

Jamaica Scuba Diving Club

Club Dive Rules & Guidelines

Introduction:

Since scuba diving is an inherently risky sport, the Club operates on the premise that any individual participating in scuba diving activities with club members etc. shall be solely responsible for his or her own safety, comfort and well-being. Having said that, the Club seeks to promote scuba diving for education and pleasure in a safe manner and with a view to achieving this, the Club has established the following rules and guidelines which should be observed by any person participating in Club-related diving activities.

Breaches of Club diving rules will be treated as a serious offence, which may lead to disciplinary sanctions as specified in the Club Constitution. Any activity involving Club Equipment (whether SCUBA equipment, tanks or otherwise) and any dive organised by the Club, will be seen as a club activity.

1. Minimum Diving Qualifications for Membership:

1.1 No person shall be admitted as a Member of the Club (whether as a Diving Member or a Junior Member) or may dive as a Guest Diver of the Club, unless he holds a diving certification from an internationally recognised diving organisation and meet the following minimum qualification/experience requirements of the Club:

Organisation	Qualification	No. of Logged Post Qualification Dives
<i>PADI</i>	Open Water	10
<i>BSAC</i>	Club Diver	10
<i>NAUI</i>	Open Water Scuba Diver	10
<i>CMAS</i>	Two-Star Diver	10

1.2 If the certifying dive organisation is not listed above, it shall be at the discretion of the Club's Diving Officer to accept or reject the certification presented as meeting the minimum qualifications required by the Club.

1.3 A checkout dive shall be required by the Diving Officer. The Diving Officer may delegate any Diving Member to undertake this dive on his behalf

2. Liability Releases & Waiver of Claims and Diver Liability Insurance:

2.1 No person (whether they are a Member or a Guest Diver of the Club) shall be permitted to participate in Club diving activities or otherwise use Club Equipment unless he has read, understood and signed a Liability Release, Waiver of Claims, Express Assumption of Risk and Indemnity Agreement (***Schedule F***).

To this effect, every person must be provided with this Agreement to review at least 5 working days before they sign it prior to undertaking dive activities.

2.2 A non-diving Guest of the Club shall not participate in any diving excursions associated with the Club including (but not limited to) taking trips on dive boats, snorkelling etc. unless he has signed the Liability Release, Waiver of Claims, Express Assumption of Risk and Indemnity Agreement (see ***Schedule F***).

- 2.3 No person (whether they are a Member or a Guest of the Club) shall be permitted to participate in Club diving activities or otherwise use Club Equipment unless he is covered under an appropriate Diver Liability insurance policy which meets the requirements as may be prescribed by the Executive Committee from time to time. Where feasible, the Club shall secure liability insurance which provides liability insurance coverage for both the Club and its officers in addition to individual club members and guests of the Club. The Executive Committee may also prescribe other insurance policies which are acceptable.
- 2.4 No Member or Guest shall act in a manner which may invalidate his coverage (or the coverage of others) under a Diver Liability insurance policy in force. In the event that an individual's actions or omissions render such a policy void or otherwise undermine insurance coverage (whether or not a diving incident arises), then he shall be subject to such disciplinary action as the Executive Committee may determine.

3. *Statement of Understanding of Safe Diving Practices:*

- 3.1. No person (whether they are a Member or Guest Diver of the Club) shall be permitted to participate in Club diving activities or otherwise use Club Equipment unless he has read, understood and signed a Statement of Understanding of Safe Diving Practices (*Schedule G*).

