

NACK FAQs

ON TRAINING:

Do I have to take NACK training to be a NACK member?

Training is not required to be a NACK member. NACK encourages all its members to develop skills needed to participate in club trips at their desired level. We think NACK training is the most efficient way to meet these goals. Not all members require training to meet their Assessment objectives and there is no requirement that training has to be taken through NACK.

Do I have to take NACK training to get a NACK Skill Certification?

NACK Assessments are based on ACA Skills Criteria. Training with an ACA certified Instructor helps insure success in understanding and meeting these requirements, but members are not required to take any specific training prior to their Assessment. It should also be pointed out that training alone is not sufficient to guarantee your Certification. Candidates are encouraged to read NACK Certification criteria, acquire basic equipment and practice to become proficient in the indicated skills.

Why doesn't NACK offer training for free to members?

NACK uses only ACA Certified Instructors in its training programs. The training and testing required for such certification is difficult and expensive. When using a Certified Instructor you can be sure that you are getting the most up-to-date skills from an Instructor that has been trained in both skills and teaching methods. There are many ways to access training and members are not required to patronize NACK Instructors. In paddling as in many other pursuits, you get what you pay for and goals achieved with little personal investment are usually not valued.

How can I become a NACK Instructor?

Any Instructor certified by the ACA may apply for an Instructional Membership in NACK. Upon verification of credentials with the ACA the Training Director can recommend their name to the Board for approval as a member of the Training Committee. At the discretion of the Training Director a new member may be asked to complete a period of mentoring or co-teaching prior to joining the Training Committee.

Becoming an ACA Instructor requires skill and commitment. It generally starts with an Instructor Development Workshop (IDW) where teaching skills are developed along with basic modeling skills. Depending on the candidate one or more IDWs may be needed to prepare for the Instructor Certification Exam (ICE). Upon successful completion of this Assessment the candidate will pay a fee to join the ACA Safety, Education and Instruction Council (SEIC) after which an Instructor card will be issued. ACA offers IDWs and ICEs at various times and places across the country. For more information contact the NACK Training Director, our Divisional Instructor Facilitator (DIF) or the ACA SEIC Director.

ON ASSESSMENT:

Do I have to pass a Skills Assessment to be a participating member of NACK?

Members do not need a Skills Assessment to attend most meetings or serve on most committees. Members do not need a Skills Assessment to participate in off-water activities and events. In order to participate in on-water (ACA Sanctioned) events, paddles and activities members must demonstrate a skills proficiency at the appropriate level. The easiest and

cheapest way to achieve this is through a NACK Skills Assessment that is free to most members. NACK will also accept appropriate certification from outside the club such as an ACA Skills Certificate or an ACA Instructor Card. Members may also offer other certificates to the Training Committee for review.

Does NACK offer free Assessment training?

One free Assessment per year is offered free to each member at the level they choose to challenge. It is generally not possible to take an Assessment without also getting some training, but it is not advisable to expend ones free Assessment without proper preparation. NACK will from time to time schedule Peer Practices where the necessary skills may be honed with other members offering assistance - these are generally cost-free. ACA Certified training in basic skills will also be scheduled through our Training Committee to meet member needs and may secured at attractive group rates. It is also possible to use excess work credits to offset training costs. While we hope to access the best quality training for our members at cost-effective rates, it is not our philosophy or intent to offer free training.

Do I have to take my Assessment with other members? Can I be assessed privately?

Free NACK Skills Assessments are conducted under group conditions. Any member may choose to opt out of the free Assessment program and arrange to work privately with a NACK approved Assessor to take Certification. NACK will also seek to arrange opportunities for members to take ACA Skills Assessments that will automatically confer an equivalent NACK Certification. These options are at the discretion of the member and cannot be subsidized by NACK.

Do I have to go out and buy all the equipment needed for my Assessment?

