

Risk Assessment

Rather than the popular perception of diving as a dangerous sport, most divers recognize that our sport is one of adventure and discovery rather than of constant risk.

We regularly enter and completely immerse ourselves in an environment that is not designed to support life as we know it. Diving consequently has an inevitable potential risk associated with it yet we are able to enjoy the sport safely with hundreds of thousands of uneventful dives completed safely each year.

Several factors contribute to this level of safe enjoyment including the following of formal training, using specialist equipment and importantly carrying out a constant and ongoing review of the risks associated with diving and adapting our actions and procedures appropriate to the prevailing and changing conditions.

Raising awareness to encourage wider adoption of formal risk assessment processes and recognition and acceptance of the duties of all involved can only enhance safe diving.

Geoff Hide (NDC Diving Group Leader)

RISK ASSESSMENT

The process of Risk Assessment is not a new one in recreational diving and the practice has always been an integral part of conducting safe diving. The diver's simple mantra of "**Plan the Dive, Dive the Plan**" has all the essential components of a Risk Assessment inherent within it and the only difference today is a change in the terminology used.

Risk Assessment is not however the preserve of just one individual but is part of an extensive and cohesive system that involves many aspects and the involvement of several people as in the examples below.

TRAINING

The inherent risks of diving have been considered within diver training and the training provided is geared towards minimizing and controlling the risks associated with particular levels of diving. The importance of this training is that as long as divers remain within the limitations of their qualifications then their training should adequately prepare them for meeting the risk levels for their diving. Consequently it is vitally important that further training be undertaken before extending the diving undertaken.

DO

The Diving Officer is responsible for all diving and training conducted within that branch and should ensure that divers remain within the limitations of their training but also ensure that adequate opportunity is provided to expand and extend their skills and experience.

DIVE MARSHAL

Appointed by the Diving Officer, the Dive Marshal has responsibility for planning and organizing the overall diving on the day and advising individual divers of the safety implications of their dives and taking appropriate steps to ensure the safety of all diving activities.

DIVE LEADER

Appointed by the Dive Marshal they take on responsibility for leading the dive and for monitoring dive progress and taking decisions throughout the dive for the benefit of the buddy pair. This should not always be considered in isolation and appropriate communication and agreement should be sought from the dive buddy.

DIVER

Each of us as responsible divers need to conduct our own personal Risk Assessment throughout the diving process. This would include expressing when we are not comfortable with a planned dive through to questioning or challenging a buddy's/dive leader's decisions if they are clearly inappropriate. If you do not believe it is safe to continue a dive you should say so and not just carry on regardless just because your buddy is more experienced.

For more details on the Risk Assessment process visit the Risk Assessment Resource Centre

Think SAFE – Dive SAFE

Jim Watson

BSAC Safety and Development manager