



**Rocky Mountain Aquatics**  
**DIVE**  
**SUPERVISOR**

A Review of the PDIC  
Dive Supervisor Manual



## THE DIVE SUPERVISOR

### **Introduction**

A Dive Supervisor is:

- an underwater guide and leader of dives
- an instructor's training assistant and aide
- a safety and rescue diver for dive operations
- a dive events coordinator and director
- a highly skilled underwater professional
- a future instructor and leader of other Dive Supervisors

As a Dive Supervisor your first and most important responsibility is to yourself and to be the most responsible safe diver you can be. The Dive Supervisor should be the most active and depended upon individual on any serious dive operation. The Dive Supervisor is the liaison between the instructor and students and any other individuals involved in any diving activity. Become clear and familiar with what your duties should be and make sure you are always a good example of good safe diving.

Dive Supervisors are expected to be both physically and mentally prepared, knowledgeable in basic and advanced diving skills, having experience to relate to and draw from, and to be reliable as well as to be a self-starter. Dive Supervisors are a power pyramid with the ability to continuously lead others, control the group, and to relate all pertinent data between every faction of the dive event and those concerned. This pyramid consists of COMMAND functions; COMMUNICATION functions and CONTROL functions with CORRELATION the central point between the other three. Actual diving experience, knowledge and expertise though important are only a part of the leadership skills necessary to be an effective Dive Supervisor. Dive Supervisors must remember that their very presence and everything they do will have impact on the new divers with whom they come in contact. The Dive Supervisor has a direct impact in shaping the learning and growth of both new and experienced divers.

If you are in it for the money, you are in for a disappointment! This is not to say that some money won't ever come your way but there exists an even greater reward from working as a certified Dive Supervisor. From the simple joy of seeing a diver under your care conquer the training task set before them to their visiting of a sunken wreck for the first time, you will find that being of service to and leading others will enhance your own diving experiences and significantly add to them.

## **The Training Assistant:**

The backbone of what a Dive Supervisor is all about is training leadership. The first aspect of this training leadership is known as internalized efforts, which means to direct energies inward in achieving primary or initial results. There is no better task which defines this process than that of training new divers. While it is true that the instructor is directly responsible for training, it is equally true that it is usually the assistants, which are most directly involved, in the actual hands-on guidance and one-to-one supervision.

There are a matrix of duties involved with functioning in the capacity of a training assistant, which will demand of you a focus of attention, which you are not likely to be used to. Training assistants are generally assigned to a specific duty. Above all else, the primary duty of the training assistant is to be the ultimate “overseer.” There may be times when even being in touch visually is beyond the capabilities of the instructor. As the instructor has his or her hands full, it will be impossible to attend visually the supervision necessary for the entire training group or class. There are times when having a Dive Supervisor to keep visual charge of the dive activity at hand may be the most important element of all. **This is particularly true during the open water experience where the Dive Supervisor should pay particular attention to the following:**

- Making sure that the equipment is transported to the Dive Site
- Making sure that each student has the appropriate equipment
- Determine with the Instructor whether you should assist students to put their equipment together first and then get yours ready or whether you should get your equipment ready first
- Be alert to the interaction between the instructor and students. If a student or group of students are taking a great deal of attention from the Instructor you may make the greatest contribution by getting the Instructor’s equipment set up and ready.
- Assist students to put their equipment properly. Observe carefully and give them a chance to connect their own equipment but move in quickly to correct errors in equipment placement or connections.
- Determine with the Instructor whether you should enter the water first so that the Instructor can assist students to get in the water and place them under your supervision while he or she enters the water or whether the Instructor would rather enter the water first and have you only enter the water after you have assisted every student to enter.
- Place yourself so that it is always possible for you and the instructor to maintain eye contact, preferably with the students between the two of you.
- Stay alert so that you may be of assistance and follow the directions of the Instructor or meet clear and evident needs of students.

- After the open water experience help to keep equipment in order, remind students to take care of their equipment and generally help to provide order and direction.

