

Guideline For Scuba Diving/Snorkeling- Water Based Adventure Tourism Activities

For Registration with Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

1. INTRODUCTION

Scuba diving is a mode of underwater exploration where a person uses a self-contained underwater breathing apparatus, which is completely independent of surface air supply, to breathe underwater.

SCUBA (Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus) diving is an aquatic activity that allows people to interact with the marine world.

The term 'diving' here is used to describe recreational diving following international rules regulations.

Snorkeling is a part of swimming on under water mainly in the sea while equipped with appropriate swim gear to gain opportunity to observe under-water life in a natural setting/environment.

2.BASIC OPERATING PROCEDURE / GUIDELINE

2.1. OPERATIONS

- a) Minimum qualifications for recreational divers.
 - i. Dive certification card from a recognized agency that approves a person to dive in open water.
 - ii. Log book validating open water diving experience.
 - iii. Should produce a recent valid certificate from a medical practitioner clearing to dive.
 - iv. Completed diver registration form.
- b) Supervision of diving activities:
 - i. All diving training and certification has to be done as per the standard exclusively by SCUBA diving Instructors, or Dive Masters.
 - ii. It is essential to have a dive plan. Dive centers must be informed of any changes to the dive plan of the dive boat and divers.
 - iii. An instructor or dive master cannot guide more than 5 divers in the water at and given time.
- c) Discover SCUBA Diving

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- i. A Discover SCUBA Dive (DSD) is provided to a participant who is not a certified SCUBA diver.
- ii. This activity **MUST** be done in the presence of a dive instructor or a dive master.
- iii. The maximum depth for a DSD should not be more than 12 meters.
- d) Diving in restricted areas:
 - i. It is recommended that dive centers consult the relevant appropriate authorities to find out the possible restricted dive area.
- e) Cultural and environmental protection
 - i. Nothing should be taken from the sea, particularly cultural monuments, or artifacts. Damaging and extracting cultural monuments is prohibited.
 - ii. Divers must protect the marine environment and its inhabitants. Divers should avoid damaging coral and physical contact with marine animals.
 - iii. Sharks should **NOT** be fed under any circumstances.
 - iv. Activities detrimental to marine protected areas (MPAs) and protected species are prohibited. Prior approval should be obtained from relevant authorities to dive marine prevention areas.
- f) The instructors and supervisor carrying out the snorkeling activity should have a basic knowledge and experience of the activity.

Each snorkeler should provide with a full set of required equipment by the operating center. The equipment should inspect and maintain regularly.

The operating center should have basic important information of the snorkeler with emergency contact number.

2.2. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) AND INSTRUCTIONS

- a) All Operators must maintain and update a Standard Operating Procedure for their operations.
- b) Besides covering the methodologies that are adopted by the operator of the activity, should covers assessing of members medical condition and experience, avoidance of injury, safety precautions, procedure for emergencies, casualty evacuation, incident and accident reporting, communication procedure assessment of weather condition and feedback mechanism.

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The following must be included in the Standard Operation Products (SOP):

- i. An Emergency Action Plan should be in possession and advance arrangements must be aware for medical help and evacuation assistance in case of an emergency.
- ii. Staff/ guides must be trained in all aspects of the Emergency Action Plan in every 03 months as a safety drill.

2.3. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR RECOGNITION OF OPERATORS

- a) Each SCUBA diving snorkeling center must have at least one dive instructor and trained staff with valid license.
- b) The Dive Instructor must have a valid instructional license from a recognized national/international diving institute/ association Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI), National Association of Underwater Instructions (NAUI) etc.
- c) Discovery dives instructor or dive guide should have a minimum qualification needed to conduct resort activities.
- d) The dive center should be affiliated with international SCUBA diving agencies.
- e) The dive staff should meet the minimum qualifications required by the affiliated dive agency.
- f) The dive center should comply with affiliated agency's requirements for safety standards and documentation of dives and certifications.
- g) The Dive Centre must have an Emergency Action Plan with regular training for the Dive Centre staff periodically.
- h) The company must follow a strict 'leave no trace' policy and conform to high sustainability standards.

