



# Safety Checklist

## for underwater survey work

### PLANNING:



- Designate a team leader who should coordinate planning
- Team leader to delegate tasks and make decisions
- Allocate personal gear to users for individual responsibility
- Establish a work plan and discuss with team members
- Designate a contact person who knows the work plan
- Study the survey location using maps and local information
- Ensure you have effective communication by radio or mobile phone
- Arrange secure packing of gear and materials

### DIVING CREDENTIALS AND INSURANCE:



- Check that all divers have a minimum open water level certification
- Only allow active divers who have dived in the last 6 months to participate
- Check that all divers have insurance and a valid annual medical clearance to dive
- Ensure you can contact the local emergency agency
- Ensure someone in the group knows relevant first aid procedures

### WEATHER AND GENERAL CONDITIONS:



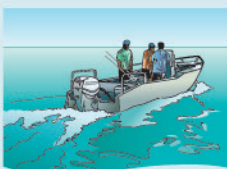
- Monitor daily weather forecasts
- Seek local advice where necessary
- Plan activities according to daily weather conditions and tidal changes
- Avoid diving in rough seas and strong tidal currents
- Always dive in the same direction as the current
- In channels always dive into the lagoon
- Avoid areas of poor visibility

### HEALTH:



- Do not dive if you have a head cold or are not feeling well
- Change daily plans to suit the needs of the team if necessary
- Keep a medical kit onboard
- Ensure at least two team members have basic first aid skills
- Don't dive under influence of alcohol or drugs, even the night before
- Have oxygen equipment on board when diving to depths of over 40 m

### BOAT SAFETY:



- Ensure the boat is a suitable size and design for the work plan
- Check that all basic safety gear is onboard (see SPC sea safety booklet)
- Check engine and keep additional fuel onboard, crosscheck with operator

- Safely stow objects onboard
- Ensure the boat operator knows the whereabouts of all divers and be alert for other swimmers and fishers in the water
- Stay away from ascending divers (10 m at least); move in when they have surfaced
- Position the boat into the wind and swells in all operations
- Ensure there is an assistant onboard to help divers back into the boat
- Do not leave boat unattended or move away from work site
- Ensure that enough food and water is onboard in case of delayed return

### DIVE EQUIPMENT:



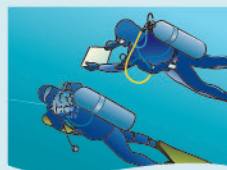
- Ensure all equipment is serviced regularly
- Pack an additional set of equipment
- Check gear for proper fit and leakage; replace with spare set if faulty
- Ensure divers know their weight system
- Check regulator and BCD for leaks and trapped hose
- Be familiar with your equipment; avoid subserviced and unfamiliar gear
- Keep fragile equipment in cases out of sun and saltwater when not in use

### BEFORE-DIVE CHECKS:



- Check that your buddy's gear is in good order
- Secure, within easy reach, a spare octopus, regulator and dive computer
- Test air supply, check weight system and depth gauge before and on descent
- Be clear on your dive plan before entering water; ask if you are unsure
- Ensure your writing slate is in order and pencil and record sheet are ready
- Ensure all divers have basic understanding of standard dive sign language

### UNDERWATER:



- Never dive alone
- Maintain the same depth as your buddy and stay within view of each other
- Stay focused and do not stray from the dive plan
- Signal immediately if you sense a problem (e.g. tiredness, air running low, gear failure)
- Adjust your weight belt and buoyancy system
- Fix problems as soon as they happen, don't let them build up
- If you lose your buddy, stop work and look around the area for 2 minutes; if you cannot locate your buddy, ascend safely and alert the boat operator



# Safety Checklist

## for underwater survey work

### USING A COMPRESSOR:



- A person should be in charge of the compressor
- Ensure the machine is serviced before going into the field
- Secure sufficient fuel to run the compressor
- Check for clean air before refilling
- Take care of the machine and keep a spare one if necessary

### DETECTING PROBLEMS:



- Observe yourself and your buddy regularly for signs of problems
- Signs of problems include: rapid breathing, no response to signals, awkward kicking, tears in eyes, eyes wide open, jerky movements, using arms to swim, ejecting mask and regulator, bolting to the surface
- On the surface, problems include: lagging behind, choking, coughing, vomiting, moving the head back, treading high out of the water, using hands and arms, and no snorkel or regulator in the mouth

### ASCENDING:



- Always ascend together; follow decompression stop rules
- Ascend up the wall face if near a reef wall
- Always face your buddy when ascending in mid-water
- Stay closer together in low-visibility waters
- If using a sausage float, use exhaled air to fill the sausage
- In deep dives, keep spare scuba tanks and regulator at least 10–15 m below the boat
- Always check above for the boat or objects before surfacing
- Keep watch on the boat when moving closer and getting onboard
- Be careful when removing weight belts, as they can fall off easily

### ENVIRONMENTAL DANGERS:



- Avoid actions that attract sharks such as fishing: stay away from fishers
- Wear full wetsuits, boots and gloves for maximum protection
- Follow local advice
- Do not touch anything if unsure
- Stay away from estuaries and murky waters in countries where crocodiles are endemic

### ACCIDENT:



- Implement responses to accidents that you have practiced. e.g. throw life-float to victim
- Ensure that the process of assisting the victim does not endanger the life of other team members
- Work out a plan of action with the others onboard
- Bring the boat closer to the victim, extend anything available to reach the victim
- Place the diver gently in a comfortable position onboard
- Commence ABC checks (airway, breathing, circulation)
- Allocate tasks to team members
- Alert relevant authorities for assistance as soon as possible
- Record changes in condition of distressed diver, activities and time of events

### AFTER DIVE CHECKS:



- Remove gear and safely stow it
- Put fragile equipment – GPS, computers, mask, camera – in cases
- Turn off dive tanks onboard and keep tanks secure when the boat is moving
- Avoid free diving immediately after a deep dive
- Wear a wind breaker on cold and windy days
- Check that all data are recorded before leaving a site
- Ensure safe keeping of completed record sheets
- Do not travel by plane within 24 hours of completing a dive

### GENERAL CONDUCT:



- Seek permission from the community and local authorities for access to work site
- Use a local guide at all times and follow his or her instructions
- Respect local rules, code of conduct and culturally significant sites
- Team leader is responsible for maintaining order at all times
- Maintain good behaviour
- Ensure good communication is maintained at all times

**This Safety Checklist should be used alongside:**

**The SPC Manual for Safety at Sea, a scuba dive regulation manual, and any marine environmental safety guide.**