**TWO EYES-TWO TASKS:** Training assistants must be able to focus in on either an individual or special problem without losing total eye contact with the group that they are responsible for. During training, help and advise, but do not become a “crutch.” Allowing students to make minor mistakes usually creates a better neuro-association, which graphically “drives the point home” of what is proper procedure and what is not. Many students will be unsure and insecure and actually work at trying to get you to do everything for them so that they will not have to do it themselves. Make sure that you are in attendance at all times, correcting and guiding the student divers every step of the way. It goes without saying that an explanation or valid reason always should follow any correction of error, otherwise the correction will more than likely lack a certain “bedside manner” quality and be misinterpreted as an undesirable reprimand instead. Remember that as a Dive Supervisor, you are a representative of your instructor. As a result of this, your actions will directly reflect not on the instructor but the entire organization you represent. When acting in this capacity, please be clearly aware of the appropriateness of every behavior.

The first step towards proper command is very simple; leave your “ego” on the beach, treat all students equally, and never try to “upstage” the instructor... no matter how valid your point is. If you feel that a serious problem has arisen or that you have a valid point, talk to the instructor-in-charge on the side away from students. In keeping with this notion, never, absolutely never lecture over any instructor. If you are given an assignment or receive a comment from an instructor with which you disagree – follow instructions and the advice without discussing it with students or others at the site and deal with it in private with the instructor later. Your job as a training assistant is to affirm what is being taught not to “re-teach” the lesson presented.

By being given the chance to become involved in teaching diving to others, you will be learning as much, if not more, than the students. At the end of each skill phase or training session it should be your responsibility to ask for feedback on how helpful your behavior and assistance has been. This might be of special importance with students to give you an opportunity to answer any questions and discuss any problems they have observed, and second, an opportunity to show students and the instructor that you are genuinely concerned for the well-being and progress of students.

As a Dive Supervisor serving in the area of “training assistance”, it goes without saying that your rudimentary training as a Rescue Diver is absolutely imperative. But the most important aspect of this is “prevention” not cure.

You will be, at times, everything from chief cook to bottle washer. There is some indication that in terms of percentage it might look something like this:

- 50% Training Assistant and Dive Leader
- 25% Safety and Rescue Diver
- 15% Psychologist
- 5% Technician
- 5% Lackey and obedient Slave
- 1% Babysitter

The performance of duties as a Dive Supervisor is a unique mixture of “groan” and “glory.” You will learn to deal with every situation by an equal distribution of your efforts and talents; and this above all-else, makes for an experienced and effective Dive Supervisor.

Always approach every situation with a positive attitude, especially when dealing with student divers. You as a dive leader must be certain of your own mental, physical and technical capabilities before you can turn around and expect the same from others in your charge.

There may be times when you might be involved in a training or diving situation where you at the time do not have the necessary technical training. Where there is a need for training assistance you can be of assistance whether you possess the specific training and knowledge or not. These situations can open up opportunities for you to learn and expand your own knowledge and skills and becomes one of the gifts and benefits of being a training assistant. In fact, many instructors will provide a great deal of free technical training and experience for you in return for your assistance and support.

As you become involved in training experiences consider the following comments and observations:

- Over Observation: Some Dive Supervisors are so busy looking for the forest that they don't see the trees. Simply put, this is a condition whereby you may try too hard to take in all that is going on and direct focus to an activity may become lost. Don't waste time observing “bodies”, rather read faces and watch for classic signs of problems ready to occur.
- Constructive Criticism vs. Blanket Statements: Often it is how you say something, not what you say that has the most important impact on an individual. Instead of dwelling on the negative, try to highlight what was done correctly or how a skill may be corrected. Be creative and constructive in your approach ... an approach, which finds you “talking to” not “down to” students.

