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Services

SPORTS SCUBA DIVING PROGRAM

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These instructions implement AFD 34-1, *Air Force Services Programs*. It establishes the requirements for personnel from units assigned, attached, tenant, and associate to Kadena Air Base who wish to participate in *Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus (SCUBA)* diving programs on or around Okinawa and establishes the criteria under which Air Force agencies and activities may sponsor recreational diving programs. All Air Force personnel who engage in sport diving on Okinawa are responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures herein. Commanders and supervisors will ensure that military, civilian and family members within their commands are informed of and comply with Japanese and Okinawan laws/ordinances governing diving and the removal of marine life. It applies to 18th Wing and associate units at Kadena Air Base. This publication does not apply to the Air National Guard or US Air Force Reserve.

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

Changes are in paragraphs **11.** and **12.** in regard to reporting SCUBA mishaps. New or revised material is indicated by an bar (|).

1. Responsibilities.

1.1. The Commander, 18th Services Squadron (18 SVS/CC), is responsible for programming, budgeting, and supervising the necessary organization to offer an effective and safe SCUBA diving program; sets the policies for operating the Kadena Marina SCUBA Sales store and SCUBA Locker air fill station; provides qualified SCUBA diving instructors for Services training programs.

1.2. The 18th Wing SCUBA Safety Advisor is responsible to the 18 MSG/CC for the safety conduct of the Air Force SCUBA diving program on Okinawa. Provides information concerning safety, new technology, and other items of SCUBA diving interest to SCUBA diving groups. Makes recommendations on SCUBA diving safety to the 18th Services Squadron Marina (18 SVS/SVROM), provides technical expertise to other agencies, and aids in investigating SCUBA diving accidents that involve

Air Force personnel. Makes recommendations on the maintenance and inspection of SCUBA rental equipment.

2. Definitions.

2.1. Certified Diver: Any person who has successfully completed a program of diver training through a nationally or internationally recognized recreational diver training agency, or anyone who has successfully completed a military diver course. Proof of training completion is a certification card from the diver's training agency.

2.2. Student Diver: Any person medically qualified and enrolled in a SCUBA course under the direct supervision of a qualified SCUBA instructor while taking part in a pool, confined, or open water training session.

2.3. Night Dive: Any dive beginning after official sunset and ending before official sunrise.

2.4. Professional/Commercial Dive: Academic or research dives sanctioned by a national/international institution, or diving for which monetary compensation is received.

2.5. Recreational Dive: Any SCUBA dive not directly related to professional military duties or commercial diving operation.

2.6. Buddy System: The buddy system is defined as being a minimum of two physically mature persons, each capable of providing assistance to the other, who maintain visual contact with each other at all times.

2.7. Certification Agency: All nationally and internationally recognized SCUBA certification agencies will be recognized.

2.8. Certified Instructor: Any person certified by a SCUBA training agency to teach SCUBA diving or SCUBA diving-related activities. All instructors are required to abide by the standards set forth by their respective certification agency as well as these instructions.

2.9. Divemaster: A certification where an individual leads/supervises dive activities of certified divers and/or assists an instructor. Divemasters must abide by the standards outlined by their certifying agency as well as these instructions.

2.10. Technical Dive: Decompression diving between 0 and 165 feet with appropriate additional certifications.

3. General Rules for Recreational Diving.

3.1. Only personnel certified by a nationally or internationally recognized SCUBA certification agency may participate in recreational diving activities on or around Okinawa.

3.2. All divers will adhere to Japanese and Okinawan laws/ordinances governing diving and the removal of marine life.

3.3. All recreational dives will be planned and conducted within the NO DECOMPRESSION LIMITS as defined by established dive tables approved by recognized SCUBA certification agencies.

3.4. Commercially manufactured dive computers may be used in lieu of approved dive tables but may not be used to make planned decompression dives. In the event of dive computer failure, the dive should be terminated with appropriate safety stop(s) made. No subsequent dives in the next 24 hours.

- 3.5. No sport dives will exceed a maximum depth of 130 feet and any repetitive dive will not exceed a maximum depth of 100 feet.
- 3.6. Alcoholic beverages should not be consumed 12 hours preceding a dive and at least 6 hours after a dive.
- 3.7. The buddy system will be adhered to during all recreational diving activities.
- 3.8. SCUBA equipment will not be loaned or rented to uncertified persons.
- 3.9. Certified divers under the age of 15 will be under the supervision of an adult who is a certified diver. The minor must be accompanied by two (2) adults if it is reasoned by the adults concerned that the minor is not capable of effecting a rescue or providing assistance to his dive partner if required.
- 3.10. All personnel must delay altitude chamber and aerial flight exposures for at least 24 hours following compressed air diving. If the dive requires a decompression stop, recommend 48 hours elapse prior to aerial flight or altitude chamber exposure.
- 3.11. It is the responsibility of the acting instructor to ensure the medical questionnaires are completed. If the student self identifies a potential issue, they must obtain medical clearance from a qualified medical authority. It is the instructors responsibility to ensure this has been completed.

