# 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) Klemheist, (b) Asymmetric Prusik (with a 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 cons 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, rigging releasable, lowering first person, 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. | | |
| Set up and use Static Courtesy Rigging to facilitate trouble-free rope retrieval. Explain purpose, proper usage, and application. | | |
| 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.  https://www.canyoneering.net/docs/signals.pdf | | |
| Use Radios to communicate verbal commands for belaying, rappelling. | | |

|  | DATE | SCORE |
|---|---|---|
| **On Rope Techniques, Companion Rescue** | | |
| 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 rappeller via Bottom Belay. | | |
| Rappel with pack securely hanging from harness. | | |
| Demonstrate safe rappel start off of extended courtesy rigging. | | |
| Safely and effectively zip line gear over/around obstacle. Describe scenarios for usage. | | |
| Shift Rappeler from rappel line to top rope belay line. | | |
| Release contingency block and 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). | | |
| Perform controlled rappel up to 200'+, adding friction mid-rappel, communication with 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, Jumping, Waterfalls** | | |
| Swim 50 yards with gear, without floatation. | | |
| Jumping into water (Max distance 8ft./8ft. Min depth) identify hazards/depth check, correct body position. | | |
| Describe and safely demonstrate basic Waterfall Rappelling Techniques. | | |
| Describe basic waterfall/stream hazards such as foot entrapments, strainers, siphons, undercuts, recirculating currents, rope entanglement and appropriate methods for mitigating / dealing with them. | | |

## 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.

• Increase technical skill sets, expand situational awareness, and begin introduction to Canyoneering Leadership all through skill practice sessions, workshops, and mentored canyoneering opportunities.