- A Picture is Worth A Thousand Words: Rather than talking and trying to create a visual picture, save time and effort by doing a demonstration for the students.
- Dead Air Time: Keep the flow of activity up; don't allow any time to go by where communication between you and the students has broken. Always keep up the atmosphere with students by relating antidotes or personal experiences. This shows interest in them and is a form of teaching in its own right. But also remember that there are appropriate times on the part of both students and assistants where the best thing to do is to enjoy quiet thinking time.
- The Three T's: It should be remembered that at any given time there are three activities ongoing in any pool or open water situation. The TEACHING of skills, the TRAINING to reinforce, and the TRACKING to promote safety for all students involved. Know where you fit in based on your respective assignment.
- Intern and Learn: A Dive Supervisor working as a training assistant must always remember that the lessons being taught extend to them as well as the students. Always keep an underwater slate and pencil handy to write down notes and observations on one side and the instructor's lesson for the day on the other, or keep a journal and make entries as soon as possible before you forget what you observed and learned. By doing this you will begin compiling your own training notes, which will be of great service to you in the future.
- Position Conditioning: You should condition yourself, as should all other members of the staff, that while you are on rescue or general surveillance duties (also known as "safety diver") to always be at an equal distance from other staff members with students in between. If this is remembered, then there will be an even flow of all the staff members with no student or diver left uncovered or unobserved.
- Constant Contact: Visual, verbal, and physical contact are your key control resources. The degree to which you use these will intensify with worsening conditions. Remember not to become a "crutch", make dive buddies responsible for each other but always make the final check before beginning your dive activity.
- Skills Gone Sour: In most cases when a skill has gone sour, it's usually better to abort and return to a secured area (i.e.: boat or shallow end of the pool/beach). This approach is easier and prevents potential compounding of the problem by struggling students whose attention span has been lost.
- Buddy Matching: Often the instructor will subdivide the class into smaller training groups, which are placed under the direct supervision of the training assistants. You may find that it will be to your advantage to arrange groupings, based on your own judgment with the permission of the instructor. When creating "buddy teams" the following two options should be considered:

- a. Placing “ability compatible” student divers together or
- b. Placing “ability incompatible” student divers together

Often the first option is best suited, especially where beginners are involved. By keeping the weaker and stronger separate, an organized flow will result as these compatible buddies “seek their own level”, as it were. In the latter case, a dichotomy of performance might be the end result. This could mean a situation where the slower diver can’t keep up with the stronger one; resulting in frustration, anxiety, and impatience between the two. When this occurs, buddy separation might be advisable. There might be times, however, when a stronger but sensitive diver is exactly the right person to help another diver who needs assistance or support.

- **Silence is Golden:** Too often the breakdown of communication is due to one simple error, poor acoustics. Because of this, whether indoors or out, it is imperative that proper respect be shown to the instructor at all times and that students be in a position where they can hear and get the attention they need.

We have taken a look at some of what might be a never-ending list of common situations, which may arise. Use these common occurrences as “starter” information to be build on as you become more and more involved in your career as a diving professional.

#### Positioning for Stationary Skill Training:

Groups should be positioned in the shallow end relative to the area where they will be working underwater. This should limit the crossing over from one area to the next, thus preventing the bumping of one diver into another. The position of each group leader, regardless of task, should be in a central position relative to those that he or she is responsible to supervise or teach. With more than one group involved the designated “safety diver” must be in a position where each group can be equally observed. If assigned to a specific instructor an assistant should be close enough to the instructor to be able to take immediate direction.

#### Positioning for Mobile Skill Training:

The same basic rules apply as before with only slight additions as to your task. When moving with your team, your position should be off to the side and at the rear. This manner of swimming will allow you to observe the entire group and at times it might be important to establish eye contact with the instructor with all students in between the two of you.

