



BLACK ROCK UNDERWATER DIVING GROUP

DIVING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEMBERS AND GUESTS

The following recommendations are for members and guests, whilst diving or otherwise participating in official BRUDG functions. Each member is responsible to obey all applicable laws and to follow the teachings of their respective certification organisation. Recommendations for change are to be in writing and sent to the safety officer.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This manual provides the framework for club operations. It is based on the experience of club divers, recognised safe diving practices, while recognizing that BRUDG is not a commercial dive organization and therefore does not have the resources of such organisations.

BRUDG divers acknowledge that they are participating in a potentially hazardous sport and agree to accept the risks and consequences associated with recreational scuba diving and club outings. All BRUDG members, and visitors, accept full responsibility for their own safety and unconditionally agree to absolve any other BRUDG member from liability for any incidents arising from participating in BRUDG-sponsored activities.

BRUDG believes that safe diving results from a combination of well trained, responsible, safety-motivated individuals, operating within a supportive club environment. There is no such thing as risk free diving; BRUDG aims for a balance between safety and enjoyment.

The BRUDG Diving Program, which is documented in this manual, consists of;

- Individual Responsibility, an acceptance that safety is our own responsibility
- Operating Recommendations and Diving Code of Practice, which are key recommendations for diving and key minimum standards
- Awareness and Training by regular discussion of safety matters at meetings and magazine articles.

2 INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

You are responsible for your own safety, you are responsible to;

- Dive within your accreditation limits.
- Ensure you are in a fit state mentally and physically to take part in diving activities
- Decide whether it is safe for you to dive
- Ensure your dive gear is serviceable and suitable for the diving conditions
- Ensure you understand any local hazardous conditions, ask if unsure
- Ensure you understand the correct operation of the compressors before using them

You should consider the following

- Regularly review your diving certification organisation manual and this Diving Manual to identify any areas of your diving that may need attention to minimize the likelihood of an accident

- Ensure that if you are under medical treatment, including using prescription medication, you only dive with your doctor's approval
- Aim to develop and retain a sufficiently high standard of personal diving skill
- Undertake a regular exercise program
- The consumption of alcohol before or after diving can adversely affect your ability to dive and can predispose you to DCI
- Never use any illegal drugs prior to diving
- Do not dive or continue a dive if you feel stressed, uncomfortable or in any way unsafe with the dive
- Wear appropriate weather protection garments and use u.v. protection creams.

2.1 AWARENESS AND TRAINING

The DSO shall include discussion or expert presentations at club meetings of any safety topics that may benefit divers, including discussion of any safety related incidents.

2.2 DECOMPRESSION ILLNESS (DCI)

With DCI, symptoms often appear as follows:

- In 50% of cases, within 30 minutes
- In 90% of cases, within 6 hours
- Sometimes greater than 24 hours

Susceptibility to DCI varies enormously between divers and between dives. It is a significant risk to divers, with DAN reporting that up to 70% of divers treated for DCI had reported diving within the limits of the US Navy dive tables.

Pre-disposing factors for DCI are;

- Repetitive diving
- Deep diving and decompression stop diving
- Rapid or multiple ascents
- Exercise before, after or during a dive
- Dehydration (also aggravates existing DCI)
- Obesity
- Older divers

- Lack of fitness
- Ingestion of alcohol or drugs
- Fatigue
- Altitude exposure during or after diving
- Anxiety
- Carbon dioxide excess
- Cold
- Illness or injury

Diving medical organisations believe that most DCI symptoms remain untreated and may cause more serious injury, especially as divers' age.

The most frequent signs/symptoms of DCI are malaise (feeling unwell) and extreme fatigue.

You should never "push the limits"; always use your Dive Tables or computer conservatively.

3 OPERATING RECOMMENDATIONS AND CODE OF PRACTISE

This section describes;

- Recommendations for BRUDG activities
- Descriptions of typical BRUDG activities
- Mandatory Codes of Practise that are key minimum standards for BRUDG activities

It is not intended as a detailed diving instruction manual. You should be familiar with the diving manual from your dive accreditation organisation and follow the manual.

Club Dives

BRUDG dives are dives that;

- Have been scheduled in the magazine and have been advised by e-mail or other method to members or prospective members.