Each member is generally assumed own certain equipment to complement a skills rating if you plan to paddle at that level. For purposes of completing an Assessment members may borrow or rent some or all of the required equipment. Any equipment used in an Assessment is assumed to belong to, and be familiar to the candidate. NACK expects that participants will be properly equipped on NACK trips. Any participant found lacking important safety equipment may be deferred by the Trip Leader.

I don't have a fiberglass kayak, should I borrow my friends boat to take my Assessment?

It is best to take your Assessment in the boat you will paddle on NACK trips, but candidates may use any craft suitable for the level for their Assessment. If you have a plastic recreational kayak you may still take your Assessment at a level appropriate to the use of that boat. You will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the skills and equipment appropriate to your chosen craft. Any borrowed equipment will be judged as your own. All craft used in NACK Assessments or on NACK trips must pass an inspection to verify that it is in good condition and has proper flotation capabilities.

How can I become an NACK Assessor?

Assessors have a critical function within the club and are expected to demonstrate a high degree of proficiency, knowledge and discrimination with regard to paddling skills. Upon working with the club as an Approved Instructor for a period of time a member may apply to the Training Director for advancement to Assessor level. A period of mentoring will take place during which time the Assessor Candidate will assist in Assessments and have their skills evaluated. The Training Director will recommend potential Assessors to the Board for approval.

ON TRIPS:

If I have passed my Assessment, can I lead a NACK paddle?

After passing your Skills Assessment you may participate in NACK paddling trips. To lead a trip members must first complete NACK Leader Training, or show evidence of taking the ACA Trip Leader Training. Leaders must then mentor with a current Leader and pass a Leader Assessment. Members may avoid these requirements if they show Certification as an ACA Instructor at the appropriate level. Members are welcome to submit other, similar credentials for review by the Training Committee.

How do NACK trip leaders know what level a member has been assessed at?

Subsequent to Assessment members are provided identification in the form of a notated membership card and/or certificate affirming their skill level. More quickly, certified members are added to the resource list provided to each NACK trip leader. If you plan to participate in a paddle immediately after your Assessment, be sure to let your Assessor know so that a temporary certification can be provided.

I joined NACK for paddling trips. How many trips will NACK schedule during the season?

There is no limit on the number of sanctioned trips that NACK can schedule. NACK is working to develop a membership with certified skills and cadre of trained Leaders that will work together to arrange a regular schedule of interesting trips. The best way to insure a rich Trip Schedule is to develop your skills and help plan or lead trips.

Can members of my family come on trips? Can I bring my dog?

We encourage family participation in NACK. All trip participants must demonstrate skill certification at a level appropriate to the trip rating in order to attend. The only exception may be certain trips that are organized to be "Non-Rated".

Pet participation on trips is at the discretion of the Trip Leader and must be verified in advance. Members may then bring a pet on a trip if pet and owner have passed a special Assessment and the pet is equipped with an approved PFD (Pet Flotation Device). The safety of any pet and the pet's behavior toward others on the trip is the direct responsibility of the owner.

Can I bring my cell phone on a trip?

Participants are encouraged to bring emergency communication devices on trips of any rating. Such devices should be waterproof or contained in a secure waterproof container. NACK is not responsible for damage to your personal property while attending any NACK function. On NACK paddles all participants are considered important assets to the group. Operating a cell phone for personal calls during an on-water activity is considered distracting and compromises the safety of the participant and the group.

Will NACK supply boats and gear to members on NACK paddles?

On NACK trips, unlike commercial tours, all participants are responsible for group safety. Upon receiving a skill certification each member is assumed to own and bring certain basic equipment on all paddling trips. NACK does not maintain a fleet of boats. NACK Instructors will sometimes have equipment to loan or rent to members for training purposes.

Do I have to wear a PFD, helmet or a spray skirt on NACK paddles?

It is a good idea to check gear needs with the Trip Leader prior to any on-water trip

The US Coast Guard requires that each boater have access to a PFD when on the water. The American Canoe Association as part of our Paddle America Club agreement mandates that members wear a PFD while on the water. NACK Certified trip members are trained to wear a PFD that is properly and securely fitted so that it provides optimum safety in the event of a capsized recovery. NACK Trip Leaders are trained to check and verify proper PFD use and fit and may defer any participant that is not considered a safe member of the group.