### Responsibilities of an In-Water Safety Diver:

1. Know the water-training operational procedure for the activity you are dealing with.
2. Your main function is surface attending. Be prepared to relieve the instructor of any student who has been brought to the surface for a problem, thus freeing the instructor to continue with his or her given task.
3. Identify the weakest students and place a special watch on them.
4. Take advantage of the indirect responsibility you have and use the time to "spot check" equipment of all those in the water, let this be random and as periodic as possible.
5. Act as a "traffic director", making certain teams and groups don't "jam up" during exercises. Also relay to others what positions are available underwater and on the bottom for group activities.
6. You can serve as a "communication" bridge for instructors and other staff members by bringing and delivering messages from surface to submerged groups and visa versa.
7. Assist in keeping the pace moving. Attend to groups and leaders by making them aware of the time frame ... remember it is very easy to lose track of time when you are involved underwater.
8. Remember that your primary job is "safety" and "control", do not interfere with training activities unless it involves one of these two items.
9. Attend to students that are not with a leader for whatever reason. Be prepared to take over for an instructor if necessary with an individual student. Have your equipment ready to go and readily available.
10. Attend to "pre" and "post" dive duties as well. Watching the beach, checking for proper equipment fit and care, assisting anyone who may need help, getting equipment ready for distribution, keeping equipment organized, and making sure equipment is cleaned and stored properly. Remember that this task is easier for you since you are not usually directly responsible for any one student or group of students.

### The Academic Element

Although the Dive Supervisor is not responsible for the academic side of dive training, this should stop those who wish further involvement in this area of dive leadership.

Many instructors are willing to allow the Dive Supervisor to take on limited instructor lecturing duties, some go as far as to encourage this. The best plan is to become involved in a specific course of study, such as an Assistant Instructor candidate. Not only will your role of Assistant Instructor assist you in expanding

your knowledge as a diving professional, but also allows greater freedom for the instructor to expand his or her ability to deal with student divers more directly and individually.

Most often the Dive Supervisor or Assistant Instructor candidate would present "limited" topic lectures within the parameters of the current lecture. It should be noted that the instructor must be present at all times to guide and correct, if necessary, on items or areas.

Ideally and most important is the instructor's feedback, which in turn becomes an excellent staging area for your future role as an instructor.

Major topics which are covered in courses are the direct responsibility of the instructor and he or she would determine what you are capable of doing. Equipment and environmental factors are often two good beginning lectures.

There is an old saying, which says "you don't really know your subject until you have to teach it." It is without reservation that this is true.

### Mental and Physical Aspects of the SCUBA Student

The physical capabilities of anyone is shaped and conditioned by the way in which they eat, sleep, motivate, and generally live. It goes without saying that anyone who dives should be in good shape, but it doesn't stop there. The student diver should be encouraged to develop a regimen of physical activity, especially in the area of respiratory, circulatory and cardiac fitness. As a diver, it will also be necessary to keep up with skills and techniques, including new safety and procedure guidelines. As a Dive Supervisor you will have your hands full, people from all walks of life, all ages, and various stages of physical health. It is important that you really relate to the tremendous dichotomy of students that you may be responsible for ... just think of the instructor and the responsibility that he or she must bear.

Mental attitudes are also an incredible diversity of people's personality and beliefs at work. As a dive leader you will find that the area of mental attitude is by far the most serious issue. The first problem, however, is that mental attitudes are not always obvious or noticeable since they don't always involve performance expression, that is, they can be the direct result of that person's own internal perception, not necessarily the result of a physical action.

Students may have a variety of attitudes, which can create conflicts, which directly involve other students as well as staff. These attitudes can go undetected for long periods of time and end up compounding a problem during a difficult or stressful situation. One of the worst mental attitude is "ego." In ego, we find that the student diver justifies, whether rationally or irrationally, that "I know better... he can't tell me what to do...I'm not going to let him show me

anything." Often young males who are easily threatened, can create major problems. The tendency to panic is also often the result of an attitude.

It is important that a Dive Supervisor adopt a smooth one-on-one approach which builds trust and confidence which should be as open and relaxed as possible. Mental problems can lead to physical problems such as the fear of the unknown leading to the inability to function correctly. Physical problems can lead to mental problems such as hyperventilation leading to panic.

The best weapon against these problems will be the judgment and powers of observation of the staff, all leading to an approach which is preventative and swift in action.

