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River Rescue Certification Course for Professionals

The **River Rescue Certification for Professionals (RRC-P)** is an internationally recognized certification designed by Professional Boaters, for Professional Boaters. Built for river guides and kayakers who spend a significant portion of their careers on the water, this course assumes a solid foundation of boating and basic rescue skills — and takes your professional certification to the next level.

This curriculum is fast-paced, scenario-based, and physically demanding. You'll develop sharp decision-making skills under pressure, with an emphasis on quick reaction time, situational awareness, and a thorough understanding of rescue options and available resources. Skills testing focuses on knowing your limits, executing rope skills with confidence, and performing effective rescues as part of a team. The course also includes a dedicated night operation. Upon completion, a task book outlines straightforward pathways to maintain your certification through continuing education and testing options.

Prerequisites: Current River Rescue Certification, Current River Guide or Kayak Instructor, and excellent rescue skills, including the use of throw bags, basic knots, and anchors.

WHAT TO BRING!

For the water:

- **Drysuit or Full Wetsuit!** Drysuits are always recommended because we spend so much time getting in and out of the water, and the weather is always variable. Drysuits can be rented from: Pacific River Supply (510-223-3675) will ship you the drysuit by UPS and you only pay for the days you use it. We **highly recommend this option** as we have NEVER had any problems with PRS drysuits!!
- **PFD:** Type 3 or Type 5 with whistle and knife (knife optional)
- **Helmet:** Lightweight swiftwater or climbing helmet.
- **Footwear:** Hard-soled wetsuit booties or good shoes for walking in the river and on the banks with wool socks and/or wetsuit socks



- **Personal Throw Bag**
- **2 Locking Carabiners**
- **Wetsuit gloves** (optional)
- **Food and water:** Lunch, snacks, and water for each day!
- **Extra warm clothes**
- **Kayak and Paddle (optional)**

NOTE: This course is a good time to figure out what you want to add or subtract to your personal gear. Bring what you would have with you as a guide or kayaker.

FULL IMMERSION!

Please plan for very active days and homework at night. We integrate the classroom materials throughout the course, and you will be in the water a lot during class. We will make the course as scenario- and case study-based as possible.

We will emphasize:

- Using basic access skills such as boating, wading, swimming, and throw bagging
- Identifying hazards and trying to prevent accidents from ever happening
- Carrying basic safety and rescue gear, and being competent in its use
- Knowing basic rope rescue skills for use in access, gear retrieval, etc.
- Understanding basic search components
- Improving awareness of safety skills in the advanced river environment
- Developing and practicing advanced rescue techniques
- Understanding and practicing structure in advanced emergency situations
- Understanding your own strengths and weaknesses and performing a basic skills test

Please feel free to let us know what is most important to you as we go through the training, and we will make it as relevant as possible to your whitewater interests.



OVERALL BASIC OUTLINE:

- Introductions and paperwork
- A new way of thinking about rescue
- Understanding: LAST: Locate, Access, Stabilize, and Transport
- Review of skills and options:
 - Advanced swimming: aggressive, defensive, barrel roll, swiftwater entry
 - Advanced throw bagging, rope management, decision making, etc.
 - Rescue jacket uses and self-rescue, live bait, kayaker extraction, etc.
 - Wading and hands-on stabilization
 - River rescue scenarios with hands-on practice
 - Knots, Hitches, Anchors Review: What You Need to Know!
 - Advanced principles of ropes in river rescue
 - Application of simple principles in effective ways
 - Paddling onto the scene – organization and priorities of the rescue
 - Kayaker, rafter, cats, etc., approach
- Retrieval of people and gear
- Effective search
- Evacuation and decision-making process in the river rescue
- Procedures for extrication/ evacuation
- Advanced pin/ rescue scenarios

SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE SECTION

The skills assessment evaluates your ability to perform rescue techniques in realistic conditions — not just your knowledge of them. This includes access and scene assessment, patient stabilization, and evacuation. Equal weight is given to technical proficiency and self-awareness; knowing your strengths and limitations is as critical as the skills themselves.

Each section is timed at the instructor's discretion. The focus is on strategy and sound planning, not speed or distance. You'll be assessed on your attention to personal safety and the safety of others throughout every task. A reasonable level of fitness is expected.

River guides may rig their boat however they choose, provided it is safe and consistent with how they would rig for an actual river run — for example, using a thwart strap or hand hold for self-rescue. This flexibility is intentional: the goal is to prepare you for real-world rescue under realistic conditions, and to help you understand your own limits in that context.

All skills are practiced during the days leading up to the assessment. These include, but are not limited to, the following:



- Good access and assessment skills
- Ability to stabilize a scene
- Evacuate a patient
- Swimming
- Self rescue with craft of choice
- Throw bagging
- Basic technical rope skills
- Ability to operate as part of a team
- Knots
- Anchors
- Raft flip drills
- Safety Talk

Skills testing includes pass/fail components, with all results documented in the task book at the end of the RRC workbook. The task book also tracks continuing education, workshops, and certification renewal. Upon successful completion of the skills assessment, students will receive their **RRC-PRO certificate**.

The outline will evolve based on the focus of the participants. Our goal is to give you as much as you can handle in a couple of days and still keep it fun and supportive. We will integrate many scenarios based on the swiftwater situations you may face as rafters or kayakers.

Please feel free to contact us directly if you have any questions before the class! Thanks for registering for this class, and we look forward to seeing you on the river soon!