4. *Medical Statements, Medical Certification and Medical Insurance:*

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of each individual (whether as a Member or as a Guest Diver) to ensure that he or she is fit, healthy and capable to participate in scuba diving (particularly given the inherent risks of and the physical and mental challenges associated with the sport).
- 4.2 No person shall be permitted to dive with the Club (whether as a Member or as a Guest Diver) in any calendar year unless he has completed a self-declared **Medical Statement (Schedule H)** in respect of that calendar year and if required he has successfully completed a Medical Examination which remains valid for the calendar year in question.
- 4.3 If the person answers **YES** to any of the questions in the medical questionnaire, then he should consult a physician knowledgeable in diving medicine and undertake a Medical Examination unless he has previously successfully completed a Medical Examination (in relation to the same medical condition) and this Examination remains valid. If an additional medical condition is disclosed, (e.g. an individual answers **YES** to one or more additional questions) vis-à-vis a previous Medical Statement, a Medical Examination shall be required. If a Medical Examination this is required, the Medical Statement contains **Guidelines for Recreational Scuba Diver's Physical Examination** which can be referred to by the person and his physician.
- 4.4 A Medical Statement must be completed in respect of each calendar year and shall be regarded as valid only for the **calendar year** in which it is completed and signed by the individual. It is the responsibility of each individual to declare any changes in health which take place during that calendar year (which may affect their fitness to dive), to the Diving Officer or the Secretary of the Club.
- 4.5 A successfully completed Medical Examination shall normally be deemed to be valid from that date of the Examination to the second anniversary of the **end of the calendar year** in which the examination is undertaken e.g. if someone undertakes a medical examination at any time in the calendar year 2003, it shall normally be deemed to be valid for calendar years 2004 and 2005. If however an individual's physician indicates that the validity should be for a lesser period (say ending on 31st December), that lesser period shall apply.

4.6 The Club encourages all members to undergo a diver medical examination before joining the Club and to have periodic re-examinations at the following intervals thereafter:

- Every five years up to the age of 40;
- Every three years between ages 40 and 50;
- Annually over the age of 50.

4.7 Given the potential cost to Members or Guests of medical assistance/treatment in the event that they are involved in a diving incident, the Club strongly recommends that each person secures appropriate dive medical insurance to provide them with sufficient coverage in the event that they are involved in a diving incident. No Member or Guest shall act in a manner which may invalidate his coverage (or the coverage of others) under a Medical Insurance policy in force. In the event that an individual's actions or omissions render such a policy void or otherwise undermine insurance coverage (whether or not a diving incident arises), then he shall be subject to such disciplinary action as the Executive Committee may determine.

5. ***Guests of the Club:***

5.1 Jamaica Scuba Diving Club also welcomes guests of JSDC members. Guest Divers visiting the Club may dive with other members (subject to the approval of the Diving Officer) and rent Club Equipment (also subject to the discretion of the Diving Officer).

5.2 No visiting Diver Guest of the Club may participate in diving activities associated with the Club or rent or use Club Equipment unless he:

- (i) completes the Membership Application Form (***Schedule A***) and submits it to the Secretary or other officer of the Club for consideration by Executive Committee.
- (ii) complies fully with Articles 1, 2, 3, 4 in the same manner as a Member is required to.

5.3 No Guest may participate in diving activities unless he is either covered by Diver Liability insurance coverage maintained by the Club or produces evidence that he is covered by a Diver Liability insurance policy which meets the requirements as may be prescribed by the Executive Committee from time to time. In addition, no Guest shall act in a manner which may invalidate his coverage (or the coverage of others) under a Diver Liability insurance policy in force.

6. ***Equipment Requirements:***

6.1 No person shall be permitted to dive unless their equipment used includes:

- (i) a depth gauge;
- (ii) an air contents gauge;
- (iii) an octopus rig/alternative air supply;
- (iv) underwater watch or other time-keeping mechanism;
- (v) Buoyancy Compensation Device (BCD);
- (vi) a quick-release weight belt or other suitable weights system;
- (vii) a quality underwater torch (for night dives);

6.2 In addition the Club recommends every person diving to have the following:

- (i) an underwater compass;
- (ii) a dive computer;
- (iii) a dive knife;
- (iv) a whistle;
- (v) a diver surface marker;

It is also recommended that the Dive Leader utilises a surface marker buoy (SMB) where appropriate.

6.3 Each person is responsible for the proper functioning of their own Equipment (including any Club Equipment hired by them).

7. Club Equipment & Rental

7.1 The Club shall keep and maintain Club Equipment for use by Club members and Diver Guests of the Club. For this purpose, the Club may also rent equipment from other diving clubs or organisations for use by its members. The type and quantity of Club Equipment made available by the Club shall be at the absolute discretion of the Executive Committee having regards to the needs of members, the Club's finances and prevailing circumstances. For this purpose, Club Equipment includes tanks, weights, BC's, regulators, compressors, or other equipment whatsoever made available by the Club to members and Diver Guest of the Club.

