



## **SPECIAL DIVING PROVISIONS DURING COVID19 PANDEMIC – SEPTEMBER 2020**

In compliance with CDC, CSU, and State of California directives, and with consideration of the special potential exposure conditions posed by diving and associated auxiliary activity, **the Cal Poly Diving Control Board on September 1, 2020 approved the following, effective immediately, for diving activity under Cal Poly auspices. These provisions shall remain in effect until Cal Poly resumes in-person training.**

### **Cal Poly Covid Provision #1 – Non-essential diving is suspended.**

- Research Diving – All diving not deemed non-essential shall be suspended. As all divers know from experience, diving and its surrounding activities are messy, wet undertakings, commonly requiring close personal contact in a highly variable environment. For these reasons, the DCB finds diving activity (including skin diving work) is an area of special concern for COVID19 exposures.
- Training – All in-person training shall be conducted on a case by case basis. This includes scientific diving check-out dives, free diving training, and DAN 1<sup>st</sup> Aid training. Training sessions will involve reduced capacity classes

### **Cal Poly Covid Provision #2 – Dive plans deemed essential will be reviewed on a case by case basis**

- Approval for essential diving must ultimately come from the Appropriate Administrator for the research being conducted. Staff should inquire with their supervisor. Students inquiring if their project diving needs are essential should consult with their faculty advisor and faculty should contact their department chair.
- Dive plans for diving deemed essential shall be reviewed again, taking into account the recommendations made below.

### **Cal Poly Covid Provision #3 – Best practices for diving deemed essential**

The following are considered minimum requirements as of the date of this document. Additional measures may be required by the DCB based upon specific characteristics of the planned operations, environmental conditions, current community public health situation, or further guidance from UCD.

- All dive team members will conduct CDC Daily Self Health Check.
- No diver will participate who feels ill or has reasonable cause to believe they have been exposed to COVID-19.
- All diving operations must be conducted under the assumption that at least one unknown member of the operations is currently asymptomatic, infected, and contagious.
- Dive teams and auxiliary personnel must be kept to a minimum.
- During all aspects of the operation, adequate interpersonal distancing must be maintained. Minimum surface interpersonal distances must not be less than 6

feet. It must be recognized that the 6-foot distance is generally specified for indoor, land-based conditions. Interpersonal distancing procedures apply to all surface activities associated with the dive including :

- Vehicular and vessel transit to dive sites
  - Vessel and vehicle sizing must be planned to allow adequate interpersonal distancing, and will be reviewed by the DCB as part of dive plan evaluation.
  - At a minimum all personnel while on the surface must wear a covering over their mouth and nose in order to reduce respiratory droplet dispersal from coughs and sneezes into the air and onto vehicle and vessel surfaces, and discourage the inadvertent face touching.
  - If standard protective barrier equipment is not available, all team members must use the best available substitute, such as sunglasses, and balaclavas, neck gaiters/buffs, etc...which cover the mouth and nose.
- Pre-and post-dive briefings and debriefings
  - Primary dive team operational planning and briefing should be conducted prior to departing for the dive site.
  - On site discussions and prep must be minimized to essential items.
- Buddy and equipment checks
  - Each diver must only handle and test their own equipment.
  - Each diver will perform functional testing and demonstrate operation of his/her equipment while observed by the buddy.
  - During pre-dive checks, divers must not breathe from their own secondary second stage (Octopus). Pre-dive functional testing must be accomplished via depressing the purge and listening for free flows.
- Entries, exits and surface swims
  - Diving must only be conducted under conditions in which normal (non-emergency) entries and exits can be made unassisted and in full gear.
  - These must be accomplished with each diver's mask in place and the divers breathing from their regulators.
- 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 thus all divers must have a standard alternate 2<sup>nd</sup> stage (octopus).
- Diver assist, rescues, and first aid must be approached with extra safety precautions in mind.
  - Reinforce with all participants the need for standard use of protective barriers whenever available. This includes face masks and eye shields in all first aid situations, when available.
  - If standard protective barrier equipment is not available, team members must use the best available substitute, such as sunglasses, and balaclavas, neck gaiters/buffs, etc...which cover the mouth and nose.
  - In surface rescue and assist scenarios, unless an immediate assist is necessary to prevent loss 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 final freshwater rinse before drying.
    - Equipment used by one diver will not be used by a different diver without an intervening period of at least 5 days and a re-disinfection prior to use.
    - O2 kits, first aid supplies, etc... must be disinfected and disposed after use, using best practices.
  - Upon completion of a day's operations, the Lead Diver must communicate a log of the day's dive to the DSO, including
    - Time, date, location, nature of diving activity;
    - Names and contact information of all participants, their roles, and dive parameters (number of dives conducted, diver pairings, dive time and depths, and dive modes used);
    - Any incident or accident, including possible breaches of exposure protocols.