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**Recreational diving services —  
Requirements for recreational diving  
providers**

*Services relatifs à la plongée de loisirs — Exigences relatives aux  
prestataires de services de plongée subaquatique de loisirs*





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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 228, *Tourism and related services*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 24803:2007), which has been technically revised.

## Introduction

Standardization is important for recreational activities, such as diving, for which training and experience are essential for the participants to be able to carry out the activity safely. Although recreational diving is potentially hazardous, the risks to the participants and to the natural and cultural resources of the dive sites can easily be reduced to acceptable levels by the adoption of appropriate precautions. Additionally, impacts to the marine environment, particularly fragile marine ecosystems such as coral reefs, can be reduced through proper education and training of scuba instructors, dive leaders and divers.

A service provider can offer diver training and education, guided dives and rental of diving equipment, snorkelling excursions, and courses leading to one or more of the diver or instructor qualifications specified in the relevant ISO standards. This document specifies requirements for each of these services separately. Thus, although a client might be provided with two services at the same time (for example, diver training and rental of diving equipment), the client is considered to be in receipt of two distinct services.

Examples of service providers are a land-based dive centre, a boat-based operation, a dive club, an individual instructor, a watersport centre or an operator offering snorkelling excursions.

Service providers can often supply compressed breathing gases. This service is not covered in this document as it is usually covered by national legislation and/or other standards.

This document for service providers has a key role in the series of standards for recreational diving services as it specifies requirements that are common to the provision of training and qualification of divers and instructors, as specified in the other standards in the series.



# Recreational diving services — Requirements for recreational diving providers

## 1 Scope

This document specifies requirements for service providers in the field of recreational scuba diving and snorkelling excursions.

It specifies the following areas of service provision:

- introductory diving activities;
- snorkelling excursions;
- provision of training and education;
- organized and guided diving for qualified divers;
- rental of diving and snorkelling equipment.

Service providers can offer one or more of these services. This document specifies the nature and quality of the services to the client.

This document does not apply to freediving (also called “apnea diving”).

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 11121, *Recreational diving services — Requirements for introductory programmes to scuba diving*

ISO 13289, *Recreational diving services — Requirements for the conduct of snorkelling excursions*

ISO 24801-1, *Recreational diving services — Requirements for the training of recreational scuba divers — Part 1: Level 1 — Supervised diver*

ISO 24801-2, *Recreational diving services — Requirements for the training of recreational scuba divers — Part 2: Level 2 — Autonomous diver*

ISO 24801-3, *Recreational diving services — Requirements for the training of recreational scuba divers — Part 3: Level 3 — Dive leader*

ISO 24802-1:2014, *Recreational diving services — Requirements for the training of scuba instructors — Part 1: Level 1*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <http://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

**3.1**

**service provider**

entity (individual or organization), including any individual acting on behalf such an entity, which offers one or more of the following services:

- introductory diving activities;
- snorkelling excursions;
- provision of training and education;
- organized and guided diving for qualified divers;
- rental of diving equipment

**3.2**

**client**

individual or group receiving services from a service provider

**3.3**

**diving equipment**

equipment consisting of the following items:

- fins;
- mask;
- snorkel;
- demand regulator (also referred to as a regulator);
- alternative breathing gas system;
- cylinder;
- cylinder support system;
- buoyancy compensator;
- a quick-release weight system (when weights are needed);
- submersible pressure gauge (breathing gas pressure monitor);
- means to measure depth and time and to safely limit exposure to inert gas;
- diving suit (when needed)

Note 1 to entry: An alternative breathing gas system could range from a simple octopus system to a duplicate breathing system with a separate breathing gas supply. It is good practice in cold water (i.e. temperatures below 10 °C) and/or in depths deeper than 30 m to use at least a system with two cylinder valves and two independent regulator systems.

Note 2 to entry: Specific environments or activities may require additional equipment (e.g. an underwater navigational aid, knife/cutting device).

**3.4**

**confined water**

swimming pool with a depth appropriate to the activity or body of water that offers similar conditions with regard to visibility, depth, water movement and access

**3.5**

**open water**

body of water significantly larger than a swimming pool offering conditions typical of a natural body of water



**3.6****scuba instructor**

individual qualified in accordance with ISO 24802-1 or ISO 24802-2 respectively

**3.7****dive leader**

individual qualified in accordance with ISO 24801-3

**3.8****organized dive**

service offered by a service provider where divers already at a qualification and experience level suitable for the diving activity are taken to a dive site

**3.9****guided dive**

organized dive where clients are also accompanied underwater by an individual appointed by the service provider

**3.10****risk assessment**

identification of likely hazards and who may be harmed by them, the likelihood of harm and the applicable control measures

**3.11****buddy team**

group of two or three recreational divers who remain in close proximity to one another during a dive to provide mutual safety support

**4 Common requirements****4.1 Minors and vulnerable persons**

In the case of service provision to minors or vulnerable persons, providers shall be aware of the additional responsibilities this entails. The service provider shall implement policies and procedures designed to provide reasonable protection and precautions against abuse occurring during the service provider's activities.

