

Diving in pools, tanks, aquariums and helicopter underwater escape training

HSE information sheet

Diving Information Sheet No 8

Introduction

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 Approved Codes of Practice (ACOPs) to be followed for diving work carried out in closed artificial environments and the minimum team size and qualifications of those carrying out the work. It does not remove the need for those involved in diving at work to be familiar with the Regulations, the list of approved diving qualifications and the appropriate ACOP.

This information sheet provides guidance on the following:

- diving in swimming pools and tanks
- diving in aquariums
- benign diving conditions
- team size and qualifications
- diving in helicopter underwater escape training

Diving in swimming pools and tanks

For cleaning, maintenance and construction activities, the inland/inshore ACOP is appropriate. For other activities (e.g. media or recreational), the relevant ACOP should be followed.

Diving in aquariums

For maintenance, construction and repairs, the inland/inshore ACOP is appropriate. For day-to-day routine housekeeping, e.g. simple cleaning tasks, debris removal, public display and scientific work, the scientific and archaeological ACOP should be followed. For other activities, (e.g. media or recreational) the relevant ACOP should be followed.

Benign diving conditions

Benign diving conditions means:

- inland in a tank or pool artificially constructed for the purpose of swimming, diving, or for use as an aquarium or media facility
- where no entanglement or entrapment hazards are present and the diver is in full view from the surface at all times
- where there is no interference from other activities, e.g. no scenery or set in media diving and no powerful or aggressive animals in fish storage tanks or aquariums
- for media diving where the diver does not have any specially adapted diving equipment and/or specialist production equipment rigged on them while diving (this includes sound, lights and camera equipment)

Note – diving beneath moveable floors would not be classed as benign conditions.

Team size and qualifications for benign conditions

Where diving is taking place in a pool, tank or aquarium and the conditions are not classed as benign then the minimum team sizes and qualifications are the same as diving under that ACOP in open water.

Where SCUBA diving is taking place in benign diving conditions, then the minimum diver qualification for all ACOPs is CMAS 2* or equivalent or “dive leader” qualification that meets the requirements of EN 14153-3/ISO 24801-3. Subject to the risk assessment the minimum team size may be reduced to three following the guidance overleaf:

Inland/Inshore:

- supervisor on the surface
- diver on a lifeline
- dedicated third person on the surface

Scientific/Archaeological:

either

- two divers in the water (one of whom would have to be the supervisor) who must each act as standby to the other
- dedicated third person on the surface

or

- supervisor on the surface
- diver on a lifeline
- dedicated third person on the surface

Media:

- supervisor on the surface
- diver
- dedicated third person on the surface who should be at least a qualified lifesaver

In all cases the third person on the surface does not have to be a qualified diver but should be competent for the task. The supervisor must hold an approved diving qualification for the diving operation and for the diving techniques which they are supervising. There should always be one member of the team on the surface that is qualified in first aid.

The wearing of full-face masks and reserve cylinders may not be necessary if the risk assessment indicates they may safely be dispensed with.

Diving in helicopter underwater escape training

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

The diving contractor's 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 this risk assessment.

The team size should be a minimum of four: supervisor, two divers in the water, and surface assistant. The supervisor and surface assistant need not be qualified divers 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, reserve cylinders, life lines or full-face masks may not be necessary if the risk assessment indicates they may safely be dispensed with.

The minimum approved qualification for this work is CMAS 3* or equivalent or "dive leader" qualification that meets the requirements of EN 14153-3/ISO 24801-3. CMAS 2* is also approved if the diver additionally holds the OPITO HUET/METS qualification certificate.

Equivalence of recreational diving qualifications

For CMAS equivalents, please see the CMAS equivalence table in HSE's list of approved diving qualifications: www.hse.gov.uk/diving/qualifications/approved-list.pdf

Further reading

- 1 *Are you involved in a diving project at work?* INDG266 (Rev2) www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg266.pdf
- 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* (Second Edition) HSE Books 2014 ISBN 978 0 7176 6593 8
- 4 *Recreational diving projects. Diving at Work Regulations 1997. Approved Code of Practice L105* (Second Edition) HSE Books 2014 ISBN 978 0 7176 6594 5
- 5 *Media diving projects. Diving at Work Regulations 1997. Approved Code of Practice L106* (Second Edition) HSE Books 2014 ISBN 978 0 7176 6595 2
- 6 *Scientific and archaeological diving projects. Diving at Work Regulations 1997. Approved Code of Practice L107* (Second Edition) HSE Books 2014 ISBN 978 0 7176 6596 9
- 7 *List of approved diving qualifications* www.hse.gov.uk/diving/qualifications/approved-list.pdf

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

This information sheet is available at: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/dvis8.pdf.

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