**Edinburgh University Sub-Aqua Club Health and Safety Policy**

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**1. Definitions and Changes**

**1.1 Definitions and clarifications**

The following terms and abbreviations are used in this document

* The club – refers to the Edinburgh University Sub-Aqua Club
* Sports Union (SU) – refers to the Edinburgh University Sport Union
* BSAC – British Sub-Aqua Club
* UK – United Kingdom
* H&S – Health and Safety
* DO – Diving Officer
* Man dives – refers to a single dive carried out by a single member of the club independent of their gender and size of the dive group
* SQEP – Suitably Qualified and Experienced Person
* Nationally Qualified Instructor (NQI) – BSAC Open Water Instructor and above
* Risk Assessment – Process of assessing the probability and severity of all risks involved in an activity and decision on whether the risk involved are reasonably acceptable, this process does not stipulate a specific template and may be done as a mental exercise
* Slate management – is a process of recording (usually on a slate) the planned and actual dive time, this provides count of divers in the water and helps work out when divers are overdue
* MCA – Maritime and Coastguard Agency
* RNLI – Royal National Lifeboat Institution

**1.2 Changes**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Issue** | **Date of Issue** | **Summary of Change** | **Authorised by** |
| 03 | October 2016 | The policy was edited to include the Underwater Hockey team’s safety policy in Appendix A. | S. Fairbairn  Diving Officer  (2016-2017) |
| 02 | March 2013 | The policy was rewritten to provide clear view of the responsibilities of different stakeholders. | A. Zacheshigriva  Diving Officer  (2012-2013) |
| 01 | October 2010 | Original Document | Unknown |

**2. Introduction**

Scuba diving can be a dangerous sport. To minimize the risks, various processes and controls are used in the club. This policy document summarises the responsibilities of the club members, the diving and equipment officers, dive managers and instructors. It defines the governing bodies that provide rules and regulations as well as guidance and best practice advice to the club.

Individual rules and regulations are not referenced in this document as that would be impractical.

All members of the underwater hockey team must follow the guidelines in the safety policy outlined in appendix A.

**3. Governing Body**

The club has two governing bodies. All club activities and processes have to be in line with the rules, regulations and policies of the SU and the BSAC, which is the national governing body for scuba diving in the UK.

In practice the SU regulations are more dominant in the aspects of club regulation, finance and reporting. However the safety aspects are described in more detail in the BSAC policies. The club is different from the majority of other SU clubs in that it is an outdoors activity, often referred to as an extreme sport. By its nature the main safety issues arise from being in a remote location and reliance on extensive equipment and techniques in comparison to other sports.

BSAC provides guidance and training programmes that cover all H&S aspects of the sport. This guidance is under continuous review by the BSAC and other international governing bodies. Best practice is identified and where necessary new regulations are introduced. These changes are cascaded to the club via the official channels and are adopted when applicable.

**4. Responsibilities of the Club Members**

All members of the club have a responsibility to ensure that diving and supporting activities are carried out in a safe manner. In particular club members have the following responsibilities which they are informed about either during their training or cross-over lectures (which are obligatory for all qualified divers that join the club):

1. To have an adequate third party insurance (provided by BSAC as part of their membership)  
2. To complete a medical self-declaration and get it approved by the dive doctor if required.  
3. To acknowledge their competence level and qualifications and only do diving that is within their ability.  
4. To inform the DO about their dive plans, discuss the plan and agree on the H&S elements.  
5. To only take part in diving that is done in line with the regulations and guidance and is approved by the DO  
6. To report at the end of each day of diving to the DO, as a minimum the number of man dives and description of any incidents, near misses or unsafe behaviours  
7. To carry out risk assessment for all diving related activities that they take part in.This takes a form of a SEEDS buddy briefing prior to the dive covering the topics of:

a. Safety

b. Equipment  
c. Exercise (including: depth, time, route, turnaround point and decompression management)  
d. Discipline  
e. Signals

8. To carry out safety checks before the dives covering the following as a minimum:

a. Buoyancy Control  
b. Gas supply (including alternative source)  
c. Releases (for de-kitting in case of emergency)  
d. Extra equipment

**5. Responsibilities of the Diving Officer**

The diving officer (DO) is a special position on the committee. The DO is responsible for the supervision of all diving and diving related activities in the club, although there is an expectation that the DO will provide drive and direction for effective and efficient running of the club as a whole and help develop all club members, his or her main responsibilities are to ensure that the safety is never compromised and all club activities are carried out in line with the regulations and best practices. The requirement for the DO in a club is stipulated by the BSAC and approved by the SU.

