



University of Essex



SCUBA Diving Policy

University of Essex

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Document control

Revision	Author	Date	Detail
0.1	Dr Jon Chamberlain, Caroline Smith	15/10/2020	Creation of the document, initial draft and added to template.
1.0			Publication of document in agreement with HSG
1.1	Dr Jon Chamberlain	31/8/2021	Document reviewed subsequent to completion of HSE professional SCUBA course and specific advice received from course tutors.
1.2	Dr Jon Chamberlain	24/10/2023	Role of Deputy Dive Officer defined and added.

Abstract

The aim of this safety policy is to fulfil the University's requirements for the HSE Diving at Work Regulations 1997. This document sets out the responsibilities and requirements of all parties involved in activities covered by these regulations.

Scope

Scope	<p>This safety policy applies to all persons who use self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (SCUBA), are engaged in</p> <p>diving projects where at least one diver participating in the dive is considered to be 'at work' and is associated (employee, student, volunteer or self-employed) with the University of Essex.</p>
Beyond scope	<p>This policy does not apply to the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Surface swimming, snorkelling or diving where breathing is not aided by pressurised air or other gas mixture.▪ Dive projects that require decompression▪ Diving activities where rebreathers are used.▪ Diving carried out for recreational purposes. <p>The UK legal requirements do not apply to operations conducted overseas; however, the principles of this policy should be applied as far as reasonably possible to such diving operations. All national/local requirements for the overseas location where the diving is to take place must be adhered to.</p>
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Health and Safety at Work Act 1974▪ Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999▪ Diving at Work Regulations 1997▪ Approved Codes of Practice for Media, Scientific and Recreational activities▪ Scientific Diving Supervisory Committee (SDSC) http://www.uk-sdsc.com/index.htm▪ The British Diving Safety Group http://www.bds.org/index.htm

Definitions

At Work	The phrase covers divers who dive as part of their duties as an employee and divers who are in business on their own account during the time that they devote themselves to work as a self-employed diver.
Dive	Entering water (or any other liquid) or a chamber in which they are subject to pressure greater than 100 millibars above atmospheric pressure. In order to survive in such an environment they breathe in air or other gas at a pressure greater than atmospheric pressure.
Diving Project	The overall diving job - whether it lasts two hours or two months. It can be made up of one or more diving operations.
Diving Operation	Made up of either a number of dives or a single dive. A diving operation should be that portion of a diving project identified in the diving project plan which one supervisor can safely supervise. One supervisor only must be appointed for each diving operation in writing (email or letter). The relevant ACoP for the diving operation must be identified in the dive plan.
Competence	A combination of training, knowledge and experience which enables a person to participate in a dive operation in a safe manner.
Diver	In this context, a person using open-circuit SCUBA equipment who is part of the minimum dive team requirement for the dive operation.
Participant diver	In this context, a person using open-circuit SCUBA equipment who is taking part in a UoE dive operation but is not considered to be part of the minimum working dive team.
Buddy	A buddy is the term given to a dive partner who in an emergency situation would be available to provide assistance to the other diver.
SCUBA	Self-contained underwater breathing apparatus.

Roles

Role	Responsibility	Reports to
UoE Health and Safety Group	Delegated authority from Council for the implementation of the UoE Health and Safety Policy.	Council
Diving Contractor	The main duties under the Diving Regulations are placed on the diving contractor for the project. The UoE is the diving contractor for any projects in the UK which are organised by the University. Where UoE staff or students take part in diving for another organisation, that organisation is the diving contractor.	HSE
Diving Subgroup	Provide oversight of all UoE diving projects and report to HSG on compliance with statutory and University requirements.	Health and Safety Group
University Dive Officer (UDO)	Ensure HSE standards are enacted in UoE policy. Approve all dive projects on behalf of the Diving Subgroup. Monitor the activities of dive projects. Appointed by the registrar.	Diving Subgroup
Deputy Dive Officer (DDO)	Provides support for UDO, has similar responsibilities for planning and monitoring dive operations and can approve overseas dive projects on behalf of the subgroup where HSE is not in force. Cannot approve UK dive projects. Appointed by the Diving Subgroup.	Diving Subgroup