7.2 Members and Diver Guests of the Club may rent Club Equipment for use in Club-related diving activities in consideration for paying the appropriate charges (and deposit if required) set out in **Schedule E**. The rates set out in **Schedule E** may be altered by Committee Decision without prior notice to Members.

7.3 The Club shall not rent or sell Club Equipment on a commercial basis. The Club may however keep a stock of items for sale to members.

7.4 All rentals shall be at the discretion of the Diving Officer of the Club (subject to the right of appeal to the Executive Committee). Membership of the Club does not confer any automatic entitlement to rent or otherwise use Club Equipment.

7.5 No Club Equipment shall be rented to any individual unless that person has satisfied all the requirements set out in Articles 1 – 4 above.

7.6 Club Equipment hired must be used only by Members or Diver Guests of the Club in the course of club activities. Club Equipment must not be used by person for commercial diving activities, spear-fishing or for any other purpose which is contrary to the philosophy of the Club.

7.7 The hirer is responsible for the care and safety of the Club Equipment after it leaves the clubhouse and until it is returned. All equipment hired will be taken to be in good working order at the time of hiring.

7.8 Any person returning a piece of equipment which in the opinion of the Diving Officer (or Equipment Officer if appointed) is in a damaged or dirty condition will be held responsible for the cost of replacement or repair. All Club Equipment should be cared for by Members in accordance with Guidelines as may be prescribed by the Diving Officer from time to time.

7.9 All Club Equipment is rented on a weekly basis. Rental rates are from Thursday to Thursday. Late returns will incur an additional weekly rental for any week (or part thereof) the Club Equipment remains outstanding. Equipment must be picked up/returned to the Club weekly between the hours of 9:30pm and 10:30pm on Thursdays only. Persons may not keep Club Equipment from week to week.

7.10 Club tanks (and Members own tanks) should be filled at the prescribed refilling location (which is currently "Norman's" - Diving & Salvage, 2A Bedford Park Road (off Upper Waterloo Road – close to Peppers). All used tanks should be returned to Norman's for refill on the same day of use if possible and in any event no later than by Tuesday of the following week for refill. Tanks are to be left inside the specified cage at Norman's. **TANKS MUST NOT BE LEFT OUTSIDE THE CAGE IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES**. Refilled tanks should be collected and returned to the clubhouse by members on Thursday (i.e. the following Club Night) in order to avoid incurring additional rental charges. Tanks returned empty shall incur an additional week's rental.

7.11 Neither the Club or its members accept any responsibility for the air refills (e.g. air quality etc.) provided by the prescribed refilling location or for any loss, damage or otherwise which may occur to tanks left by persons for filling there.

7.12 No Club Equipment shall be removed from the clubhouse or otherwise used by a Member or Guest of the Club unless:

- an Equipment Requisition Form (the form of which may be prescribed by the Executive Committee) has been completed by the Diving Officer (or other person authorised by the Diving Officer) and signed by the hirer;
- the appropriate rental (and deposit if required) has been paid;
- the Club Equipment is being rented for use on a dive which has been reviewed and approved by the Diving Officer in accordance with **Article 8.1(ii)** below.

7.13 Members may also rent diving equipment from other diving clubs or organisations as may be approved by the Executive Committee. For the purposes of this Article, any such equipment rented shall be regarded as Club Equipment.