### **Dive Supervisor Employment Opportunities:**

#### Assistant to a Scuba Instructor:

A common responsibility is to assist a certified instructor in teaching diving courses. Many feel that attaining a dive supervisor rating is an important step towards becoming a dive instructor, but not everyone is interesting in going in that direction. Serving as an assistant is in itself a deeply rewarding experience and fulfilling experience. As an assistant to an instructor you may participate fully in the classroom, pool and in open water. The duties assigned to the Dive Supervisor may include that of safety diver or team leader in the water, and/or actually providing instruction. The Dive Supervisor works under the direct supervision of the instructor and may do so as a part of an employment assignment or on a volunteer basis to enhance skills and/or just for enjoyment.

#### Boat Dive Supervisor:

This position carries with it a multitude of responsibilities. There are many different types of boat dives available. It is the responsibility of the Dive Supervisor in these settings to be completely familiar with the dive sites involved, including things like the typical surface and underwater conditions. In addition, the Dive Supervisor may be a member of the boat crew and be required to gain additional skills and even certification in this area. Keeping track of all diving activities and spotting potential problems with divers as well as equipment are essential elements of this assignment.

### Dive Guide:

Many dive facilities around the world provide or even require Dive Supervisors to escort or guide divers through their entire diving experiences. A Dive Supervisor would usually be responsible for no more than four divers. This is done for several reasons:

- Since dive operators have a rapid turnover of customers, they do not have an in-depth knowledge of a particular divers' capabilities. To make sure that all divers return to the boat or shore safely, they employ a dive guide. The guide is responsible for making sure that the divers check their remaining air, and find their way back to the boat.
- Navigation is a difficult task to master for many divers. It is very reassuring for these divers that they do not have to worry about finding their way back to their starting point. They can enjoy the sights without having to look at their compass.
- If the dive operator knows that there are inexperienced divers onboard, or renting their equipment, they may be more than glad to provide or even require a guide to accompany these divers.
- Dive guides can accompany groups of more experienced divers to point out the more interesting underwater locations and marine life.

### Live Aboard Dive Boats:

Many people enjoy their dive vacations on these "mini floating hotels." Live Aboard allow the customers the flexibility of diving a variety of sites in a short period of time. In addition, they provide a unique vacation experience – often having wonderful chefs and the ability to tour many coastal areas, as well. The Dive Supervisor on these types of boats may perform a variety of duties in addition to being responsible for the dives. He or she may also function as a crewmember, social director or have other duties based on the needs of the boat or the customers. Major Cruise lines operating in tropical water will have onboard Dive Supervisors to assist passengers in purchasing equipment, making recommendations or arrangements for land based diving experiences. Cruise lines look for individuals who have a wide range of aquatic experience and skills. The head of all aquatic activities for Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines is a Certified Scuba Instructor. He is always looking for Dive Supervisors who are willing to really get to know the specifics of all of the ports of call in order to help passengers decide where to go and can also take groups on escorted tours. These individuals may find themselves teaching a wide variety of other aquatic activities such as paragliding, using wave runners, snorkeling, etc.

## **Supervising the Dive:**

There are five phases to any dive. Each phase needs to be taken seriously to ensure that the dive will be safe and enjoyable for all participants. SCUBA is a recreational activity, and a good dive ends with the participants excited about planning their next underwater adventure. The five stages of a dive are:

