

NIAGARA DIVERS' ASSOCIATION

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. The Niagara Divers' Association (hereinafter referred to as "The Club") will provide a full schedule of dives and activities throughout the year which will, whenever possible, allow for the participation of all members.
2. The Club will attempt to organize each scheduled diving event (hereinafter referred to as the "Dive") in such a manner as to allow divers of all certification levels to participate. It is understood that on certain dives, the dive sites and conditions may preclude participation by divers who do not possess advanced levels of certification. In these cases, the minimum level of certification required for divers wishing to participate in these dives will be clearly indicated to the membership.
3. The Club will appoint from its membership a Dive Co-ordinator for each of the scheduled dives. The duties of the Dive Co-ordinator include the following:
 - a) to be the designated representative of the Club;
 - b) to act as liaison between the Club and the charter operator or dive site operator;
 - c) to oversee the operation of the dive and to settle any disputes which may arise concerning how the dive is conducted;
 - d) ensuring that, to the best of his or her ability, the Club Rules and Regulations and Club Policies and Procedures are adhered to by all divers;
 - e) provide to the divers, to the best of his or her knowledge, information regarding the dive site and conditions and the local emergency services, where available;
 - f) attempt to ensure that emergency oxygen supplies and first aid kits are available at the dive site, and, where not available, communicating the same to the divers.

It is understood by all divers that the Dive Co-ordinator is not performing the duties of the Divemaster, regardless of whether or not the Dive Co-ordinator is certified to do so. The conduct of the diver once a dive is commenced cannot be regulated and the responsibility for conducting the dive within the Club Rules and Regulations and Policies and Procedures remains solely with the individual diver. As it is a duty of the Dive Co-ordinator to oversee the operation of the dive in such a manner as to maximize the safety and enjoyment of all divers who are participating, he or she is empowered by the Club to limit the duration and profile of any individual dive or diver based upon factors such as dive or weather conditions or any other factor which, in the opinion of the Dive Co-ordinator, may adversely affect the safety or enjoyment of the divers. **Decisions of the Dive Co-ordinator are final and are to be respected by all divers.**

4. Divers interested in participating in a dive are required to provide the Club with a 50% non-refundable deposit to reserve a place on the charter, subject to availability. The remaining balance is to be paid to the Club no later than one week prior to the date scheduled for the dive. Failure to pay the balance on time will result in the forfeiture of the deposit. Where the charter operator requires payment on their own terms (e.g. payment in full for the charter 30 days prior to the charter date), divers interested in participating in the dive must comply with those terms. Details of payment requirements where they differ from the standard Club payment policy will be specified in the dive schedule or as soon as they become available.
5. Where a diver has paid the fee to participate in a dive and is unable to attend, he or she is entitled to find a replacement to assume his or her place on the charter. If a replacement is not found, the fee is forfeited. The replacement must comply with the Club's Policies and Procedures and Rules and Regulations and must satisfy the certification requirements specified for the dive.
6. When a dive charter is full, divers are invited to provide their own transportation (boat) to the dive site and participate in the Club dive, provided that the charter operator has no objections to this practice. It is understood that the Club assumes no responsibility for any incident or accident arising from the use of personal transport to the dive site. All divers prior to participating in any Club dive must sign the Statement of Understanding, including divers providing their own transportation to the dive site.
7. Club members have priority in booking space on Club dives for a time period following announcement of the dive. The time-frame of preferred member booking will be specified when the charter is announced, after which time both members and non-members have equal opportunity to book space. A non-member will be charged a minimum of \$10.00 per day in excess of the rate paid by a member, unless otherwise specified. This surcharge will be applied to the membership fee provided the non-member joins the Club within one week following payment of the surcharge. Non-divers may participate in the dive charter upon payment of \$10.00 or the fee set by the charter operator, if space is available.
8. All non-members of the Club who wish to participate in a Club dive will be provided with a copy of the Club Policies and Procedures and Rules and Regulations. All divers, both members and non-members of the Club, must sign a Statement of Understanding prior to participating in any Club dive.
9. All divers must be prepared to provide the Dive Co-ordinator with their certification card from a recognized training agency and a logbook as proof of certification and experience. The Dive Co-ordinator is empowered by the Club to refuse to allow any diver to participate in a Club dive where that diver fails to provide adequate proof that he or she meets or exceeds the minimum standards of certification and experience as specified by the Club for any particular dive.

10. Where a diver does not possess the minimum standard of certification and experience as specified by the Club for a particular dive, he or she may apply in writing to the Executive of the Club for a personal exemption from the certification and experience requirements. The application must specify the dive in question, the diver's current level of certification and experience with proof thereof, the minimum standard of certification and experience specified for that dive and the reasons why a personal exemption from the minimum standards should be waived in his or her particular case. If the application is successful, the applicant will receive from the Executive of the Club written confirmation that the applicant has been granted a personal exemption from the minimum standards specified for a particular dive. Such applications are to be received by the Club no later than three weeks prior to the scheduled date of the dive in question. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that he or she has written confirmation from the Executive of the Club available to be presented to the Dive Co-ordinator at the dive as proof of his or her personal exemption from the minimum standards. Without written confirmation of the personal exemption, the Dive Co-ordinator is empowered by the Club to refuse to allow a diver not possessing the minimum standards as specified by the Club to participate in the dive. The Dive Co-ordinator has no authority from the Club to approve a request from any diver for a personal exemption from the minimum standards at the dive site.
11. For any Club dive to depths in excess of 60 feet, divers must provide to the Dive Co-ordinator proof of certification and a log book which proves a minimum of two dives to depths within 15 feet of the planned depth to be reached during the dive.
12. It is the responsibility of each dive team to plan and execute each dive according to the certification and experience level of the least experienced member of the dive team. It is important that the completion (time to surface) time is given to the Dive Co-ordinator or their designate prior to the start of the dive.
13. No diver shall enter an overhead environment on any Club dive beyond the point where sufficient illumination is provided by ambient light unless the diver is specially certified to do so.
14. If during a Club dive, a diver feels it is necessary to drop his or her weight belt in an emergency situation, the Club will replace the belt and the weights. This policy does not apply in situations where the loss of the weight belt results from diver carelessness or an accidental release of the weight belt.
15. Divers who are under the direct supervision of a certified instructor conducting a course during a Club dive are deemed to meet the minimum level of certification required for the dive for purposes of the Club's Policies and Procedures and Rules and Regulations.

