

Levels of a paddling event

Nominated sea leaders determine the level of difficulty of a paddling event based on their assessment of the environment and forecasts of ever changing conditions.

Paddlers initially self-assess to determine whether an event matches their skill level. This decision is arbitrated by the sea leader's assessment of the conditions and an understanding of a paddler's skill level. A sea leader can also vary the level of the paddle at any time dependent on changing conditions. To enable a member to paddle one level above their current award they should assure the sea leader that a Sea Skills Award holder will directly support them on the paddle.

Self-Assessment

Paddlers are asked to self-assess based on the following questions, for instance.

1. Can I cope with the weather and sea conditions? Am I going to be safe if the conditions deteriorate?
2. Can I maintain the group speed?
3. Am I able to paddle the distance necessary to complete the trip?
4. Am I able to carry out self and assisted rescues?

Conditions Assessment

The table below aids in determining the level attributed to a paddling event.

Award	Conditions	Location
Basic Skills (AP)	Flat waters	Sheltered waters
Introduction To Sea Skills Award	Winds below 17kn at sea Breaking (white capping) waves Sea up to 0.5m Surf to 0.5m	Outside of estuaries, harbours, embayments or other sheltering reefs or islands Areas of exposed coastline that are simple, not involving overfalls, tidal races, difficult landings or open crossings Maximum of 1.5 nautical miles from shore
Sea Skills Award	Winds below 26kn at sea. Breaking (white capping) waves Sea up to 1.0m Surf to 1.0m	Outside of estuaries, harbours, embayments or other sheltering reefs or islands Areas of exposed coastline that are simple, not involving overfalls or tidal races Difficult landings or open crossings may be included Maximum of 5 nautical miles from shore.