Documented parental or legal guardian consent shall be obtained when the client is a minor.

NOTE The age of a minor is defined by local legislation.

**4.2 Information to be provided****4.2.1 Introductory information**

The service provider shall provide the following locally relevant information to the client:

- a) conditions regarding the responsibilities of each party related to commencement, delivery and termination of the service;
- b) the consequences for the service provider and the client if either party should choose to cancel the service;
- c) prerequisites and any qualification requirements in order to obtain the service (e.g. medical certification, diver qualifications);
- d) equipment requirements;
- e) costs;

- f) insurance requirements;
- g) environmental considerations including recommendations to divers for minimizing their impact on it;
- h) diving-related legislation and legal requirements relevant to the specific kind of service.

If the service provided involves training in accordance with [Clause 8](#), the following additional information shall be provided:

- limitations of eventual qualification;
- scope of the training course;
- course procedures;
- means and methods for assessment and criteria for successful completion;
- that records of their personal data will be kept and these records may be passed on to a training organization.

In the case of guided dives or organized dives in accordance with [Clause 9](#), the following additional information shall be provided:

- information concerning the dive site, hazards in particular which could affect the safety of the dive (e.g. underwater obstructions);
- arrangements concerning buddy teams and/or group size;
- depth and/or time limitations.

#### **4.2.2 Information during service provision**

Prior to each diving, snorkelling or practical training session, clients shall have safety provisions identified to them, including:

- a) the identity and role of staff;
- b) emergency procedures;
- c) buddy/group assignments;
- d) the conduct required of clients.

#### **4.3 Risk assessment**

The service provider shall ensure that a risk assessment is conducted before each in-water activity and shall adopt procedures to ensure that all risks are controlled as far as is reasonably possible. The following factors shall be considered as part of this assessment taking into account the capability of participants and available equipment:

- a) water movement (e.g. current, wave action);
- b) depth;
- c) underwater visibility;
- d) temperature;
- e) pollution;
- f) entry/exit methods;

- g) restricted zones;
- h) suitability of the site for planned activities including hazardous fauna and flora;
- i) emergency action plan.

The service provider shall have the right to prevent any client from taking part in the activity if, following a risk assessment, this is deemed to be in the best interest of the client and/or of other clients.

#### **4.4 Surface support procedures and related safety provisions**

##### **4.4.1 Roll call**

The service provider shall ensure that each person (client and staff) is counted on entering the water and accounted for on exit.

##### **4.4.2 Activity time**

For each group entering open water, a maximum time for the activity shall be agreed upon. Provisions shall be made to trigger search and rescue operations should this time be exceeded.

#### **4.5 Vessel operations**

##### **4.5.1 Crewing considerations**

The service provider shall ensure that any vessels used in service provision have sufficient qualified and experienced crew to operate the vessel in a safe and appropriate manner for the envisaged activities.

The service provider shall ensure that competent personnel perform the following where required:

- a) selection, location and evaluation of sites;
- b) provide safe entry and exit of participants into and out of the water;
- c) monitor the safety and security of the activity area;
- d) recover participants in routine situations;
- e) recover participants in emergency situations including situations where a diver might be incapacitated;
- f) recall participants;
- g) search for lost participants;
- h) contact emergency rescue services.

##### **4.5.2 Safety/vessel briefing**

The service provider shall ensure that clients will be briefed for the particular vessel, activity and environment on the following:

- a) emergency equipment and protocols;
- b) general conduct on the vessel;
- c) storage of equipment on the vessel;
- d) the chain of command and responsibility;
- e) roll call procedures;

- f) safe preparation and water entry and exit procedures;
- g) communication procedures between participants and vessels, e.g. use of signals, delayed surface marker buoys.

#### **4.5.3 Additional equipment requirements for vessels**

In order to ensure safe diving and/or snorkelling activities, a vessel shall be equipped with the following:

- a) means for safe entry into the water and exit out of the water (e.g. ladder, boarding platform);
- b) dive flag;
- c) provisions for safe equipment storage, cylinders in particular.

