

CONDITIONAL RETURN TO ESSENTIAL RESEARCH DIVING ACTIVITY UNDER UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA AUSPICES

As of 6/1/2020, the UA Diving Control Board has determined that essential research diving activity under University auspices may be allowed under specific conditions as outlined below, which are designed to reduce the risk of COVID infection.

New dive plan approval applications will be accepted as of today's date for current and ongoing UA research projects, for which Principal Investigators (PI), with the approval of the respective Dean, deem that diving is immediately necessary to the continuance of its research effort. College or Departmental concurrence should be indicated by a dean or department head signature on a field safety research plan, which is to be submitted with the dive plan.

All divers listed on plans must be current in CPR, First Aid, O2, dive medical physical, and have a COVID Risk Acceptance form on file (see template).

All dive plans must be accompanied by a COVID Dive Plan Amendment (see template).

o COVID Dive Plan Amendments must include detailed descriptions of how dive operations will be designed to comply with the MINIMUM COVID19 EXPOSURE CONTROL GUIDELINES TO BE EMPLOYED FOR ESSENTIAL UA RESEARCH DIVING ACTIVITY, as outlined below.

All PI's and divers must recognize that the current window of diving oppor

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o Shore-based dive operations should consist of no more than two i

If air sharing is required, refrain from sharing a single second stage unless to refrain would result in injury or loss of life. Responding divers will establish contact and control, and then donate the secondary second stage.

Equipment configurations with auxiliary second stages integrated into a BC inflator are not compatible with this requirement and cannot be used until further notice.

Diver assist, rescues, and first aid must be approached with extra safety precautions in mi

Reinforce with all participants the need for standard use of PPE whenever available. This includes face masks and eye shields in all first aid situations, when available.

In surface rescue and assist scenarios, unless an immediate assist is necessary to prevent l of life, responding divers must stop a safe distance (at least two full body lengths, approximately 12 feet) from the distressed diver to perform initial assessment ("Are you OK? Inflate your BC! Drop your weights!").

Where possible, divers should remain on their scuba regulators with their dive masks in place during surface activity.

Surface tows should be performed with the primary objective of expediting extraction without attempting rescue breathing during transport.

Dive equipment and any personal auxiliary equipment used must be dedicated to an individual diver for the duration of the diving operation.

Each diver will only prepare, maintain, and handle their own diving equipment including during transportation and exit and entry from the water.

All dive equipment and vehicles and vessels used must be properly disinfected according to CDC procedures before and after use, by the diver using it.

Each diver must be responsible for disinfecting his/her own equipment. All regulator second stages and BC oral inflators must receive an initial freshwater rinse, then be immersed in a 10% bleach solution or other EPA-approved disinfectant, remaining wetted for at least 4 minutes, and then receive a

O2 kits, first aid supplies, etc...must be disinfected and disposed after use, using best practices.

WHILE THE UA DCB SETS THESE GUIDELINES AS A MINIMUM FOR RESEARCH DIVING OPERATIONS DEEMED ESSENTIAL TO THE UNIVERSITY'S RESEARCH MISSION, RESEARCHERS, PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS, AND ADMINISTRATORS SHOULD REMAIN MINDFUL THAT SIMILAR CONDITIONS AND CONCERNS EXIST IN ALL MARINE FIELD OPERATIONS, INCLUDING BOATING. ALL PARTIES ARE ADVISED TO CONSIDER WHETHER A PARTICULAR ACTIVITY IS TRULY ESSENTIAL, AND ENSURE SIMILAR PROCEDURES ARE FOLLOWED IN OTHER ACTIVITIES.

APPROVED BY UA DCB