8. *Pre-Dive Planning, Dive Conduct & Dive Reports:*

8.1 Prior to any dive being undertaken by members, the Club recommends the following:

- (i) A Dive Marshall should be appointed amongst the group of members intending to undertake the diving activities;
- (ii) A Dive Planner (see **Schedule I**) should be completed by the Dive Marshall in advance of each dive proposed (if possible on the Club Night preceding the dive excursion). It is recommended that an alternate dive site be highlighted as a back-up location. The Dive Planner should be reviewed and approved by the Diving Officer (or other person authorised by the Diving Officer) with a view to ensuring that the dive proposed does not breach any Club rules etc.
- (iii) The Diving Officer may prohibit or limit an individual's participation in any Club-related diving activities. His decision shall be subject to the individual's right of appeal to the Executive Committee in the prescribed manner. Unless the Executive Committee over-rules the decision of the Diving Officer, his decision shall remain valid and must be upheld.
- (iv) The Dive Marshall should check weather reports etc. to assess whether the weather, currents or tides may interfere with the proposed diving arrangements.
- (v) The Dive Marshall should also ensure that he/she has noted the locations (vis-à-vis the dive site(s) proposed) and methods of contacting the emergency services (ambulance, doctor, re-compression chamber, coast-guard/JDF) should the need arise. Some useful contact numbers have been printed on the back of the Dive Planner. Each diver should carry his emergency information and provide it to the Dive Marshall in advance of participating in the diving activities planned.
- (vi) The Dive Marshall should also ensure that there are adequate supplies of Oxygen and First Aid carried by the diving party.

8.1 At the dive site, the Dive Marshall should evaluate the dive site vis-à-vis the Dive Planner.

8.2 Prior to commencing any diving activities, a person should be appointed as Dive Leader amongst the group of members intending to dive. The Dive Leader will consult the Dive Planner and will pair off each diver in buddy pairs having regard to degree of experience etc. Having done that, the Dive Leader should brief the diving party in advance of the dive. The areas to be covered by this briefing can easily be summarised by remembering the mnemonic “SEEDS”:

S Safety: ear/mask clearing, adjusting buoyancy, what do if separated, depth limitation and maximum bottom time, air reserves, any other dive-specific safety issues, overview of safety procedures to be adopted in the event of an emergency.

E Exercise: how the diving will be conducted: entry/exit methods, mode of descent, dive plan once submerged, assembly at the bottom etc., procedure for surfacing at termination of dive etc.

E Equipment: - what is on board and where it is stowed, stowage of dive equipment etc.

D Discipline: - reminder to each diver buddy pair of the need to keep close together at all times. Also each buddy pair should endeavour to maintain regular visual contact with the Dive Leader throughout the dive.

S Signals: - review of signals that may be during the dive etc.

8.3 Prior to any dive, each buddy pair should agree which individual shall lead their dive. In addition, each buddy pair should carry out their own pre-dive checks (and as appropriate at the start of the dive). This also serves to allow each individual to gain some appreciation of his/her buddy's dive equipment. The checks should include the following:

B Buoyancy Control Device: Ensure snugly adjusted with releases firmly secured. Check proper operation of low pressure/oral inflator and air release/pressure valves.

W Weight Belt: Should have a right-hand release and should be clear of other equipment/straps for easy and fast one-hand removal

R Releases: - Review location of various releases on your buddy's equipment etc.

A Air Supply: - Check air is turned on, regulators are properly functioning, hoses are untangled & not trapped by other straps etc., location/functioning of alternate air source.

F Final OK: - after completion of above.

The steps in the above dive check can be easily remembered by the phrase “Begin With Review And Friend” (BWRAF).

8.4 Specific air reserves may be stipulated by the Dive Leader having with due regard to diver ability, cylinder size, diving conditions etc. (*Note: 1 bar = 15 psi approx.*). Unless other stipulated by the Dive Leader, once any individual diver's air supply reaches **50 bar / 750 psi**, he/she must inform his/her buddy and they must together bring this to the Dive Leader's attention.

At this point, the Dive Leader may decide to either:

- (i) to terminate the dive; or
- (ii) request the buddy pair to commence re-surfacing (subject of course to completing their required safety stop) while the remaining divers continue the dive; or
- (iii) re-arrange the buddy pairing so that another diver accompanies the individual diver with low air supply back to the surface (e.g. a diver who volunteers to terminate his/her dive or the diver with the next lowest air supply in the dive group)

8.5 Every individual must ensure that he/she has an air supply of at least **35 bar / 500 psi** by the time he/she (along with their buddy) commence their required safety stop **at 6 metres / 20 feet approx.** prior to resurfacing.