Role	Responsibility	Reports to
Dive Project Manager (DPM)	Plan the dive project and dive operations, including the risk assessments, contingency plans, emergency procedures and ensuring Dive Supervisor is provided with the documentation. Ensure all equipment is serviced and personnel are competent. Seek approval from UDO before dive project commences and provide a report on completed dive projects. Appoints the Dive Supervisor in writing.	UDO
Dive Supervisor	Ensure the dive operations are conducted in the manner described by the dive project plan. Ensure safety by checking equipment and personnel before dive operations begin. Provide a report on completed dive operations. Appointed in writing by the DPM. Dive supervisor must be competent and qualified for the dives they are supervising.	DPM

The University will provide in writing to the HSE, all particulars required in [Schedule 1 of the Diving at Work Regulations 1997](#) and will inform the HSE of any subsequent changes to the diving activities of the University. This notification will be approved and signed by the Registrar and Secretary.

The University will appoint in writing the University Diving Officer (UDO) who will on a day to day basis manage all diving activities including ensuring that risk assessments are carried out on behalf of the University.

UDO, DPM and Dive Supervisors will all have suitable competence, in line with regulatory requirements, for planning, approving and monitoring dive safety.

Dive Planning

The dive project plan will be written by the DPM. The plan will be assessed and approved by the UDO. A dive project plan should as a minimum include:

Overview of the project

- Details of the diving operations
- Risk Assessment
- First Aid and Emergency provision
- Equipment and dive personnel requirements

The risk assessment should include diving operations and, if relevant, travel to and from the dive destination and the full range of non-diving related risks, such as transporting and manually handling diving equipment and cylinders; hazards from boat traffic, local marine life that might be poisonous or dangerous (jellyfish, sharks).

First Aid

The DPM will be responsible for ensuring that enough people in the diving team are trained to the required standard of first aid (typically the 3-day First Aid at Work course, which must be completed every 3 years). The risk assessment will identify the first-aid equipment required on site and the number of qualified personnel needed to use it. Those who are qualified should not hold other important duties which could conflict with the need to administer first aid in an emergency.

In some instances additional first aid training may be required where remoteness from local emergency medical services means there is a need to maintain life until the emergency medical services can attend or where the diver requiring first aid is inside a hyperbaric compression chamber and medical assistance cannot be provided by normal emergency medical services.

The benefits of therapeutic oxygen to many diving related conditions mean that it should be considered as part of the first aid kit. The diving project plan should record who in the diving team has responsibility for first aid and what type of first-aid equipment is available for the diving project.

The first aid kit and emergency oxygen kit should be checked by the first aid providers before the dive operation begins and reported to the Dive Supervisor who will log that this has been checked.

Emergencies

For each diving project the risk assessment should include a suitable casualty evacuation plan. This should include the arrangements for the emergency recovery of a casualty from the water and their transportation to a hyperbaric chamber or specialist treatment centre. The details of the emergency arrangements should be recorded in the diving project plan. The initial stages of these arrangements should be tested periodically in order to ensure that they are effective.

Divers

All divers participating in dive operations must have suitable competence for the tasks they will be performing and the type of diving and depths they will be working in. The DPM will ensure all qualifications and dive logs are collected and are valid for the particular dive before the dive operations begin and that arrangements have been made for specialist training onsite be conducted to ensure the divers know how all equipment operates, how the dive plan will be conducted and what arrangements are in place for in-water contingencies and emergencies.

Under the Diving at work Regulations (DWR), all divers at work must have a valid certificate of medical fitness to dive, issued by an Approved Medical Examiners of Divers (AMED). It is a legal requirement that an individual must not dive in a diving project if they know of anything, including any illness or medical condition, which makes them unfit to dive. They must provide to the DPM all certificates of medical fitness before they can participate in any dive activities. The Dive Supervisor will ask each diver if they are fit to dive for the dive operation and log their response. In addition, the Dive Supervisor will log any medical events reported by the divers during or after the diving operation.