4. Sea Condition Procedures.

- 4.1. On any given day, somewhere on the island, Okinawa's tides and currents create hazards that prohibit water-related activities in that location. It is also true that on certain days, somewhere on the island, conditions are ideal. Experience, education, training, and risk management are the keys to assessing conditions before engaging in any water sport. Water-related activities are occasionally restricted for the general safety of all personnel.
- 4.2. Kadena Air Base weather is responsible for determining sea conditions based on observed and forecasted winds and sea states. They will disseminate sea condition advisories by updating the Kadena Weather Flight telephone recording (634-4081) and by advising the American Forces Network (AFN), Kadena Marina, and the MWR dive centers/marinas. AFN will issue the latest sea condition advisory by the worst sector; Kadena Marina and MWR dive centers/marinas will post and update the latest advisory by sea conditions in both sectors (i.e., West Sector and East Sector). Each individual is responsible to determine current sea conditions, to assess specific conditions at their proposed ocean recreation site, and to weigh their skill level prior to entering the water.
- 4.3. While recognizing specific weather limitations and uncertainties, the following criteria and procedures will be used to implement the Sea Condition Warning System:
 - 4.3.1. Okinawa is divided into two sectors for Sea Condition Caution and Warning:
 - 4.3.1.1. West (W) - East China Sea shoreline, Hedo Point (northern tip) West down to Cape Kiyon (southern tip).
 - 4.3.1.2. East (E) - Pacific Ocean shoreline, Hedo Point (Northern Tip) East down to Cape Kiyon (Southern Tip).
- 4.4. The Sea Condition Warning System has three conditions:

4.4.1. Caution (C) - Conditions that may cause damage to property or cause minor injury. Exercise caution if entering the water. Only personnel who can accurately assess local conditions should enter the water.

4.4.2. Warning (W) - Conditions that may be life threatening. Exercise extreme caution when entering the water. Only personnel who can accurately assess local conditions, have extensive experience/training in the water activity, have a need to enter, and if the planned water activity warrants, should enter the water.

4.4.3. Red (R) - Conditions that are deemed to be life threatening and will cause damage to property or cause life-threatening injury. No entry into the water; EXIT if in the water. Kadena Marina and appropriate MWR facilities close and/or will not issue rental equipment, refill tanks, or continue water-related classes or activities. All ocean-related activities are prohibited.

4.4.4. Sea condition advisories could be displayed as SC-WC, SC-EC, SC-WW, SC-EW, or SC-R. TCCOR1: All diving activities are prohibited.

5. Prohibited Areas for Recreational Diving.

- 5.1. Within 500 yards of any pier, dock, or wharf presently in use.
- 5.2. Within 500 yards of any sewage or stream outlet.
- 5.3. In any location where a "No SCUBA Diving" sign is posted or at established swimming beaches where such diving is prohibited by beach regulation.

6. Professional/Commercial Diving.

6.1. Before engaging in professional/commercial diving (including instruction and divemaster activities), all military personnel will obtain permission for off-duty employment through their commands. In some instances, professional/commercial diving could affect SOFA status. All personnel will obtain guidance from the base Legal Office before engaging in these activities.

7. Okinawa Five Most Dangerous Dive Spots.

- 7.1. Bolo Point (Light House).
- 7.2. Ikei Island.
- 7.3. Hedo Point.
- 7.4. Onna Point.
- 7.5. Maeda Point.

8. Mandatory Equipment.

- 8.1. Commercially manufactured, demand-type regulator, properly maintained, in working order.
- 8.2. Buoyancy control device (BCD) capable of supporting a fully equipped SCUBA diver on the surface. Must be equipped with a low-pressure inflation device.
- 8.3. Submersible pressure gauge or air-integrated dive computer.
- 8.4. Depth gauge or dive computer.

- 8.5. Underwater timing device (watch, bottom timer, computer, etc.).
- 8.6. Surface signaling device.
- 8.7. Submersible dive tables or dive computer.
- 8.8. Alternate air source or “octopus” second stage.
- 8.9. Dive knife or tool.
- 8.10. Underwater compass (mandatory for night diving).
- 8.11. A primary underwater dive light, as well as a secondary backup light, is required for all night-diving activities.

9. Recommended Equipment.

- 9.1. There is an infinite variety of recommended and optional equipment that should or could be used during sport dives. Only a few items are listed as they are generally thought of as “the” pieces of equipment to carry for utility or safety purposes.
- 9.2. Protective body covering for the hands, arms, torso, and feet. This includes booties, gloves, and any exposure suit covering the above areas such as dive skin, wetsuit, shorty, etc.
- 9.3. Surface float capable of supporting two fully equipped SCUBA divers on the surface (mandatory for all certified SCUBA instructors during all open water training sessions).
- 9.4. First Aid Kit (mandatory for instructors).

10. Dive Master.

- 10.1. It is mandatory that a certified Dive Master be present during all diving activities sponsored by Air Force organizations, clubs, agencies and facilities. First Aid equipment to include demand oxygen unit will be available at these activities.
- 10.2. Boat dives of more than six divers are required to have a certified diver with a rescue or higher certification rating present during all phases of the dive. This person is to remain on the boat until all divers in the party have returned.

11. Mishap Reporting.

11.1. In the event of a diving mishap, contact the emergency operator (938-1110 from off base or 911 from on base) and declare a medical emergency. The victim should be transported immediately to the US Naval Hospital Emergency Room or Kadena Air Base Flight Medicine Clinic during duty hours, unless the victim cannot be moved. The details of the mishap should be reported to the unit ground safety representatives and commander immediately. Unit safety representative will report diving mishaps on PACAF Form 161 “**Notification of Ground Mishap**” and coordinate the report with the 18th Wing SCUBA Safety Advisor.

12. Mishap Investigations.

12.1. SCUBA related mishaps will be investigated by 18th Wing Safety (18 WG/SEG). Investigations will be in accordance with AFI 91-204, *Air Force Mishap Investigation and Reporting*.

| 13. Changes and Additions.

13.1. Recommendations for changes, additions, and deletions to this instruction should be addressed to 18 SVS/SVROM.

JAN-MARC JOUAS, Brigadier General, USAF
Commander, 18th Wing

Attachment 1

OKINAWA DIVE SPOTS

Figure A1.1. Okinawa Dive Spots.