Specific activities or environmental conditions may require additional equipment, e.g.:

- lights for night diving;
- provisions for decompression stops (including additional breathing gas supply);
- shot line;
- current line;
- binoculars.

### **4.6 Emergency equipment and procedures**

#### **4.6.1 Emergency equipment**

For all locations where diving and snorkelling activities take place, the service provider shall ensure the availability of the following:

- a) a first aid kit suitable for the planned activities;
- b) a communication system suitable for alerting emergency services;
- c) an emergency oxygen unit with a capacity of delivering at least 15 l/min of pure oxygen for at least 20 min;

NOTE It is considered good practice that, wherever possible, the service provider provides an emergency oxygen system delivering an inspired oxygen concentration of up to 100 % and to a non-breathing patient receiving respiratory resuscitation at an inspired oxygen concentration of at least 50 %, with sufficient capacity to continue delivering oxygen until alternative emergency medical care is available.

#### **4.6.2 Emergency procedures**

At each site where in-water activities take place, a documented emergency plan comprising at least the following information shall be available:

- a) procedures for casualty recovery, resuscitation and evacuation;
- b) use of the emergency oxygen supply;
- c) information (including contact details) on emergency medical advice (e.g. a suitable diving emergency “hotline”) and the nearest medical resources (including data about the availability of a hyperbaric recompression chamber in the case of scuba diving activities).

## 4.7 Diving equipment

Individuals instructing during open water dives or leading dives on behalf of the service provider shall at least be equipped with the diving equipment listed in [3.3](#).

If equipment is provided to the client for use in training or guided or organized diving, this shall be considered a separate service and thus [Clause 10](#) shall apply.

## 4.8 Documentation

The service provider shall maintain the following documentation on all staff delivering services:

- a) name, address and date of birth;
- b) training/qualification, experience and medical screening;
- c) duties assigned to the individual staff member.

The service provider shall have documentary evidence that all staff members hold relevant and current qualifications for their duties. Proof of qualifications shall be made available to the clients upon request.

## 5 Environmental considerations

Service providers shall recognize responsibility to and shall exhibit considerations towards their local environment and have in place measures to minimize any potential negative impact their business activities may have. These measures include:

- a) environmental and underwater cultural heritage considerations in briefings;
- b) use of mooring buoys where possible;
- c) good practice guidance for divers and snorkelers.

## 6 Snorkelling excursions

If a service provider offers snorkelling excursions, these activities shall meet the requirements of ISO 13289.

## 7 Introductory dives

Introductory dives with clients having no previous diver training shall be conducted in accordance with ISO 11121.

## 8 Scuba diving training and education

### 8.1 General requirements

The service provider shall ensure that each individual client fulfils the prerequisites for taking part in the training course envisaged.

The service provider shall ensure that the size of the class, and the proficiency of the members of each buddy team or group of divers, is appropriate to enable all diving activities to be carried out safely.

## **8.2 Training locations**

### **8.2.1 Theory teaching facilities**

Where theory teaching is conducted on the premises of the service provider, it shall be conducted in an environment, such as a dedicated classroom, that is free from significant distractions to learning. This shall provide clients with sufficient working facilities and training aids (e.g. writing surfaces, reference materials, computers, visual or audio materials) to ensure that clients are able to understand the information being presented.

### **8.2.2 Open water training sites**

The service provider shall use training sites for open water training that are appropriate for the skills and experience of the student and the envisaged training activity. The service provider may choose sites which include special environmental variables necessary to build experience.

## **8.3 Staff**

The service provider shall assign the duties of all personnel involved in training activities.

Service providers shall appoint a level 2 scuba instructor who shall have overall responsibility for all diver training and education. This scuba instructor shall have sufficient knowledge of the procedures and working processes of the service provider to be able to organize diver training and education.

The training of recreational scuba divers up to level 3 in accordance with ISO 24801-1, ISO 24801-2 and ISO 24801-3 shall be conducted by a level 2 scuba instructor or, for training activities listed in ISO 24802-1:2014, Clause 4, by a level 1 scuba instructor and supervised as indicated in ISO 24802-1:2014, Clause 4.

Training courses involving more demanding operational parameters, for example,

- night dives,
- diving with nitrox,
- limited visibility dives,
- deep dives,
- wreck dives,
- dry suit dives,
- drift dives,
- ice dives, and
- cave dives

shall only be conducted by level 2 scuba instructors who have the relevant additional qualifications.