Due to the nature of the position of the DO the post holder has to be a Suitably Qualified an Experienced Person (SQEP) as defined by BSAC. The DO has to hold a BSAC Dive Leader qualification as a minimum. It is expected that they have good knowledge of the club, its members and equipment, local dive sites and have a broad experience of diving and organising trips. To make it possible to meet these requirements the DO of the club may be a non-student. This is because it can take many years to acquire the necessary experience and skills. This is stated in the club constitution and approved by the SU.

The DO has overall responsibility for safety in the club. He or she takes a proactive role in promoting an effective safety culture. In particular the DO has the following responsibilities:

1. To review dive plans presented by the dive managers, asses all safety aspects of the trip and discuss it with the dive manager, this includes but is not limited to:

a. Assessment of the mix of experience of divers and buddy pairings  
b. Assessment of the dive site, dive platform and equipment  
c. Assessment of the weather and tides on the day of diving  
d. Assessment of the contingency plans and rescue management available  
e. Assessment of the transport used

2. To approve dive trips where the risks involved are reasonable and all applicable regulations are met  
3. To suggest changes to the plan or mitigation options when risks are beyond acceptable or regulations are not adhered to  
4. To veto dives when risks are unacceptable and no mitigation is possible  
5. To oversee the teaching activities. All formal training carried out by the club is done to the BSAC syllabus and has to be approved by the DO. The DO has to ensure that all teaching is properly planned and is carried out by qualified instructors in an appropriate manner.  
6. To report any incidents or near misses to the BSAC using the established procedure  
7. To review divers’ achievements in training, approve and sign off official diving qualifications when the appropriate level has been obtained and demonstrated. This is vital to ensuring that the standards of diving are maintained to a high level.  
8. To disseminate new guidance from the BSAC to the club members, especially the instructors  
9. To pay attention to any concerns or suggestions raised by any club members about  
safety issues  
10. To delegate responsibility to a suitable club member if they are unavailable (e.g. out of the county)

**6. Responsibilities of the Dive Manager**

All open water diving carried out by the club members is done on dive trips. Each dive trip has a dive manager (and often an assistant dive manager), who has to be approved by the DO. The dive manager would either be an experienced diver (Dive leader as a minimum) or would be working under the supervision of an experienced diver. In any case each dive trip has at least one person trained in dive management and rescue management.

Dive manager has the following H&S responsibilities:

1. To prepare a detailed plan of the dive trip, including risk assessment. The choice of the dive sites is done with consideration of the following factors:

a. Divers experience mix  
b. Site specific hazards (tides, depth, traffic, etc)  
c. Tides  
d. Weather forecast  
e. Journey to the dive site, access and egress  
f. Emergency plan

2. To discuss the plan with the supervising instructor if applicable and the DO in all cases  
3. To monitor the weather conditions near the dive and during the day  
4. To reassess the risks if anything on the trip doesn’t go to the plan. And if necessary call off diving if it is no longer safe (examples could be: worsening weather, problems with diver’s health, missing or malfunctioning equipment, falling behind schedule)  
5. To give safety briefing to the divers before the dives  
6. To assign SQEP to manage boats and register when divers go in and out of the  
water (slate management)  
7. To report to the DO when diving is complete for the day

**7. Training and Instructors**

All formal training done in the club is carried out in accordance with the BSAC syllabus and rules. All instructors are required to attend regional training events and exams to achieve their qualifications. All practical and the majority of theory training is done under the supervision of a Nationally Qualified Instructor (NQI). All training plans are reviewed and approved by the DO. Open water training takes part on dive trips and is supervised by the dive manager, this process is described in section 6 of this document.

Pool training is always supervised by at least one NQI. Just like the open water lessons, each pool lesson starts with a briefing which includes safety considerations and risk assessment. On the day of the pool training the day manger will brief the whole team about pool safety rules and fire alarms.

All BSAC training is done in a progressive manner. This includes teaching dive skills, building experience (such as depth progression) and instructor experience. In practice this means that when a diver or instructor achieves a new qualification which allows them to take part in more advanced activities (such as: deeper diving, dive management, instructing) they build up their experience from simple to complex situations with the supervision of suitably experienced divers before practicing it without supervision.

**8. Club equipment**

The club provides various diving equipment to its members for hire. Some of this equipment is safety critical and requires regular maintenance. The maintenance is carried out by a qualified professional.

