue rope for someone stuck on a rope that is rigged double-strand. Use hands free backup (i.e. friction hitch) when lowering.		
Convert static twin rope rigging (e.g stone knot) to lower. Use hands free backup (i.e. friction hitch) when lowering.		
Convert tail-up rigging (e.g. fiddlestick) to lower utilizing rescue rope. Use hands free backup (i.e. friction hitch) when lowering.		
Perform a pick-off rescue of a person stuck on rope utilizing a second rescue rope, including the use of a self-belay.		
Perform a pick-off rescue of a person stuck on rope without utilizing a second rescue rope, descending the subject's tensioned rope. Include the use of a self-belay.		
Demonstrate from-the-bottom-rescue, ascending the subject's rope from below, passing the person to a position above them, then lowering them to the ground.		
Demonstrate the use of guide line, track line or tag line when hauling or lowering to hold subject away from the wall. Identify the risks of using tag lines and strategies for mitigating those risks.		
Demonstrate improvised patient carries that utilize one carrier and multiple carriers.		
Canyon Leadership		
Give initial safety briefing which includes: a) Medical/pre-existing conditions; b) Weather; c) PLB usage d) First Aid Kit location; e) Egress plan.		
Manage participant fearful of rappelling (from top).		
Deal with participant fearful of down climbing / exposed traversing.		
Give pertinent/timely in-canyon safety/technical instruction for task at hand: a) Downclimbing; b) Rappelling; c) Belaying d) Partner Capture; e) Marginal Anchors; f) Swimming.		
Wilderness First Aid - perform: a) Immobilize potential back/neck injury (do not move); b) Stabilize patient, minor injury & Vertical Evacuation.		

	DATE	SCORE
Class A/B Canyons — Pothole Escape		
Escaping a pothole using counter-weight techniques. Deploy counter weights - Pack toss and/or Pot Shots		
Escaping a pothole using counter-weight techniques. Safely ascend multiple ropes simultaneously.		
Escaping a pothole using counter-weight techniques - Pass the pothole lip out.		
Class C Canyons — Core Skills		
Jump into pool and moving water, 10 ft max identify hazards/depth, correct body position.		
Swim for 6 minutes without floatation.		
Hold breath for 20 seconds underwater.		

Recommendations After Training

- Practice technical skills in low-risk conditions, such as on clean and low angle “slab” type environments or on vertical terrain with an effective Top or Bottom (Fireman’s) Belay or Self Belay.
- Rescue skills are necessary skills we hope we never need to use. We must have the discipline to practice the skills so we can draw upon them in those rare moments when they are needed.



ACA Assistant Pro Guide Skills Checklist

OBJECTIVE: *To become competent and thorough with pre-trip preparation, confident with basic technical challenges, effectively teach / coach / manage clients with continued expansion of personal safety awareness, plus the development of client guiding and assessment techniques.*

NOTE: *Skills Checklists are cumulative in nature. Students must know all the skills from the 'Core', 'Aspirant', and 'Asst. CL' Checklists in addition to the skills listed here.*

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

ASSESSOR'S NAME: _____

RECOMMENDATION: ___PASS ___CONDITIONAL PASS ___NO PASS

	DATE	SCORE
Logistics / Safety / Communication		
Effectively communicate desired actions from participants and reiterate/back-up Lead Guide instructions.		
Provide participants with on-demand safety / instruction briefings for task at hand.		
Perform consistent and timely Buddy Checks.		
Perform efficient Gear sequencing / management / transition.		
Identify most efficient canyon egress point(s).		
Technical Knowledge & Abilities		
Successfully perform <u>ALL ITEMS</u> from the ACA Canyon Leader 1, Aspirant, & Core Skills Checklists.		
Core Rope Work		
Demonstrate proper techniques for multi-pitch rappels; security, sequencing, rope management.		
Perform controlled rappel free hanging and/or up to 300'+ - Adding friction mid-rappel; communication - radios; hanging packs.		
"Go First" Assess- rope length, evaluate rappel for loose debris, abrasion points, slippery areas and safe belay locations. Estimate optimal friction setting for guests.		

	DATE	SCORE
Belaying		
Demonstrate proper bottom belay (Firemans belay).		
Set up and use a top-rope belay system.		
Demonstrate proper hip belay.		
Demonstrate and use proper belay commands / verbal communication techniques.		
Participant Coaching / Teaching		
Perform assisted Hand Holding: pushing, pulling, grips up and down.		
Partner Capture		
Perform partner capture techniques & sequencing from the a) Top b) Bottom of a Down Climb.		
Rescue / Assistance		
Swim Rescue: free a tangled participant in water.		
Demonstrate throwing and use of tag lines to a distressed swimmer.		
Confidently rescue a struggling/drowning participant.		
Rescue person / recover gear stuck in mud.		
Manage group while Lead Guide attends to another group needing help.		
Canyon Leadership		
Manage fearful downclimb traverse.		
Communicate pertinent information to Lead Guide.		
Problem Solving Scenarios		
Scenario 1: Calm a distressed down climbing participant.		
Scenario 2: Talk down a panicking rappeler.		
Scenario 3: Lower Rappel on-belay from below.		
Scenario 4: Take over group for injured Lead Guide.		
Class A/B Canyons — Pothole Escape		
Escaping a pothole using counter-weight techniques. Deploy counter weights - Pack toss and/or Pot Shots		
Escaping a pothole using counter-weight techniques. Safely ascend multiple ropes simultaneously.		
Escaping a pothole using counter-weight techniques - Pass the pothole lip out.		