If members conduct private dives these are not BRUDG dives. If the Dive Captain or relevant boat owners cancel a dive then any subsequent diving activity is not a club dive.

3.1 NEW DIVERS TO BRUDG

New divers to BRUDG may be prospective members, new members or visitors. New divers;

- Shall be certified by a recognized diver accreditation organization, e.g. PADI, SSI or BSAC etc.
- Shall buddy dive for their initial dives with BRUDG
- Shall sign a waiver form before participating in the dive or boarding a boat, this is required even if the visitor does not intend to dive

3.2 BOAT SAFETY

Boat Captains and crew have a shared responsibility for boat safety. The Boat Captain has the prime responsibility and final authority but the crew have a responsibility to assist and act safely.

The following safety equipment is mandatory during club diving activities;

- All safety equipment required by boating regulations e.g. flares, life jackets, etc
- Statutory Diver Below flag

The following safety equipment is recommended to be carried:

- Marine communications equipment (e.g. 27 MHz or VHF) comment: it is recommended to upgrade to VHF radio as better safety communications are obtained ,direct access to police, safety authorities, weather and shipping information. A nautilus lifeline type device can communicate between the surfaced diver and the VHF receiver.
- EPIRB's inside the statutory two mile zone (outside this zone EPRIB's are compulsory)

The following safety equipment is recommended;

- Dive equipment lines (2) for holding divers weight belts and diving sets before exiting the water
- GPS
- Depth sounder
- Safety phone numbers and mobile phone
- Radio contact details including frequencies
- Resuscitation mask
- First aid kit (including broad bandages to stop bleeding)
- Oxy Viva kit (if allocated)
- Sufficient fuel load with some reserve for emergencies

3.3 DIVERS EQUIPMENT

You have a life saving dependence on your equipment, selecting the correct gear and maintaining it is your responsibility.

3.3.1 GEAR SELECTION

The following equipment is recommended

- Contents and depth gauges
- Safety sausage (surface marker buoy)
- Whistle
- Dive knife
- Octopus regulator for all dives
- BCD

You should consider the following

- Dive computers are highly recommended
- Servicing of your gear as recommended by the manufacturer is worthwhile. You should also thoroughly inspect and check the operation of your dive gear after having it serviced and before diving; it is not unknown for equipment to be incorrectly assembled during servicing.
- Write your name in large letters in permanent marker on the side of the tank and around the neck, this assists when filling tanks and picking up from dive shops

3.3.2 INDIVIDUALS

It is your responsibility to evaluate conditions, your abilities, dive location, gear suitability and any other relevant factors and decide whether you will participate in the dive and, or the boat trip. This is your responsibility and must be made independently of other divers, Dive Captain and Boat Captain.

You should inspect all equipment prior to each dive. When diving in pairs you should request your buddy to inspect your gear prior to diving.

If you are uncomfortable, SPEAK UP, and decline to participate in the dive.

You should consider carrying spare equipment on dives; this could include:

- Tank O rings (note: there are a range of o ring sizes required, depending on the manufacturer of the valves fitted to the cylinder)
- fin straps

- mask straps
- knife straps

You should carry warm, dry and water proof clothing and food and water sufficient for a very late finish or even overnight stay in the boat. This is particularly important in cooler/wet months.

3.3.3 BOAT CAPTAINS AND LICENSED BOAT OPERATORS

Boat captains are expected to operate their vessel in a lawful and safe manner.

The donation of boat usage is at the owner's discretion. The club recognises it cannot take over or deny responsibility from captains, however, recommends the following;

That a radio watch is maintained on the international call/emergency channel in conjunction with an operating (working) channel

Ensure all divers are aware of:

- How to start and operate the boat in a emergency
- The location and use of safety equipment on the boat, including EPIRB, flares, medical kit, Oxy Viva, resuscitation mask, radio frequencies and operations, mobile phone and phone numbers, etc.
- That co-drivers are appropriately instructed, licensed ,and experienced to control your boat

3.3.4 INDIVIDUALS

It is your responsibility whether you dive considering your experience, dive plan, conditions and any other relevant factors. Make sure you understand the dive plan. If you are buddy diving determine your dive plan with your buddy, agree on a separation plan should you become separated. Ensure you are aware of any local dangers such as strong currents.