Dive equipment

The diving project plan should identify the type and amount of equipment required depending on the circumstances of the diving project. Each diver should be supplied with breathing gas which is to a recognised standard, and which is adequate in volume and rate of supply for the specific diving operation. In most circumstances a means of communication between the supervisor and the divers should be provided. Depending on the ACoP, this may be through an attached lifeline with agreed signals, a talk-down, buzz-back adaptation to standard SCUBA gear or full two-way communications using through water or hard wired comms. The Risk Assessment should take this into account.

All dive equipment (including regulators and tanks), whether provided by the University, hired in or provided by individuals, will all have been serviced appropriately and certification of service provided to the DPM before the project commences.

Equipment requires regular inspection, maintenance and testing between servicing to ensure that it is fit for use and not damaged or suffering from deterioration. All equipment should be checked by a competent person immediately before use. Divers must carry out a pre-dive visual inspection and check of their equipment. Any concerns or equipment failures must be reported to the Dive Supervisor who will log the issue.

Project Management

The DPM will provide the project plan and risk assessment to the Diving Supervisor. The Diving Supervisor will be responsible for ensuring the plan is enacted and any deviations or unforeseen circumstances are communicated to the DPM and mitigation agreed. During the diving operations the Diving Supervisor must make a record of the following:

- The name of the diving contractor.
- The dates on which and the period during which the diving operation was carried on.
- The name or other designation of the craft or work site in connection with which the diving operation was carried on and the location of that craft or work site.
- The name of the diving supervisor and the period for which he is acting in that capacity in respect of that diving operation.
- The names of the other persons engaged in the diving operation including those operating any diving plant or equipment and their respective duties.
- The arrangements for emergency support.
- The requirements for first aid personnel and equipment.
- The procedures followed in the course of the diving operation including details of the decompression schedule used.
- The maximum depth reached in the course of the operation for each diver.
- For each diver, in respect of each dive he makes, the time he leaves the surface, his bottom time (that is the period from the time he leave the surface until he starts to ascend) and the time he reaches the surface.
- The type of breathing apparatus and mixture used.
- The nature of the diving operation.
- Any decompression sickness, other illness, discomfort or injury suffered by any of the divers.
- Particulars of any emergency which occurred during the diving operation and any action taken.
- Confirmation that all equipment used has been checked immediately prior to the dive conforms with the maintenance schedule.
- Any defects that are discovered in any plant or equipment used in the diving operations.
- Particulars of any environmental factors affecting the diving operation.
- Any other factors relevant to the safety or health of persons engaged in the operation.

Information regarding the dives must be collected by the Dive Supervisor and passed to the DPM at regular intervals. The DPM will provide the log on completion of the dive project to the UDO. The DPM and the UDO must keep a copy of the dive logs for at least 2 years after the completion of the project.

Policy Monitoring

Annually the Diving Subgroup will carry out a review to ensure that all elements of the policy are being implemented effectively. A summary of diving activities and incidents (if any) will be created by the UDO annually and reviewed by the subgroup. Specifically:

- A UDO has been appointed in writing and this appointment letter is in date;
- All work divers in dive operations have an up to date HSE approved medical;
- Risk assessments and project plans made available for a selected review;
- Level of training for those involved in dive operations;
- Equipment maintenance records to ensure maintenance is being carried out regularly;
- Incident log

A summary of compliance to this policy will be reported to the University Health and Safety Group annually.

The Diving Subgroup will retain a copy of the above information for 5 years.

Field	Description
Title	SCUBA Diving Policy
Policy Classification	Policy
Security Classification	Open
Policy Manager Role	University Dive Officer, Professional Lead for Health and Safety (Academic Services)
Nominated Contact	safety@essex.ac.uk
Responsible UoE Section	School of Life Sciences and Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing.
Approval Body	Health and Safety Group
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