



## Diving in benign conditions, and in pools, tanks, aquariums and helicopter underwater escape training

### Diving Information Sheet No 8

#### Introduction

1 This diving information sheet is part of a series of information sheets providing guidance on diving at work. It deals with the application of the Diving at Work Regulations 1997, the List of approved qualifications and the Approved Codes of Practice (ACOPs) where diving work is carried out in closed artificial environments. It does not remove the need for those involved in diving at work to be familiar with the Regulations, the List of approved qualifications and the appropriate ACOP.

2 Diving at work is subject to the provisions of the Diving at Work Regulations 1997. Under the Regulations, the qualifications required by divers in particular situations are specified in a List of approved qualifications. To supplement the Regulations there are Approved Codes of Practice covering commercial offshore, commercial inland/inshore, recreational, media, scientific and archaeological, and police diving projects.

3 There are six sections to this sheet containing further guidance on the following:

- (a) benign diving conditions;
- (b) diving in swimming pools;
- (c) diving in tanks;
- (d) diving in aquariums;
- (e) diving in helicopter underwater escape training; and
- (f) equivalence of recreational diving qualifications.

#### Benign diving conditions

4 Benign diving conditions mean:

- (a) diving inland in a tank or pool artificially constructed for the purpose of swimming, diving, or for use as an aquarium or media facility;
- (b) where the diver is in full view from the surface at all times;
- (c) where no entanglement or entrapment hazards are present; and
- (d) where there is no interference from other activities, eg no scenery or set in media diving and no powerful or aggressive animals in fish storage tanks or aquariums, as justified by the risk assessment.

5 In benign diving conditions the following guidance may be adopted, subject to the results of the risk assessment:

- (a) the team size can be reduced to a supervisor, a diver on a lifeline and a tender;
- (b) the supervisor and tender/third person need not be qualified divers, but should otherwise be competent for the task;
- (c) one member of the dive team on the surface should have a first aid at work qualification; and
- (d) the wearing of full-face masks may not be necessary if the risk assessment indicates they may safely be dispensed with.

#### Diving in swimming pools

6 For cleaning and maintenance activities, the commercial inland/inshore ACOP is appropriate. For other activities, the relevant Code should be followed.

7 Other than in benign conditions, when diving under the commercial inland/inshore ACOP in swimming pools, the minimum qualification is HSE SCUBA. However in benign diving conditions, the minimum approved qualification is CMAS 2☆ or equivalent.

#### Diving in tanks

8 Generally for diving in tanks in non-benign conditions, the minimum qualifications are:

- (a) HSE SCUBA under the commercial inland/inshore and media ACOPs; and
- (b) CMAS 3☆ or equivalent under the scientific and archaeological ACOP.

9 For tanks where there are benign conditions, the minimum approved qualification for diving work under any of these ACOPs is CMAS 2☆ or equivalent.

#### Diving in aquariums

10 For maintenance, construction, repairs, etc, the commercial inland/inshore ACOP is appropriate. For day-to-day routine housekeeping, eg simple cleaning tasks, debris removal, public display and scientific work, the scientific and archaeological ACOP should be applied. For other activities, the relevant Code should be followed.

11 Generally for diving in aquariums, the minimum approved qualifications are:

- (a) HSE SCUBA under the commercial inland/inshore and media ACOPs;
- (b) CMAS 3☆ or equivalent under the scientific and archaeological ACOP; and
- (c) CMAS 2☆ or equivalent for benign conditions in aquariums, under any of these ACOPs.

### **Diving in helicopter underwater escape training**

12 For this type of diving, the commercial inland/inshore ACOP is appropriate.

13 The risk assessment may indicate that some of the ACOP requirements are not essential. In these situations, the following guidance may be adopted subject to the results of a risk assessment.

14 The team size should be a minimum of four: supervisor, two divers in the water, and surface assistant. The supervisor need not be a qualified diver, but should otherwise be competent for the task. One member of the dive team on the surface should have a first aid at work qualification. Voice communication with the surface, separate air supplies or full-face masks may not be necessary if the risk assessment indicates they may safely be dispensed with.

15 The minimum approved qualification for this work is CMAS 3☆ or equivalent.

### **Equivalence of recreational diving qualifications**

16 The CMAS 2☆ and CMAS 3☆ recreational qualifications are approved for use at work. Also approved are the equivalent qualifications from recreational agencies whose qualifications are approved by HSE for diving at work in connection with recreational diving instruction. The current approved agencies are:

American Nitrox Divers International UK Ltd;  
British Sub-Aqua Club;  
International Association of Nitrox and Technical Divers UK;  
National Association of Underwater Instructors UK;  
Professional Association of Underwater Instructors International Ltd;  
Sub-Aqua Association;  
Scottish Sub-Aqua Club;  
SCUBA Schools International GB Ltd; and  
Technical Diving International (Europe) Ltd.

Details of the equivalent qualifications to CMAS 2☆ and CMAS 3☆ can be obtained from the agency concerned.

### **Further reading**

- 1 *Are you involved in a diving project?* INDG266 HSE Books 1998 ISBN 0 7176 1529 4
- 2 *The Diving at Work Regulations 1997* SI 1997/2776 The Stationery Office 1997 ISBN 0 11 065170 7
- 3 *Commercial diving projects inland/inshore. Diving at Work Regulations 1997. Approved Code of Practice L104* HSE Books 1998 ISBN 0 7176 1495 6
- 4 *Recreational diving projects. Diving at Work Regulations 1997. Approved Code of Practice L105* HSE Books 1998 ISBN 0 7176 1496 4
- 5 *Media diving projects. Diving at Work Regulations 1997. Approved Code of Practice L106* HSE Books 1998 ISBN 0 7176 1497 2
- 6 *Scientific and archaeological diving projects. Diving at Work Regulations 1997. Approved Code of Practice L107* HSE Books 1998 ISBN 0 7176 1498 0
- 7 *List of approved qualifications* available from HSE, Diving and Quarries Section, Rose Court, 2 Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HS (Tel: 020 7717 6592). Also available from the Internet.

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This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

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