3. MANDATORY EQUIPMENT

3.1.

a) Diving Equipment

Each dive center should have a full set of following equipment depend on:

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- i. the capacity of participants.
- ii. Adequate filling facility
- iii. Scuba Tank,
- iv. BCD (Buoyancy Control Devices) Regulators
- v. Masks
- vi. Fins
- vii. Snorkels
- viii. Proper attire depending on the terrain of activities
- ix. Weights and weight belts.
- x. Dive computers that provide depth, time, and decompression readings for all divers
- xi. Emergency signaling device — reflective inflatable surface balloon and a whistle.
- xii. Underwater flashlights suitable for night diving.

b) Dive Boats

All dive centers offering boat-diving must have Dive Boat as per following:

- i. The boat shall consist the requirement of number of divers/capacity. Acquire chambers for placing of the filled cylinders, all essential safety, rescue and recovery gears and equipment's- First Aid kit, Emergency Oxygen cylinder etc.
- ii. The Hull shall designed in a manner that it has sufficient space to administer First Aid, Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) etc. to a victim.
- iii. The boat should be equipped with one high Horse Power engine or two engines of minimum horse power each; required for sea going.
- iv. The boat must have valid insurance coverage for the boat and participants.
- v. The boat should be handled by a master with a valid certificate in Boat-handling and Life Saving activities.
- vi. While onboard, it is mandatory that everybody wear Personal Floatation Devices (PFD) of appropriate size.
- vii. The diving shall be undertaken only at designated sites, where all precautions as per the stipulated standards including demarcation of the site with buoys etc.

3.2.DIVE CENTER REQUIREMENTS

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- a) All dive centers should have emergency action plan for any diving related accidents
and equipped with pure emergency oxygen supply.
- b) The dive center must have a manager who is responsible for day to day operation
of the center.
- c) Dive centers must have a valid dive insurance cover for employees and participants,
including coverage for decompression chamber treatment.

3.3.DOCUMENTATION

- a) Each dive center/office must maintain a record of each diver, including:
 - i. Personal and contact details.
 - ii. Emergency contact information etc.
 - iii. All information must kept and maintain in the dive center.

4. SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1. RISK MITIGATION

- a) Dive center staff must brief divers prior to every dive, regarding regulations, depth limits, dive site characteristics, currents, entry and exit techniques, potential hazards and environmental considerations.
- b) After each dive, a safety stop must be made for at least 3 minutes at 5 meters.
Divers must commence their safety stop with a tank pressure not less than 50 bar.
- c) The use of a buoyancy control device (BCD) is mandatory for all diving activities.
- d) Dive Centers must be aware of local weather conditions and inform divers of special conditions at each dive site prior to the dive.
- e) Dives deeper than 30 meters is prohibited:
- f) Any boat with divers operating from it, must always have display signals/flags by day or night to inform other boats.
- g) The dive flag is used to signal to boats, jet skis and others in the vicinity that divers are below and should approach the site with caution.

4.2.EMERGENCIES & RESCUES

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- a. All dive centers must have an Emergency Action Plan and training sessions should be
- b. provided for all staff annually All dive center staff must be familiar with emergency oxygen supply equipment.

4.3. SAFETY BRIEFING

- a) In addition to a comprehensive dive briefing, all diver should receive a safety briefing,

5. GENERAL INFORMATION

5.1. EQUIPMENT CARE AND MAINTENANCE

- a) If a dive center professionally fills compressed air into cylinders, they are not to fill cylinders that have not been hydrostatically pressure tested in the last five years. Dive center employees must be made aware of this.
- b) Equipment and compressors should be serviced annually, and it is imperative that compressors have oil and air intake filters changed frequently to maintain air quality.
- c) All equipment must be washed, dried, and checked thoroughly after each dive.

5.2. MEDICAL CONCERNS

- a) Each diver should fill out a medical form clearing them from conditions that preclude from diving. If they do experience these conditions, they should receive written medical clearance from a medical practitioner.