



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

- 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

- All dive team members need to get tested for COVID-19 and will self-isolate while awaiting test results. No researcher will commence field work until receiving a negative test result and approval from OVPR.
- Approvals remain in place for a maximum of fourteen (14) days during which appropriate quarantine measures must be followed.
- During the period of field work, researchers must remain quarantined when not conducting field work until all field work is completed.
- If there is a period of non-quarantine during the period of field work, the researcher must be tested again and await a negative test result before participating again in the field work.
- Valid documentation for COVID-19 testing must be on file with the Diving Safety Officer. COVID-19 testing results are good for fourteen (14) days.
- 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 (the “Guidelines”). Such Guidelines are used with the express consent of UC San Diego. The Guidelines were chosen by the FSU Dive Control Board due to their comprehensive and well-thought out content.
- 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.

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.

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.
- 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.

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.
- 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 5 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.
 - O₂ 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.