- Planning
- Registration
- Dive Preparation
- Dive
- Post Dive

Planning includes developing the idea for the dive excursion – when, where and how the dive will take place. Diving from a shore encompasses a variety of physical terrain. Shore dives can take place at lakes, quarries, rivers, and the sea. The shore may be paved, sandy, rocky or boulder strewn. Access to the shore may be easy or difficult. The divers may have to walk a short distance to the water with their equipment on, or they may have to climb down an embankment. The entry into the water may be easy or difficult, as well. There may be current, tide or surf conditions, or the water may be relatively calm. Do not assume that all divers are familiar with all of the entry procedures. Take the time to explain to the divers exactly how the dive site will be approached. If possible, this information should be explained at least twice, once when the diver signs up for the experience or arrives at the site, and again when all of the divers congregate at the entry point for the dive. In addition, consideration should be given to the difficulty of the dive itself (depth, current, and accessibility to the water), whether it will be a single or repetitive dive, and the availability of food and restrooms. The Dive Supervisor should also consider if any special equipment would be necessary (flashlights, reels, dive flags, etc.) about which the divers should be informed. Whenever possible, a written description of the planned dive which includes all of the above factors should be available for the divers to review so that they know exactly what they will be encountering before they sign up for a dive experience or for a scuba certification course.

Registration is the next step in attracting divers and having them sign up for the dive or the course. This is a wonderful opportunity to open up a two-way communication about what you have to offer in terms of the dive plan, and what they have to offer in terms of their certification and experience to do the dive. This is the time to review the information that was described above. Most recreation dives will only require that the diver present an open water certification card. However, the Dive Supervisor should assist the diver in determining if the proposed dive is the most appropriate for that individual. The Dive Supervisor can also ask to review the diver's logbook if there is a question about the best match between dive and diver. For example, newly certified divers, or people who are making their first dive after several years of not diving, may be hesitant

to do a ninety foot dive. In this situation, the Dive Supervisor should recommend that these divers should build up their confidence by taking some shallower dives prior to making the deeper dive.

### Dive Preparation:

- The Dive Supervisor and all assistants should arrive at the dive site well in advance of the divers.
- The Dive Supervisor must asses if the water and weather conditions are conducive to safe diving.
- All safety, life saving and other medical equipment should be ready and accessible.
- All assistants should be briefed on the overall dive plan, sites of entry and exits, location of safety equipment, and their specific responsibilities. (See Chapter on Accident Management)
- The Dive Supervisor and the assistants who will be going into the water should assemble all of their SCUBA equipment.
- When the divers arrive, the Dive Supervisor should introduce him/herself and all of the assistants.
- If the following have not been completed during registration, they should be done now:
  - ⇒ Certification Card examined and/or collected
  - ⇒ Release forms signed and collected
  - ⇒ Log books reviewed
  - ⇒ No one should be allowed to dive without the presentation of a certification card and signing a release form
- Divers should be briefed about the location of coolers, drinks, restrooms and safety equipment.
- A roster of all divers should be made, and buddy teams noted on the roster.
- The PDIC International Dive Supervisor should give a thorough briefing on water and bottom conditions including information on currents, tides, surf, visibility, temperature and depths.
- The best entry and exit locations and methods should be described.
- The best dive site locations should be identified.
- If dive flags are used, divers who will tow the flag(s) should be identified, and all divers should be briefed on their use.
- The Dive Supervisor should explain the procedures to be followed for separated dive partners, lost dives, and a diver having problems on the surface.
- Emergency procedures, as well as recall signals and procedures should also be included in the briefing.
- The Dive Supervisor and assistants should observe the divers assembling their SCUBA equipment. Several factors need to be observed. Anxious or apprehensive divers may have difficulty in

assembling the equipment. The Dive Supervisor should calmly assist that person, and at the same time attempt to reassure the diver about the dive. If the diver is still very anxious, the supervisor may suggest that an assistant accompanies the diver, or that the person not dive. The supervisor and assistants should also examine the assembled equipment for anything that may be missing, or if the divers are taking equipment that may not be suitable for the dive. This does not have to be a piece-by-piece inspection, just a general observation of the equipment.