Class C Canyons — Core Skills

Jump into pool and moving water, 10 ft max identify hazards/depth, correct body position.		
Swim for 6 minutes without floatation.		
Hold breath for 20 seconds underwater.		

Recommendations After Training

- Practice technical skills in low-risk conditions, such as on clean and low angle “slab” type environments or on vertical terrain with an effective Top or Bottom (Fireman’s) Belay.
- Students should descend intermediate to advanced canyons with competent mentors, taking on progressively more anchor, rigging and problem-solving responsibilities.



ACA Lead Pro Guide Skills Checklist

OBJECTIVE: *To become competent and thorough with pre-trip preparation, confident with basic technical challenges, effectively teach / coach / manage clients with continued expansion of personal safety awareness, plus the development of client guiding and assessment techniques.*

NOTE: *Skills Checklists are cumulative in nature. Students must know all the skills from the 'Core', 'Aspirant', 'Asst. CL', 'CL', and 'Asst. Guide' Checklists in addition to the skills listed here.*

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

ASSESSOR'S NAME: _____

RECOMMENDATION: PASS CONDITIONAL PASS NO PASS

	DATE	SCORE
Pre-Trip Preparations		
Effectively assess and/or perform each of the following items:		
a.) Participants potential physical & mental capabilities (Group Dynamics).		
b.) Participants current condition (sleep? Eat?).		
c.) Current Weather / Environmental Conditions / Forecast.		
d.) Current Canyon Access / Traveling Conditions.		
e.) Condition of Emergency Communication Device(s).		
f.) Guide Gear Check(s) (Ropes, Technical Gear, First Aid).		
Pre-Trip Safety Briefing		
Provide a comprehensive pre-canyon group safety briefing that includes:		
a.) Guide Introduction.		
b.) Head-to-Toe Medical.		
c.) Trip Description (Describe Basic Canyoneering & Environment).		
d.) Instruct participants in use of emergency communication devices (PLB, Radio, Local SAR; Emergency Contacts).		
In Canyon Safety		
Communicate Group Start Location (via personal locating beacon).		
Perform Guest Gear-up (Harness, Helmet, Clothing).		
Know and Explain Canyon Beta for applicable canyon (approach, canyon, & exit).		
Describe "In Case of Emergency" strategy.		

	DATE	SCORE
Teach, model, and effectively coach proper hand grips (pushing/pulling) & foot placement.		
Provide instruction and teach participants to downclimb.		
Give Rope / Webbing / Anchor & Rigging Introduction.		
Provide instruction and teach participants basic rappelling.		
Demonstrate function of and purpose of belaying.		
Perform timely in canyon safety / technical instruction for task at hand.		
Perform consistent and timely 'Buddy Checks'.		
Demonstrate effective group & gear sequencing of (a) rappels (b) downclimbs (c) water obstacles (d) constricted spaces.		
Demonstrate personal safety while 'working' in canyon.		
In-Canyon Group Basic & Dynamic Needs		
Effectively manage and/or mitigate the following:		
a.) Children / Parent relationships.		
b.) A participant that is (a) Angry (b) Bossy (c) Bored.		
c.) Lowering group 'emotion'.		
d.) Group breaks & re-starts (i.e. lunchtime; bathroom, rest).		
e.) Group 'transitions'.		
f.) Refocus a tired group.		
g.) Increase / decrease group rate of progress.		
Technical Knowledge & Abilities		
Successfully perform ALL ITEMS from the ACA Asst. Guide, Canyon Leader, Asst. Canyon Leader, Aspirant, & Core Skills Checklists.		
Rescue / Assistance		
Identify most efficient canyon egress point(s).		
Demonstrate throwing and use of tag lines to a distressed swimmer.		
Free an entangled / attached rappeler in water.		
Confidently rescue a struggling/drowning participant.		
Rescue person / recover gear stuck in mud.		
Manage encountering another group needing help.		

	DATE	SCORE
Problem Solving Scenarios		
Scenario 1: Talking down a panicked rappeler.		
Scenario 2: Motivating a tired participant.		
Scenario 3: Managing group reluctance.		
Scenario 4: Freeing Jammed Rappel Device.		
Scenario 5: Recognize and treat symptoms for (a) hyperthermia (b) hypothermia.		
Scenario 6: Manage Claustrophobic Guest.		
Scenario 7: Evacuate an injured participant from canyon.		

Recommendations After Training

- Practice technical skills in low-risk conditions, such as on clean and low angle “slab” type environments or on vertical terrain with an effective Top or Bottom (Fireman’s) Belay.
- Students should descend intermediate to advanced canyons with competent mentors, taking on progressively more anchor, rigging and problem-solving responsibilities.