

Appendix 1. Best Diving Practice Guidelines*

- A1.1 Divers should terminate the dive while there is still sufficient cylinder pressure to permit them to safely reach the surface and return to shore or boat, including allowing for any decompression time or planned safety stops.
- A1.2 The dive team should not include a diver who for any reason is not physically or psychologically fit at the time of the dive; or whose dive equipment is not in a safe operating condition in the opinion of the nominated dive leader.
- A1.3 All dives, including repetitive dives, should preferably be calculated using DCIEM tables (Canadian Defence and Civil Institute for Environmental Medicine), but the use of well-maintained dive computers is acceptable.
- A1.4 Divers should do a safety stop at 5 m depth for at least 3 minutes immediately before surfacing at the end of each dive where the average depth exceeded 7 metres or the maximum depth exceeded 10 metres.
- A1.5 If a dive does extend beyond the no-decompression limits, divers should remain awake for at least 1 hour after diving and remain in the company of another person prepared to assist with medical intervention if required.
- A1.6 Divers should adhere to the buddy system as taught in their dive training. This buddy system is based upon mutual assistance, especially in an emergency.
- A1.7 If a volunteer diver becomes separated from their buddy:
 - a) the diver shall do a 360-degree search for a maximum of 1 minute looking for bubbles or visual sign of the other diver
 - b) if the lost diver is not located, the searching diver shall return to the surface at the correct ascent rate, still performing the 360-degree search on ascent
 - c) the searching diver will deploy a safety surface marker buoy, use a whistle (or ask where the lost diver is) and wait on surface for 4 minutes
 - d) if the lost diver is still missing, divers are to return to their boat or shore and initiate emergency procedures by contacting emergency services.
- A1.8 It is recommended that dive teams should include an informal dive leader and should comprise:
 - a) two divers and a competent boat person or shore watch (divers' attendant) OR
 - b) three divers and a competent boat person or shore watch (divers' attendant) OR
 - c) more than three divers grouped into buddy pairs (preferably) or trios, but no more, and one competent boat person or shore watch (divers' attendant).
- A1.9 For shore dive activities, in addition to the inflatable surface marker buoy ("safety sausage") carried by each volunteer diver, each diving team should carry a suitable float (with dive flag) and line, which can be attached to the substrate to mark their area of operation, or towed during the dive.
- A1.10 For boat dive activities, a dive flag shall be suitably mounted on the boat and visible while divers are in the water.
- A1.11 Before divers enter the water, one member of each group (usually the nominated dive leader if there is only one group) shall be designated as the underwater dive leader of that group. Prior to the dive,

the underwater dive leader shall confirm a method for summoning attention and recalling divers to the surface, such as banging on the tank with a knife or other metal object.

- A1.12 If the dive activities are to be conducted from a vessel, there should be one competent person aboard the vessel at all times to act as a lookout and divers' attendant, and to recall divers to the boat in an emergency. The method to be used, such as starting and revving the engines 3 times, shall be agreed between the nominated dive leader, the underwater dive leader and the person in charge of the vessel, and conveyed to the divers before the dive begins.
- A1.13 If the dive activities are to be conducted from a vessel which will drop divers and not be at anchor (live drop), the underwater dive leader and vessel skipper should consider putting in a drop-line to provide a visual reference for the person in charge of the vessel.
- A1.14 After completing a dive, each diver shall report any physical problems or symptoms of decompression sickness to the nominated dive leader or other person able to institute the required medical assistance.
- A1.15 Diving after travel - divers shall have had adequate rest before diving.
- A1.16 Travel after diving – altitude exposure after diving is a potent precipitator of decompression illness. A minimum delay time after a dive should be observed, prior to exposure to altitude (e.g. air travel and road travel over mountains). (See *Minimum delay before exposure to altitude*.)
- A1.17 As a general guide, if flying to or ascending to an altitude >300 m after diving:
- a) following a single no-decompression dive, divers should have a minimum pre-flight surface interval of 12 hours
 - b) following multiple dives per day or multiple days diving, divers should have a minimum pre-flight surface interval of 18 hours
 - c) following dives requiring decompression stops, divers should have a minimum pre-flight surface interval of 24 hours.
- A1.18 Before ascending to altitude >300 m by land transport, divers should follow the appropriate guidelines for pre-flight surface intervals unless the decompression procedure used has accounted for the increase in elevation.

**These guidelines are universal best diving practises as taught in any open water diver training. They have been sourced from the following reputable sources:*

Recreational Scuba Diving and Snorkelling Safety in Australia, 2008

(http://www.royallifesaving.com.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/4045/Scuba_Diving_Report_Final_2008.pdf)

DAN's Diving tips for the New Diver

(http://www.diversalertnetwork.org/medical/articles/DANs_Diving_Tips_for_the_New_Diver)