- When working on a boat discuss water and weather conditions at the dive location.
- Know about the functioning of the boat as it relates to divers (the head or toilet, availability of water and safety equipment, and any other pertinent information that the divers need to know while onboard).
- Explain to divers that it is much easier to balance and assemble their equipment first while the boat is stationary than when it is moving.
- Make sure that equipment is stowed or secured so as to not roll around or fall while the boat is moving
- Instruct divers as to how they are to get to the bottom. Some boats or locations allow divers to make free descents, while other dive operators insist that the divers follow a descent line or anchor line. These expectations must be clearly known to divers.
- Explain clearly how divers are to exit the water back onto the boat. There are several different styles of ladders, some requiring fins to be removed prior to climbing aboard, and others where the fins are worn while climbing the ladder and not removed until the diver is topside. Extra instruction may be required if weather conditions may make entry particularly difficult.
- Instruct divers that when returning to a boat that they should not hang onto the line close to another diver who is on a ladder – they should stay several feet back so that if the person on the ladder slips they will not land on the diver in the water.

The Dive starts with the approach to the water with full equipment, and ends when all divers have returned to shore safely, and their names have been checked on the roster.

- The Dive Supervisor and the assistants should be equipped and ready to assist the divers in donning their equipment, and making their way to the entry location.
- Make sure that each diver's air is turned on.
- Assist any diver that needs help in getting into the water.
- The Dive Supervisor and the assistants may either be deployed on the shore as observers, or in the water as safety divers or guides.

- As dive buddies enter the water, the Dive Supervisor should mark their names on the roster, and indicate the time they entered the water.
- Preparing to enter the water from a boat, even in minimal waves, with full SCUBA gear is difficult. Different boats have different procedures for when the divers are to put on their fins. On some boats, divers put their fins on while seated, and then get up and shuffle to the entry point – they may need assistance in remaining stable. On others, they are asked to walk over to the entry point with fins in hand and are assisted in donning their fins just prior to entering the water. The Dive Supervisor and assistants should be available to assist divers in crossing the deck to get to the entry point.
- The Dive Supervisor and assistants should be vigilant for divers in distress, and assist in any way possible.
- As each diver exits the water, the Dive Supervisor should mark the roster that they are ashore, and the time of the exit.
- The Dive Supervisor and assistants should be available to help the divers as they come out of the water if they need any guidance. Assistance may be needed as the divers remove their equipment.
- Be ready to assist divers out of the water when boarding a boat. For many, climbing the ladder and getting back to their seat is difficult because of the sudden increase of weight on their back. Rough water can make this process exceedingly difficult for some.
- When all divers are ashore or onboard, the Dive Supervisor should conduct a roll call or head count to be absolutely sure that all divers are accounted for and out of the water. The Dive Supervisor is ultimately responsible to make sure that everyone is safely on shore or onboard, and should not pass this duty on to someone else. This may seem to be a lot of paperwork and redundant processing, but with a large group of divers moving around, it is easy to make an error. **If you are working on a boat, do not let the captain start the boat until you make sure that all divers are accounted for.**

Post Dive is a time when divers are usually exuberant and talkative about their experiences. Each dive usually has its own charm and surprises for the divers, and they usually want to share these experiences and observations with other divers and the Dive Supervisor. This is a good opportunity to generate excitement about diving in general, and getting people to begin thinking about future dives. If the dive involves more than one dive the following should be done:

1. The Dive Supervisor is responsible for making sure that all divers adhere to an appropriate surface interval. No divers should be

- allowed in the water until that surface interval is achieved. Inform the divers of the length of the surface interval.
2. Have the divers transfer their equipment to new cylinders.
  3. As the divers are resting during the surface interval, observe them for any signs of anxiety or apprehension (especially those that were anxious prior to the first dive), and spend some time with them, talking about the dive, and planning the next dive with them. Talking with people, and getting them to think through problem situations is usually an effective way of reducing anxiety.
  4. Observe the divers for any signs of physical discomfort. Diving can be physically exhausting, especially if the entries and/or exits are difficult. In addition, people who are not in good physical condition, or who have not been diving in some time may also experience some discomfort or physical weakness. If these issues are observed or brought to the Dive Supervisor's attention, she or he should immediately talk to the diver in question and ascertain if this is merely a sign of fatigue, or the possibility of a more serious health issue. Appropriate measure should be taken in either situation. This may include a range of possibilities, from advising the diver to sit out the next dive, to getting the diver to emergency medical services, depending on the severity of the situation.
  5. The surface interval is a good time for the Dive Supervisor to complete the Dive Supervisor's Logbook. The Dive Supervisor should be sure to note any unusual incidents. The Dive Supervisor may be requested to keep the Instructors log which would record the names of all divers as well the activities and/or skills accomplished
  6. When all diving activities have been completed the Dive Supervisor and assistants should encourage all divers to pack up their equipment, and be directed as to where to rinse their equipment, if necessary. The Dive Supervisor should also be responsible for having all of the rescue, safety and medical equipment packed away and make sure that no equipment or trash is left behind.