The register of equipment service is held by the club Equipment Officer. All club members are trained in the use of the club equipment.

All divers have responsibility to look after the dive equipment, wash it in fresh water after diving, transport and use it with care and for its intended use and report any problems or concerns to the Equipment Officer.

Equipment officer can quarantine equipment which requires maintenance or has been reported as faulty. No divers should use it until the equipment is returned to the usual location.

Club equipment is stored in the club lockup. The fire safety of the lockup is assessed by the Diving and the Equipment Officer and is audited by the SU representative on a regular basis. It is the responsibility of all lockup users to keep the lockup tidy and ensure good housekeeping.

Club boats are maintained by the club members with the supervision of the Equipment Officer. Maintenance involves annual overhauls, pre-dive preparation and daily checks when diving.

When diving using club boats is planned the DO assesses the experience of divers on the trip to ensure that enough competent boat handlers and coxswains are present.

The club boats are kept up in accordance with the BSAC, MCA and RNLI guidance for small pleasure craft.

**Appendices**

**Appendix A - Underwater Hockey Team Safety Policy**

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY SPORTS UNION

SAFETY POLICY

1. All Clubs must be affiliated to their appropriate National Governing Bodies (NGB).

Edinburgh University Underwater Hockey club will remain registered, as a club member, with The British Octopush Association (BOA). Registration will identify the club allowing Underwater Hockey activities to run. Without membership the club will suspend activity to avoid uninsured risk.

Membership insures the team, provides access to BOA services, allows team registration for National competitions, and supports teams in reaching national standards promoted by Sport Scotland. It is the team’s responsibility to ensure that regulations set out by the BOA are followed to prevent access to the above being removed. Individual members who knowingly disobey BOA regulations may be prohibited from training with Edinburgh University Underwater Hockey club.

Membership will be renewed during the common renewal date (CRD), during Autumn. Three members are required to take on roles as Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. The roles are voluntary; no member should be forced to take up an unwanted position. Voting systems will be introduced if necessary, and all members should be aware if a vote is required.

Club members are responsible for ensuring they are registered. The club, wherever possible, will ensure all members have the appropriate information.

1. The Sports Union must at the time of registration be supplied with:

(a) an Advisory Safety Code from NGB (the BOA)

(b) the Club's Safety Policy

(c) An agreement signed by the Club that the Safety Policy will be adhered to at all times

The clubs safety policy will be reviewed annually by the committee, and revised in accordance with the safety policy set out by the BOA (details of which can be accessed via <http://www.gbuwh.co.uk/index.php>). Signed agreements (see c above) should be reviewed and revised annually to ensure correct and current information is provided to the sport union. New committee members, and where applicable club members, should be made aware of the safety policy to ensure that it followed. Revisions to the safety policy will be supplied to the sports union.

The clubs priority is the safety of its members, and members who knowingly disobey rules and regulations set out in the safety policy will have implications, e.g. players may be prohibited from participating in Edinburgh University underwater hockey club training and other events. The sports union will be informed of behaviour that breaches Sports Union policies, and code of conduct (found via the sports wiki, <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=106301804>)

1. The Safety Policy must include at least the minimum recommendations of the NGB.

Annual review and revision will ensure that the minimum recommendations set out by BOA are followed.

(4) As part of a member's registration Clubs must make members aware that:

(a) the Safety Policy forms an integral part of his/her membership;

(b) breaching of any part of the Safety Policy will deem him/her not to be a member of the Club and that such action is being taken at his/her own risk;

(c) all members should have read and understood the Safety Policy;

(d) any reports of breaking the Safety Policy will result in disciplinary action.

See (2) above.

(5) All clubs that are required to do so MUST return a completed Trip Registration form 48 hours prior to the trip's departure.

(6) Suitably qualified person(s) must accompany all trips.

Guidelines set out by the BOA, and Sports Union (<https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk>) will be followed regarding trips to competitions. Members are responsible for their behaviour when travelling and during competitions, trials, alternative club training sessions etc. Competition guidelines (e.g. on registration, competitors, divisions) will be followed. Any member whose behaviour goes against that set out by the guidelines or who does not follow rules and regulations may be prevented from competing, in both current and future events and playing with Edinburgh University Underwater Hockey club.

(7) Suitable First Aid provision must be made for all trips.

When organising trips the club will attempt to ensure the appropriate number of qualified first aiders are present. First aid kit will be provided, if necessary, and checks with the competition hosts will be provided to ensure correct first aid is provided.