- 8.6 If any individual becomes visually separated from his or her dive buddy, he or she should undertake a brief attempt to re-locate his/her buddy (for no more than **30 seconds**), and failing that must return to the surface in order to re-unite with his or her buddy.
- 8.7 A Dive Report (which is incorporated into the Dive Planner) (see **Schedule I**) should be completed for each dive by the Dive Leader and returned to the Club by the following Thursday for review by the Diving Officer.

9. Diving Prohibitions:

- 9.1 Solo diving is strictly prohibited. All persons diving must do so in buddy pairs agreed prior to the dive. Diving in trios should be avoided where possible.
- 9.2 No Member or Guest of the Club shall dive in manner which is inconsistent with the limitations or requirements specified by their certifying dive association in respect of their specific diving qualification. It shall be each individual's responsibility to be aware of any such requirements or limitations imposed by their certifying association. Any individual who does not comply with any such limitations or requirements shall be solely responsible for the consequences of his or her actions.
- 9.3 A single diving computer must not be shared among buddy pairs.
- 9.4 The Diving Officer, Dive Marshall or Dive Leader has the power to refuse permission to dive to anyone considered unfit (in their opinion) to dive (whether due to alcohol, drugs or otherwise).
- 9.5 No Member or Diver Guest of the Club may engage in decompression diving unless their level of dive qualification permits them to do so and prior written permission is obtained from the Club's Diving Officer.
- 9.6 No cave diving is allowed without permission from the Diving Officer.
- 9.7 Any diving activities contrary to the philosophy of the Club (e.g. spear-fishing) should not be undertaken by any member or Guest of the Club and no Club Equipment may be used for such activities.

10. Depth Limitations:

- 10.1 The Club has set the following general depth limitations for club-related dives undertaken by Members and Diver Guests of the Club:

PADI	NAUI	BSAC	CMAS	Depth Limitation
Open Water	OW Scuba Diver	Club Diver	N/A	65 feet / 20 metres
Advanced OW +	Advanced +	Sports Diver +	** Diver	130 feet / 40 metres

- 10.2 If a person holds a dive qualification other than those specified above, it shall be at the discretion of the Club's Diving Officer as to what depth limitation shall apply to that individual.
- 10.3 Prior to every dive, the Dive Leader shall establish a specific depth limit and maximum bottom time applicable to that particular dive. Any diver who exceeds either the specific depth limit/bottom time set can be banned (at the discretion of the Dive Leader) from further diving that day and the matter must be reported to the Club's Diving Officer. Repeated infringements will result in suspension or expulsion from JSDC.

10.4 Notwithstanding that the specific depth limit set by the Dive Leader may exceed the general depth limitation applicable to any individual seeking to participate in a particular dive, that individual must not at any time exceed the general depth limitation applicable to his/her diving qualification. In consideration for participating in the dive, the individual shall be deemed to have given an express undertaking that he/she shall not exceed such general depth limitation applicable. If the individual exceeds this general depth limitation in the course of a dive, he or she shall be deemed to have done so of their own free choice and shall be solely responsible for the consequences of his or her actions.

11. Safety Stops:

A minimum **3 minute** safety stop (at approx. 20 feet / 6 metres) must be practised on all dives.

12. Dive Tables

12.1 The Club requires that Members carry Dive Tables on all dives. The Club strongly cautions against over-reliance on dive computers and recommends that Dive Tables be referred to by individuals in planning any dive profile.

12.2 Members & Diver Guests may (subject to the discretion of the Diving Officer) refer to Dive Tables approved by any internationally recognised diving organisation provided that any individuals diving together as a buddy pair must refer to the **same** Dive Tables in planning and monitoring their individual dive profiles. In no event shall an individual plan a dive profile that exceeds the specific depth limit or maximum bottom time set by the Dive Leader in relation to the dive.

13. Miscellaneous:

13.1 All Club Members & Guests must abide by Jamaica's conservation laws. Fishermen's pots etc. must not be interfered with. Remember that you are a visitor to the marine environment and therefore you should be respectful of it and return with nothing other than memories and photographs!

ENDS