Service providers may use dive leaders in accordance with ISO 24801-3 to help control clients and improve safety but not to assess or to teach any skills or knowledge to clients.

## **8.4 Record keeping**

The service provider shall ensure that appropriate student records are maintained as follows:

- a) name, address and date of birth of the client;
- b) medical screening;

- c) any previous training/qualification and experience required for the envisaged activity;
- d) records of checking the competence of clients;
- e) the progress of the student during a course.

The service provider shall ensure that student records of training and qualifications are kept for at least 7 years.

## 9 Organized and guided diving for certified divers

### 9.1 Provision of services to groups

A group may include scuba instructors or dive leaders who may take on some or all of the duties of providing proper briefing and supervision of members of the group in accordance with this document. Any such arrangement between the service provider and the group shall be agreed in advance of any underwater activity by both parties.

### 9.2 Organized dive

The service provider shall ensure that the competence of each diver shall be assessed prior to diving. Factors to be taken into account shall include the currency of the recreational qualification and of the last dive, the diving experience of the diver since the qualification was gained, e.g. as contained in the client's personal dive log, and current fitness to dive.

Organized dives which require specific qualifications (e.g. nitrox diving, night diving, wreck diving) may only be carried out if each individual client has appropriate qualifications (speciality qualification) or adequate logged experience.

If there are any doubts as to the competence of the diver to complete a particular dive, an assessment dive shall be undertaken or a dive leader or scuba instructor shall accompany the diver on that dive.

An individual of at least dive leader qualification shall be present at the dive site and in overall control of diving activities.

### 9.3 Guided dive

The service provider shall

- provide a safety briefing,
- conduct a risk assessment,
- assign buddies,
- identify operational parameters,
- ensure an emergency support procedure is in place, and
- provide an environmental briefing that includes information and methods for minimizing the impact on the natural environment, particularly on fragile marine ecosystems.

In order to be entitled to participate in a guided dive, each individual client shall at least have the competencies of a level 1 scuba diver qualified in accordance with ISO 24801-1. The qualification and each client's personal dive log shall be checked by the service provider prior to the dive.

Guided dives which require specific qualifications (e.g. nitrox diving, night diving, wreck diving) shall only be carried out if each individual client has appropriate qualifications (speciality qualification) or adequate logged experience.



An individual of at least dive leader qualification shall provide underwater leadership.

Where guided dives require specific qualifications or appropriate experience for which the client is unable to provide proof, such dives shall be considered to be training dives and [Clause 8](#) shall apply.

### 9.4 Locations

The service provider shall ensure that the person in charge of the dive has knowledge and understanding of the features, hazards and environmental considerations of the envisaged diving location.

### 9.5 Staff

Guided dives or organized dives shall be conducted by an individual of at least dive leader qualification.

If a dive requires specific skills beyond the qualifications of a dive leader, the individual leading the dive shall be able to provide proof that he/she has received relevant specialized training or has appropriate experience.

## 10 Rental of diving equipment

### 10.1 Services provided

The service comprises rental of any items of diving equipment in accordance with [3.3](#) to clients who may use such equipment both for supervised and unsupervised diving activities.

The service provider shall ensure that clients are advised on choosing the proper diving equipment taking into account the envisaged diving activity and the qualification and needs of the clients (e.g. the proper fit of buoyancy control devices and suits).

Clients renting equipment shall be informed that use of the equipment requires specific training.

**NOTE** For the rental of all diving equipment listed in [3.3](#), with the exception of mask, fins, snorkel and wetsuit, it is good practice that the service provider ensures that each individual user meets one of the following criteria:

- is qualified to at least level 2 in accordance with ISO 24801-2;
- is qualified to level 1 in accordance with ISO 24801-1 and is under the supervision of a dive leader;
- if unqualified, is under the supervision of a scuba instructor at level 2.

### 10.2 Diving equipment

Diving equipment rented to clients shall conform to the relevant international, regional or national standards.

Diving equipment rented to clients shall be subjected to an inspection by the service provider prior to delivery in order to ascertain that it is fully operational. Diving equipment shall be cleaned, maintained and serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, and records of maintenance, servicing and inspection shall be kept.

### 10.3 Staff

The service provider shall ensure that relevant staff members understand the characteristics and function of the diving equipment rented to clients. The staff shall be competent to advise clients about the proper fit and use of the diving equipment in specific diving activities.



## Bibliography

- [1] ISO 24802-2, *Recreational diving services — Requirements for the training of scuba instructors — Part 2: Level 2*

