

## THE FIFTH OPEN WATER DIVE

### Lesson Objectives

This lesson should round off the students' ability to function as an Ocean Diver by developing their dive leading skills as well as further consolidating their general diving skills. It will also provide a final check of their weighting as their breathing patterns settle over their first few dives and further reinforce weights/weightbelt jettison as a self rescue skill.

### Achievement Targets

At the end of this lesson students should:

- Be competent and confident in their ability to plan a dive within the limitations of their previous experience
- Be competent and confident in their ability to kit up
- Be competent and confident in their ability to perform buddy check
- Be competent and confident in their ability to lead a dive within the limitations of their previous experience
- Be competent and confident in their ability to jettison their own weights/weightbelt

## Lesson Contents

This lesson will require a site with which the students are familiar. Following on from the briefings and demonstrations from previous lesson, the students should take a much more active part in planning and conducting the dive. Instructors should give guidance and advice, and retain an overall monitor of safety, but should encourage the students to take the lead wherever possible.

The dive will need to be managed to end in shallow (ie. chest deep) water.

### 1. Briefing

Ensure that the students fully understand the objectives of lesson and what their responsibilities will be during its planning and conduct. Include all the elements of a 'SEEDS' brief, although some may be more productively covered after the planning is complete. Highlight in particular that while leading the dive, the priority is the safety of the buddy pair (ie. buddy monitoring and depth/time/breathing gas considerations) and that other tasks, such as pilotage, are a lower priority.

### 2. Dive leading planning

With advice on the site and the general route provided by the instructor, students should develop a simple dive plan (of such a nature that it would be suitable for two Ocean Divers to conduct together). Instructors should refer back to the briefings of previous lessons to draw from the student the aspects that need to be taken into account both in planning the dive, and its subsequent conduct.

Students should take the lead in determining decompression and breathing gas consumption considerations for the plan. Even in circumstances where decompression is unlikely to be an issue, students should still be able to demonstrate this (rather than just assume so), either by use of tables or computers. Students should also establish appropriate 'turn round' and reserve gas contents values.

Where the group comprises more than one student, separate segments of the dive should be planned to allow each student a realistic time to lead the dive. Each segment should involve an outbound and return leg from a starting point, with another student then taking the lead for a segment involving a differing route.

The instructor should encourage and prepare students to accept direction and guidance from the dive manager (students should be made aware of the roles and responsibilities of the dive manager).

Following the dive and subsequent debriefings, the students should report back to the dive manager. Here students together with their instructor could discuss the content of such debriefings and the information to feed back to the dive manager.

At the end of this exercise the students should be **competent and confident** in their ability to plan a dive.

### 3. Prepare SCUBA unit

Students should, by this time, be fully competent to prepare their equipment. The subsequent buddy check will provide an unobtrusive means of checking their performance.

**Report dive plan to Dive Manager.**

### 4. Kit up and buddy check

Buddies to assist each other to kit up and conduct buddy check. Once the students have completed their own buddy check, instructors should then perform a check of their own equipment for the benefit of all students.

At this point the students should be fully **competent and confident** in their abilities to assist their buddy to kit up and conduct buddy check.

### 5. Entry

Entry suitable for local conditions.

### 6. Student dive leading practice to between 12 and 20m

Students lead dive under supervision of instructor. While allowing the students to lead as much as possible, the instructor should, where necessary to ensure a successful implementation of the dive plan, interject reminders about buddy checking, correct pilotage etc.

- Buddy monitoring  
Frequent exchange of 'OK' signals, periodic checks of breathing gas consumption, relative positions enable divers to see buddy, distance between buddies appropriate to both underwater visibility and the need to be able to render assistance if required
- Depth/time/gas management  
Management of dive to observe agreed depth limit. Management of dive time and profile observing agreed 'turn round' and reserve gas contents
- Pilotage

Identification of topographical features to follow and significant landmarks. If landmarks required for return leg, look at aspect that will be seen in the return direction

- Feed/Report back to dive manager at end of dive

At the end of this exercise the students should be fully **competent and confident** in their ability to plan and lead a dive at a familiar site and under circumstances within their previous experience.

## 7. Weight check with low breathing gas contents - 2m depth

Over a number of dives many students, becoming more familiar with being underwater, develop more relaxed breathing patterns, with the result that they may be carrying more weight than is necessary. As overweighting is potentially dangerous, this should be checked at this stage.

- In approximately 2m of water all the air should be vented from the dry suit and a 'mid water hover' buoyancy check should be carried out with low cylinder breathing gas contents (approx 50 bar). Any necessary adjustments to the students' weight (not suit inflation) should be made until a controlled hover can be achieved. To compensate for the 50 bar of breathing gas remaining, and to ensure that, should the need arise, a controlled ascent could be achieved with lower breathing gas contents, approximately an additional half a kilo of weight should then be added.

## 8. Weight/weightbelt jettison - standing depth

The skill of weights/weightbelt jettison is an important 'last resort' skill, but must nonetheless be able to be performed as instinctively as other skills. This exercise consolidates this self rescue skill.

Kneeling on the bottom, operate weightbelt buckle/weight releases, pull weightbelt/weights clear of body and release.

Because this exercise will result in a major increase in positive buoyancy, it must not be carried out in deeper than chest deep water.

At the end of this exercise the students should be fully **competent and confident** in their ability to jettison their weights/weightbelt as a last resort in an emergency.

## 9. Exit

Exit suitable for local conditions.

**Report back to Dive Manager.**

## 10. De-kit

Students should by this time be fully competent to remove their equipment with their buddy's assistance.

## 11. Debrief

Check that all students have enjoyed the dive. Review their performance as dive leaders, highlighting areas of good performance and offering constructive criticism where necessary. Encourage the students to broaden their diving experience in different conditions and to consolidate their skills.

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## Adapting this Lesson

The content of this lesson is unaffected by differing standards of protective clothing and hence no adaptation is necessary.

## Skills Performance Standards

At the end of this lesson, the students should be sufficiently competent to achieve the following skill performance standard(s) without supervision, in the water conditions experienced:

**Dive planning** – within the constraints of depth and location set by the Dive Manager, students establish a dive profile which takes into consideration decompression considerations, and determines appropriate gas levels for commencing the return leg leaving the bottom, and an appropriate reserve.

**Kit-up and buddy check** – students should assist their buddies to kit up and then conduct a buddy check covering buoyancy devices controls and functioning, breathing gas supply contents and functioning and equipment BC harness and weight system releases. Students assess how they would access their buddy's AS if required, and how they would carry out a CBL on their buddy if required.

**Dive leading** – throughout the dive students regularly monitor their breathing gas, depth, dive time and breathing gas consumption together with their buddy's well-being and breathing gas consumption. Buddy position/separation maintained appropriate to underwater visibility and ability to render effective assistance if required.

**Weights/weightbelt jettison** – student locates and operates weights/weightbelt release quickly and without fumbling, pulls weights/weightbelt clear of body before releasing, weights/weightbelt fall cleanly and without snagging on any equipment.