



*The Florida State University*  
Diving Control Board

## **EXPOSURE CONTROL GUIDELINES FOR DIVING OPERATIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The following are considered minimum mandatory requirements as of the date of this document. Additional measures may be required by the DCB based upon specific characteristics of the planned operations, environmental conditions, current community public health situation, or further guidance from the University.

### **General Guidelines**

- All diving operations must be conducted under the assumption that at least one member of the operations team is potentially infected and contagious.
- Diving must only be conducted under conditions in which normal (non-emergency) entries and exits can be made unassisted and in full gear.
- Approved PPE must be used at all times when two or more people are present in the same area and interaction among personnel is possible.
- Interpersonal distancing procedures apply to all surface activities associated with the dive including vehicular and vessel transport.
- The applications of social units and/or a quarantine process will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

### **Personnel Guidelines**

- In the interest of the dive team, it is expected that any diver who feels ill or has reasonable cause to believe they have been exposed to the Corona SARS-CoV-2 virus will exclude her/himself from diving operations until receiving medical clearance to dive.
- All divers will be evaluated according to the [UC San Diego Guidelines for Evaluation of Divers During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- Divers who previously completed a covid-19-immune-response test for the Corona SARS-CoV-2, are encouraged to share the results.
- Dive teams and auxiliary personnel must be kept to a minimum, and it must be possible at all times to adhere to the social distancing rules, on land as well as on the water.

### **Vehicular and vessel transit to dive sites**

- If the dive site requires travel by car, dive party members must travel individually in separate vehicles.
- Vessel size must be planned to allow adequate interpersonal distancing, and will be reviewed by the DCB as part of dive plan evaluation (FWC and coastguard check social distancing on boats)
- At a minimum, all personnel while on the surface (out of the water) must wear a breathing mask covering mouth and nose in order to reduce respiratory droplet dispersal and for discouraging inadvertent face touching.

### **Pre-and post-dive briefings and debriefings**

- Primary dive team operational planning and briefing should be conducted prior to departing for the dive site.
- On site discussions and prep must be minimized to essential items.

### **Buddy and equipment checks**

- Each diver must only handle and test their own equipment.
- Each diver will perform functional testing and demonstrate operation of his/her equipment while observed by the buddy.
- During dive gear setup, divers must not breathe from their own alternate second stage. Pre-dive functional testing must be accomplished via depressing the purge and listening for free flows.
- Pre-dive regulator checks must be done just before entering the water, and divers must continue breathing through their primary second stage until in the water to avoid unnecessary exposure of saliva.
- At the end of the dive and when in physical contact with the vessel (dive line, ladder), and prior to getting back onto the vessel, the diver must remove the regulator from the mouth and thoroughly rinse the regulator and also thoroughly wash her/his face. The same applies to the secondary second stage if used during the dive.

### **Rescue Guidelines**

- If air sharing is required, refrain from sharing a single second stage unless to refrain would result in severe injury or loss of life. Responding divers will establish contact and control, and then donate the secondary second stage.
- Diver assist, rescues, and first aid must be approached with extra safety precautions in mind.
- In surface rescue and assist scenarios, unless an immediate assist is necessary to prevent loss of life, responding divers must stop at a safe distance (at least two full body lengths, approximately 12 feet) from the distressed diver to perform initial assessment ("Are you OK? Inflate your BC! Drop your weights!").
- If an immediate assist is necessary to prevent loss of life, helpers must use PPE and must not do mouth-to-mouth/nose resuscitation but use the emergency oxygen supply unit and/or manual bag type resuscitator.
- Where possible, divers should remain on their scuba regulators with their dive masks in place during surface activity. Surface tows should be performed with the primary objective of expediting extraction without attempting rescue breathing during transport.

### **Equipment**

- Dive equipment and any personal or scientific auxiliary equipment used must be dedicated to an individual diver for the duration of the diving operation.
- Each diver will only prepare, maintain and handle their own diving equipment including during transportation and exit and entry from the water.
- Heavy gear that cannot be safely moved by one person should not be used.

- All dive equipment and vehicles and vessels used must be properly disinfected according to CDC procedures before and after use, by the diver using it.
- Each diver must be responsible for disinfecting his/her own equipment. All regulator second stages and BC oral inflators must
  - Receive an initial freshwater rinse, then be immersed in a CDC-approved bleach solution or other EPA-approved disinfectant after return to shore,
  - remaining wetted for at least 4 minutes, and then
  - Receive a final freshwater rinse before drying.
  - Equipment used by one diver will not be used by a different diver without an intervening period of at least 7 days and a re-disinfection prior to use.
  - O<sub>2</sub> kits, first aid supplies, and any other gear that may have been contaminated must be disinfected or safely disposed after use, using best practices.

### **Dive Logging Procedures**

- Upon completion of a day's operations, the Lead Diver must communicate a log of the day's dive to the DSO, including:
  - Time, date, location, nature of diving activity;
  - Names and roles of those involved
  - Dive parameters (number of dives conducted, diver pairings, dive time and depths, and dive modes used);
  - Any incident or accident, including possible breaches of exposure protocols.