A spray skirt is appropriate for any sea kayak and most recreational kayaks. It may be dispensed with in certain flat-water environments without compromise to group safety, but will likely be required by NACK trip leaders on AFW and higher trips. A helmet is required by ACA and NACK for any paddle involving white water or surf. It may also be appropriate in other conditions at the discretion of the Trip Leader

Why would I want to become a NACK Trip Leader?

Trip Leaders are highly regarded in the organization. Trip Leaders are members who have demonstrated a high degree of paddling proficiency. They have also shown the willingness to complete higher training and advanced Assessment in order to accept a degree of responsibility for others on the water. NACK Leaders will help plan and determine the timing and location of NACK trips in order to best fit their own schedules. NACK leaders may be able to use NACK Not-For-Profit status in order to offset some costs of paddling trips.

How can I become a NACK Leader?

Members wishing to become leaders should make their interest known to the Training Director. With sufficient interest Leadership training can be scheduled. Upon completion a period of mentoring will occur during which the candidate will work as backup with other leaders and eventually plan and guide trips with assistance. Eventually one or more trips will be scheduled and led as Assessment trips before completing Certification.

ON DISCOUNTS:

As a member of NACK am I entitled to any training discounts?

NACK encourages training for members of all levels and attempts to arrange training from Certified Instructors at competitive rates group rates. NACK Instructors will often volunteer discounts because NACK represents a community of paddlers interested in personal development. The best way to insure cost effective training is encourage more members to participate in training sessions. This will help to further reduce individual costs.

Can I get a discount on private lessons through NACK?

Any discount on private lessons must be negotiated between the Instructor and the student. NACK recognizes that private training can be effective, but generally cannot use group bargaining power to secure favorable rates. Some skills are difficult to effectively teach except under group conditions.

As a member of NACK am I entitled to discounts on paddling equipment?

There is no guarantee, but the power of NACK as a Not-For-Profit organization can often be used to gain discounts for members at local outfitters. In addition, our affiliation with the ACA provides certain discounts to our members. Frequenting these retailers will help insure continuation of

such programs. If you are interested in working to develop discount programs for our members please contact a NACK Officer.

ON WORK COMMITMENT:

I don't have much free time. Can I make a donation to NACK in lieu of work hours?

The work commitment is set up as a method to help insure member participation and build a broad base of support of the club. For the health of the organization it is considered best to have as many active members as possible. The work commitment is voluntary and failure to contribute hours currently carries no sanction. Neither has the Board approved the possibility of a buy-out program. Both of these options are under consideration.

How will the work committee know of my work hours if I don't report them?

They will not know. Activity leaders are not required to monitor and report work hours. All members are responsible for reporting their hours to the Work Committee Chairman. Credits not reported will not be logged to your account.

Is there a time limit on reporting work hours?

There is no time limit, but work hours should be reported promptly. NACK endeavors to maintain good records, but hours from months or years previous may not be easy to verify and could fail to be accepted. NACK allows members to bank work hours. If you have lots of free time one year, help us out in case you get busy in the future.

Does attending a meeting count toward work hours?

Simply attending a meeting or participating on a trip does not count as work hours. But acting as approved backup on a trip, or helping organize or run a meeting can put hours in the bank. If you are not sure if an work activity meets club purposes please consult the Work Committee Chairperson.

I have a work project that is beyond my capabilities. Should I just keep quiet about it?

Anyone can submit ideas for a work project to the Work Committee Chairman, the Executive Committee or to the Board. If you have an idea for a NACK project please let us know. If it is appropriate and fits the schedule we will help you set up a team to work on it.

MORE INFORMATION:

Where can I go for more information about NACK:

The best place to access a wealth of information about NACK is the club website at: <http://www.GetTheNACK.org>. You may also seek information from the Membership Chairman, other Committee chairs, the Executive Committee or the Board of Directors.