#### Dive Safety:

Regardless of the type of dive a Dive Supervisor is ultimately responsible for the safety of all of the divers participating in the underwater excursion. There are diver related issues that can affect overall safety, and for which the Dive Supervisor needs to be vigilant and aware. These can be broken down into two categories – Diver preparedness and diver lack of judgment. These two problems are often interrelated. The Dive Supervisor must be able to diagnose these problems and provide solutions and/or alternatives.

Some divers may not have enough experience to participate in some types of diving, yet may be hesitant to admit it. Some students may not really be adequately prepared for the open water experience. Sometimes divers may try

to bluff their way into making the dive. Dive Supervisors must be alert for those people who display a great deal of bravado or boasting. Assess whether the diver is truly capable, or just putting on a front to cover up his or her fear or inadequate dive experience or preparation. If the Dive Supervisor determines that the diver is not prepared for that particular dive, he or she must be firm in not allowing that person to dive, or to be able to dive with certain restrictions.

The Dive Supervisor should not assume that dive partners, whether married or friends, are equally trained or mentally or emotionally capable of making the same dive. It is not unusual for one diver to "egg" the other one on to go on a dive for which he or she feels they are not ready. If a diver is hesitant to make a particular dive, yet feels pressure from others to do it anyway, intervene in a firm manner. Talk to the diver in question in private. Reassure that person that diving is supposed to be a fun sport, and that it is perfectly acceptable if he or she wants to sit out the dive. Do not allow people to feel undue pressure to make a dive for which they feel unready or hesitant to make. Often, people in these situations need a way to "save face." They will make a dive despite their discomfort unless they have an excuse that will be acceptable to their dive buddy. Support them in finding a "valid excuse," and not giving in to peer pressure. If necessary, intervene with his or her dive buddies.

Diver preparedness may also involve physical issues. For example, it is known that the possibility of getting the bends increases with recent alcohol consumption. If divers are talking about how drunk they got the night before a deep dive, encourage them to wait a few hours or even a full day before they make their next dive.

In their excitement, divers may forget the basics and may not do simple things that could help prevent them from getting decompression sickness. Encourage divers to be well hydrated with water and decaffeinated beverages before and between dives. In addition make sure that all divers maintain an adequate surface interval.

#### References:

#### **PDIC: A Guidebook for the Dive Supervisor (Note: You should get this.)**

Auerbach, Paul. (2002) "Dive Medicine: Managing Motion Sickness: New Alternatives for Divers." *Dive Training*: March 2002, 91-94

Dovenbanger, Joel. "Basic Instincts." *Alert Dive*: Nov./Dec. 2001, 8-9

Durand, V. Mark and Barlow, David. *Abnormal Psychology, An Introduction*. Wadsworth/Thompson Learning, Belmont, California, 2000

Joiner, James T. (ed) *NOAA Diving Manual: Fourth Edition.* Best Publishing, Flagstaff, AZ. 2001

Manning, George; Curtis, K.; and McMillen, S. *Building Community, The Human Side of Work.* Thomson Executive Press, Cincinnati, 1996

McDougall, Connie. "Dive Boat Safety: Confessions of a Captain." *Alert Diver*, March 2002, 10-11

Parks, A. Lee, and Fairchild, Thomas, *How to Survive Educator Burnout – Kids Come in Special Flavors.* Dayton Ohio 1981