If you are not comfortable with a dive, dive plan or conditions, **do not dive**.

4.4.5 SOLO DIVING

The group recommends the buddy diving practice, however, recognizes some difference in doctrine in diving circles with this system. While still committed to the recommended and promoted buddy diving practice, the club will permit solo diving by qualified individuals.

- Certified by recognized diver accreditation, OR
- A diver with open water solo diving experience
- Solo divers should advise their boat captain and others or in the case of shore dives the dive captain of his intended solo dive

The solo diver will adhere to the groups safety procedures, but during execution of his solo dive takes on full and total responsibility and liability for his own conduct and safety.

3.3.6 INDIVIDUALS

It is your responsibility to ensure you dive in a safe manner considering your abilities, conditions and any other relevant factors.

Ensure you follow the safe diving practices as described in your certifying organisation diving manual.

Before entering the boat at the end of the dive you should consider removing your tank and possibly weight belt and secure to equipment lines hanging from the boat or hand them to a buddy on board the boat, to reduce physical exertion. Dive pairs

Check that your buddy is ready to descend, prior to descending. Descend together, preferably down the anchor line.

On reaching the bottom, conduct a final check of one another before swimming off in the agreed direction.

Ideally, under water, dive buddies should be within a few seconds swim of one another, to be able to offer reasonable assistance in an emergency situation. If you cannot locate your dive buddy then follow your separation plan, e.g. surface to establish contact.

As you surface you should turn through 360 degrees and look up, especially as you approach the surface, holding a closed fist above your head. It may stop you from hitting obstacles during surfacing.

Stay with your buddy until you are back at the boat and provide assistance to one another if required.

3.3.7 LOOKOUT

The club recommends the use of lookouts. On all offshore dives with multiple boats participating, a lookout system is to be employed.

The lookout may cover more than one boat provided they are close enough for the lookout to provide assistance

Lookouts shall maintain a watch for the other divers and be ready to rescue any diver in danger.

For Drift Dives, the Lookout shall keep the float in sight and periodically scan the surrounding water in case a diver has surfaced away from the float.

For anchored dives, scan the water for surfaced divers or any hazards. In particular, keep a close watch downstream of the dive site.

3.3.8 DRIFT DIVES

There are two drift methods regularly used, either attached to the boat or to a float.

The “boat attachment” method is recommended only for dives less than 18 metres deep and where there are no obstructions on the bottom, for example a scallop dive in Port Philip Bay.

The “float method” is suitable for all drift dives. The float should be non sinkable, e.g. two floats attached to the drift rope several meters apart or a single non sinkable float. This is to ensure the float does not sink in strong tidal flows. The drift rope shall preferably be attached to a reel which one diver operates. The other divers may have suitable ropes attached to the drift rope.

If you become separated from the float surface immediately otherwise you may drift away from the boat.

3.3.9 DEEP DIVES

Deep dives are dives in excess of 30 meters. You shall follow the recommendations of your Diving Accreditation Organisation and assess your own experience.

3.3.10 DIVING IN DIFFICULT CONDITIONS (SWELL, CURRENT, LOW VISIBILITY, COLD)

Difficult conditions may be caused by any one or combination of the following factors and the combination of factors may drastically increase risk;

- Swell
- Currents or tidal flows
- Low visibility
- Cold conditions, i.e. water or air temperature
- Remote locations
- Depth

Diving with a buddy is recommended for difficult conditions as the risks involved are far greater.

3.3.11 NIGHT DIVING

For night diving the following is recommended;

- Buddy diving
- Use of a torch and other illumination device, e.g. cyalume stick
- Diving up to 18 meters only
- A compass

3.3.12 BOAT CAPTAIN

Ensure you account for all divers.

You should consider leaving the dive site at the same time as the other boats or in pairs to provide a margin for safety in case a boat breaks down or there is an emergency. The second last boat on site is recommended to only leave the dive site after consultation, and clarification regarding destination, of the remaining boat captain. A radio watch must be kept by participating boats in the club dive until the “signing off” by the last remaining boat.

3.3.13 DIVE CAPTAIN

You shall ensure all boats have safely returned or have “signed off” via other communications. E.g. marine radio or mobile phone. A responsible person will be assigned this duty if the dive captain is unavailable or the dive captain is to absence himself.