



## ACA Sovereign Canyoneer Skills Checklist

**Goals:** *Train to become a competent and confident canyoneer, capable of making informed choices to optimize safety and experience.*

**NOTE:** *Skills Checklists are cumulative in nature. A successful Sovereign student will be capable in all skills from the 'Core' and Sovereign skills Checklist.*

STUDENT'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

|  | DATE |
|--|------|
| <b>Navigation, Beta, Weather</b>   |      |
| Use GPS to determine current location, mark waypoints, and navigate to waypoints. Share GPS location coordinates.                        |      |
| Evaluate & Assess canyon watershed using Google Earth or topo map. Correctly identify watershed size and orientation.                    |      |
| Describe "high ground" and identify possible canyon escape/exit routes.  |      |
| Research and Interpret Online Canyon information Resources. Canyon rating and most current conditions.                                   |      |
| Use weather.gov or equivalent weather information website. Find high-low temps, wind speeds, precipitation forecast.                     |      |
| Find & Interpret local weather radar, water vapor loops & infrared satellite imagery   |      |
| Identify and assess flash flooding risks associated with a selected canyon. Size, primary surrounding terrain's material, and condition. |      |
| <b>Canyon First Aid / Evacuation</b>   |      |
| Maintain personal safety and patient safety at all times.  |      |
| Perform Basic First Aid patient Assessment   |      |
| Treat for shock using standard techniques.   |      |
| Immobilize/Stabilize lower/upper extremity injury.   |      |
| Identify & Effectively treat for Heat and/or Cold Injuries (Hyperthermia / Hypothermia)  |      |
| Describe basic Self-Evacuation. Outline how to send for appropriate help if needed.  |      |
| <b>Emergency Response</b>  |      |
| Activate EMS system, Non-Life threatening Scenario (Personal assistance, Local SAR Emergency Contacts).                                  |      |
| Activate EMS system, Life Threatening or Time Critical Scenario (Local SAR; Medivac).  |      |
| <b>Knot Craft</b>  |      |
| Tie and inspect; Frost knot.   |      |
| Tie and inspect Alpine butterfly.  |      |
| Tie and inspect Directional Figure Eight.  |      |
| Tie and inspect MMO (Munter-Mule-Overhand)   |      |
| Tie and inspect Asymmetric Prusik (with a VT Prusik or equivalent).  |      |

|   | DATE |
|---|------|
| <b>Anchors</b>  |      |
| Understand and apply basic principles of anchor identification, construction techniques, and associated friction. Using DEAR acronym (Dry, Efficient, Accessible, Rope Retrievability). |      |
| Demonstrate techniques to safely back-up and test an anchor before use.   |      |
| Identify, assess and rig a single point anchor using a simple loops and cinching hitches (Girth, wrap 2 / pull 1).  |      |
| Identify, construct, rig, and evaluate/test multi-point natural anchors using EARNEST.  |      |
| Safely Construct dead man anchors (using rock/stick).   |      |
| Set up and use human anchors. Explain scenario for use and proper sequencing. Associated risks.   |      |
| <b>Rope Retrieval</b>   |      |
| Identify and Mitigate standard rope retrieval challenges with Courtesy rigging.   |      |
| Efficiently Lock off and extend Courtesy Rigging Hands Free   |      |
| Safely Anchor pull side of partially retrieved stuck rope. Ascend rappel side of a partially retrieved rope (rappel side)   |      |
| <b>Rigging</b>  |      |
| Set up and use Dynamic Rigging system using blocks and/or Munter-Mule-Overhand (MMO). Describe pros and associated risks of both and steps to mitigate accident or injury.              |      |
| Set up and use Static block. Describe pros and risks of using static blocks and steps to avoid accident or injury.  |      |
| Set up and use double rope / Toss 'n Go rigging. Describe specific limitations and associated risks.  |      |
| Describe methods for safely setting initial rope lengths for A,B and C rated rappels.   |      |
| Demonstrate how to safely and efficiently reset / adjust rope length.   |      |
| Identify and demonstrate how to change abrasion points to protect rope/webbing from damaging edges.   |      |
| Set up and use Hand Line to assist with safe low angle ascending-descending.  |      |
| Set up and use a retrievable safety line to protect a traverse.   |      |
| Set up and use Dynamic Courtesy Rigging to protect exposed rappel starts. Explain associated risks.   |      |
| <b>Belaying</b>   |      |
| Set up and use a Self-belay using a VT (auto-block). Below and above rappel device. Understand and explain the pros/cons of each. Describe specific risks associated with auto-blocks.  |      |
| Set up and perform a top-rope belay system with hands free back-up A.) Hip belay 40ft or less. B.) Fixed anchor 40ft+.  |      |
| Belay a climber-downclimber, with hands free back-up. a.) Hip belay, 15ft or less, b.) Fixed anchor 15ft plus   |      |
| Arrest out-of-control rappeler via Bottom Belay.  |      |
| Perform a Dynamic Belay (Lowering while maintaining belay).   |      |
| <b>Signals / Communication</b>  |      |
| Understand and use proper verbal for commands for belaying, rappelling, and up/downclimbing.  |      |
| Understand and use proper whistle signals.  |      |
| Understand and use proper hand signals.   |      |
| Use Radios to communicate verbally.   |      |

|   | DATE |
|---|------|
| <b>On Rope Techniques, Companion Rescue</b>   |      |
| Perform 'Partner Checks' (Safety check) at initial gear-up and at every rappel.   |      |
| Ascend a fixed rope using friction hitches; single strand and 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. Explain safety concerns and mitigation.  |      |
| Tension and tie off a guide rope at the bottom anchor.  |      |
| Release tensioned Guide line from bottom rigging..  |      |
| Safely sequence zip lining of equipment past obstacles. Describe applications.  |      |
| Perform self rescue from stuck gear mid-rappel.   |      |
| Shift Rappeler from rappel line to top rope belay line.   |      |
| Release contingency rigging and perform controlled lowering of rappeler with hands free backup.   |      |
| Perform controlled rappel up to 250+. Add friction on rappel. Select pack position. Mitigate communication challenges   |      |
| <b>Swimming, Jumping, Waterfalls</b>  |      |
| Swim-float 100ft in full canyoneering gear. No floatation.  |      |
| Jump into pool of water, in full gear. Max distance 8ft. Minimum depth 8ft. Correctly identify hazards and correct body positioning upon entry. *No jumping without 100% safe depth confirmation. Describe job of "DipStick".   |      |
| Describe and safely demonstrate basic Waterfall Rappelling Techniques.  |      |
| Define basic waterfall/stream hazards such as foot entrapments, strainers, siphons, undercuts, recirculating current and rope entanglement. Describe mitigation protocol.   |      |
| <b>Recommendations After Training</b>   |      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice technical skills in low-risk, low angle "slab" type environments, always with a belay. Work in vertical terrain with multiple competent technical partners. Belay at all times!</li> <li>• Gain critical weather forecasting and map reading/orienteering skills whenever possible. Expand situational knowledge and awareness. Volunteer on local SAR, it's a great opportunity to learn and help others!</li> </ul> |      |