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## Diving Safe Working Practices

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The Diving Operations at Work Regulations 1981 (as amended) apply to diving operations in which the divers are at work.

These notes have been prepared primarily for reference on construction work involving diving operations in connection with docks, harbours, reservoirs and inland waterways in shallow waters down to 30m.

It is important to make clear distinction between construction companies who use their own employees as divers and the construction companies who employ specialist diving companies or self-employed divers.

It is also important to differentiate between Diving operations at sea which in the local case come under the control of the Senior Harbour Master TORBAY Harbour and his designated Harbour Masters at BRIXHAM, PAIGNTON and TORQUAY harbours.

### **HARBOUR MASTERS**

Harbour Masters in addition to others involved in Diving operations, have a duty under the Diving at Work Regulations 1981 (as amended) to ensure that such operations are conducted safely, so far as is reasonably practicable and that all such operations conform to the Regulations.

It is essential that Harbour Masters and others who arrange or permit diving operations to be undertaken inform shipping in the vicinity that such operations are being carried out and alert the diving team to any local hazards. These could include the location and operation of any underwater sluices, outfalls and intakes as well as other underwater obstructions and hazards. The diving team should also be informed of the operation of locks in the vicinity of the operation and the passing of ships.

Many ports have bye-laws which require the permission of the Harbour Master before any diving is carried out. Where this is requested, and the Harbour Authority has no other involvement in the operation, it will suffice for the purposes of the Regulations if, when giving permission, the Harbour Master stresses that permission is given subject to the Regulations (as amended) being complied with.

Where Harbour Masters become aware that the Regulations are not being complied with, e.g. not enough persons in the diving team or a diver not having the correct diving certificate, reference should be made to the local HSE Inspector who deals with diving, as only HSE can enforce the

Regulations. In this connection, it would be wise to be sure who the local diving inspector is and where he can be contacted.

Where Harbour Masters are involved in either employing divers or employing diving contractors, they will have responsibilities for ensuring that the Regulations are being fully complied with.

### **DIVING IN ASSOCIATION WITH CONSTRUCTION WORKS**

The construction company (Main Contractor) who is the recognised “Diving Contractor” would be responsible for complying with the requirements of the Diving Operations at Work Regulations 1981 (as amended) as well as being responsible for general obligations under the various Construction Regulations and HASAWA etc.

The specialist diving company or self-employed diver when engaged as “Diving Contractor” by a construction company (Main Contractor) will have responsibility for the range of duties of the Diving Operations at Work Regulations 1981 (as amended) and will become a subcontractor to the main contractor on that particular contract. It is important to remember that the construction company would continue to have a general duty under Regulation 4 of the Diving Operations at Work Regulations 1981 (as amended) in addition to his duty towards the “Diving Contractor” under the various Construction Regulations and sections of the HASAWA as a normal subcontractor. It is therefore important the the Main Contractor is familiar with the Diving Regulations and, as far as is reasonably practicable, monitors the activities of the Diving Contractor.

### **DIVING CONTRACTOR**

Diving cannot start until a “Diving Contractor” has been appointed. If the construction company uses its own employees as divers the employer would be the “Diving Contractor”.

If there is more than one employer they must agree between them who will be appointed “Diving Contractor” and this appointment must be made in writing.

A specialist diving company or self-employed diver, engaged by a construction company (Main Contractor), would be the appointed “Diving Contractor”.

The “Diving Contractor” will be responsible for appointing, in writing, one or more diving supervisors to be in immediate control of operations, for issuing diving rules for regulating the conduct of all persons engaged in the diving operation, for providing a diving operations log book and for ensuring that all plant and equipment which is necessary for the safe conduct of the diving operation is tested, inspected and available for immediate use.

### **DIVING SUPERVISOR**

The “Diving Supervisor” will ensure that each diving operation for which he is appointed is carried out under his immediate control and in accordance with the diving rules. In particular he will:-

1. ensure that a current test certificate is held for plant and equipment and the equipment has been examined by a competent person within six hours of diving commencing;
2. ensure that a copy of the relevant part or parts of the diving rules is made available to each member of the diving team;
3. enter the necessary particulars in the diving operations log book and sign entries daily during the course of the diving operations;
4. countersign relevant entries in the diver's log book.

### **DIVING TEAM**

No diving operation may be carried out unless there are present a sufficient number of divers and other competent persons, forming the "diving team". The functions of the diving team include the operation of plant, equipment or other facilities and are generally to ensure the safe conduct of the operation.

### **DIVERS**

A person may not take part in any diving operation as a diver unless he: -

**1. Has a valid certificate of training stating the category or categories of diving to which it relates.** The Health and Safety Executive will provide the necessary certificates to divers who can substantiate their competence by training and/or experience. Training establishments, approved by the HSE, can obtain these certificates from the HSE on behalf of student divers who reach the recognised standards. A register is kept by the HSE of certificated divers.

A certificate issued by a diving contractor during a period of up to six months after the regulations came into force (i.e. up to 31st December 1981), is an acceptable alternative to the HSE certificate. Certificates issued by the Manpower Services Commission, prior to 1st July 1981, are also acceptable.

**2. Has a valid certificate of medical fitness.** All divers require a certificate of medical fitness to dive, issued by a doctor or by an Employment Medical Adviser approved by the Health and Safety Executive, in accordance with these regulations. The medical certificate must be entered in the diver's log book and the entry must be in such form as the HSE may approve.

**3. Is competent to carry out safely the work which is allocated to him.** Every diver must maintain a personal log book in which he enters his name, signature and contains a photograph which is a reasonable likeness of him.

Details of his daily work must be recorded in his log book and he must sign each entry and each entry must be countersigned by his diving supervisor.

Every diver engaged in a diving operation must inform the diving supervisor appointed if he is unfit or if there is any other reason why he should not go or remain under water or in a

compression chamber. (The effects of alcohol or drugs or a heavy meal before diving are examples.)

Certain divers are excluded from the regulations, principally those using only snorkel type apparatus or no underwater breathing apparatus at all and those in submersible craft or press-resistant suits at less than 300 millibars above atmospheric pressure.

### **MEDICAL**

Prompt and efficient treatment to an injured person is vitally important. Divers often work in situations which are isolated from readily available professional medical assistance, and the injury they have sustained may be compounded by a need for therapeutic decompression.

Diving contractors must make adequate medical and first aid arrangements, including):-

- ensuring that all divers hold a valid certificate in first aid;
- the provision of equipment, facilities, medications and trainer personnel for first aid and emergency treatment;
- ensuring that trained “diver medics” are present when necessary;
- ensuring that all members of the diving team are aware of any medically prescribed instructions on the management and handling of people who are injured or become ill while diving.

### **Emergency services (police, ambulance services, hospital authority)**

Arrangements should be made for calling the emergency services and advance notification of the diving locations should be given where appropriate.

Arrangements in case of emergency are required to be covered as part of the diving rules to be issued by the diving contractor.

A written contingency plan with instructions to alert emergency services should be posted at the contract office and at the diving station.

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE (PLYMOUTH AREA)**

A diving medical service has been organised by the approved doctors working in the Plymouth area. A communications network has been set up using a private line to “Aircall” and the duty doctor is equipped with a pager. The service is available on a 24-hour basis. The service may be mobilised by calling Plymouth (01752) 261910 and asking for the Duty Diving Doctor.

When operating through radio stations, all messages should be prefixed with “DIVING EMERGENCY PRIORITY”.

For further information:-

HSE Diving Safety Memoranda