NIAGARA DIVERS' ASSOCIATION

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Note: It is the intent of the Rules and Regulations to allow the diver to perform the type of diving for which he or she has been certified, provided that it does not interfere with the enjoyment or safety of others on the dive. Standards for various levels of certification vary between agencies and it is the responsibility of the diver to ensure that his particular rating meets the requirements of the dive. This may require submitting a copy of those standards to the Safety & Training Director in advance of the dive.

In general the requirements are:

For overhead environment within the light zone -- Cavern or Overhead Wreck certification minimum.

For overhead environment beyond the light zone -- Intro/Single/Apprentice Cave, Full Wreck or Full Cave certifications.

For Nitrox -- Nitrox certification with actual dives minimum (some courses are theory only).

For Decompression dives -- Advanced Nitrox, Mixed Gas, Deep/Extended Range Air (with actual decompression dives), Full Cave or Full Wreck certifications.

It is also noted that all equipment must be functional and in good repair.

1. All divers are required to sign the Niagara Divers' Association Statement of Understanding and to have read the Club's Policies and Procedures and Rules and Regulations prior to participating in any Club dive.
2. The Club's Policies and Procedures and Rules and Regulations have been established to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all divers participating in Club events. Any diver failing to comply with the Club's Policies and Procedures and/or the Rules and Regulations will be suspended or dismissed from the Club.
3. Certified divers under the age of 18 years may participate in Club dives provided that he or she dives only in the company of his or her parent (or legal guardian, if applicable) or a specific person designated in writing by both parents (or legal guardian, if applicable). The Club's Statement of Understanding must be signed by both parents (or legal guardian, if applicable).
4. All dive teams are to be composed of two divers. Solo diving is not permitted on the Club dives except in emergency or rescue situations at the discretion of the Dive Co-ordinator. Dive teams composed of three divers will be allowed in situations where there are an uneven number of divers on a dive or under special circumstances at the discretion of the Dive Co-ordinator.

5. All divers will carry on their person a sufficient gas supply to safely execute the planned dive (including planned decompression and safety stops) with an adequate reserve supply. Partner supplied gas, hanging tanks (on line or at depth) or surface-supplied decompression airlines are not to be relied upon.
6. Each diver will be equipped with and utilize a power-inflated buoyancy compensator, an alternate air source, a pressure\depth gauge and timing device.
7. Divers are permitted to follow any of the decompression tables recommended by their certifying agency. Where members of a dive team generally follow different decompression tables, the dive must be planned and executed in accordance with the most conservative tables.
8. Decompression computers may be used on Club dives providing:
 - a) all members of the dive team are equipped with a separate computer;
 - b) the computer with the most conservative decompression profile is followed by every member of the dive team;
 - c) in the event of a computer lockout or shutdown, where a backup computer is not utilized the diver will abort the dive and refrain from diving for 12 hours following a no-decompression dive or 24 hours following a decompression dive. Divers who have calculated and executed their dive profiles in accordance with recognized decompression tables and have not exceeded the limits of those tables through the use of the decompression computer may continue to dive following the computer lockout or shutdown. Proof that table calculations were followed during the dive may be required by the Dive Co-ordinator before the diver is permitted to make subsequent dives;
 - d) if all members of the dive team are not equipped with separate computers, those possessing computers may use them only as depth/timing devices and the entire dive team must plan and execute their dive according to recognized decompression tables.
9. The consumption of alcohol within the 8-hour period prior to the commencement of the dive will result in that diver being precluded from participating in the dive. The use of illegal drugs will not be tolerated. It is the diver's responsibility to ensure that any prescription or non-prescription drugs being taken by the diver will not impair or adversely affect him or her in any way while diving.
10. All divers making a no-decompression dive will make a safety decompression stop at 10 to 15 feet for 3 to 5 minutes.

11. Decompression diving will be allowed on Club dives provided that:
 - a) the diver possesses the level of certification to do so;
 - b) all procedures and practices specified by the certifying agency are adhered to;
 - c) as an added margin of safety, all divers calculating their dive profiles in accordance with decompression tables shall add 5 minutes to the calculated length of the 10-foot decompression stop;
 - d) divers using decompression computers shall add 5 minutes to the indicated length of the 10 foot stop;
 - e) a shortened or omitted safety stop will be considered the same as omitted decompression. When Nitrox is used as though the breathing mixture was air, or when Nitrox or oxygen is used during decompression following an air dive, the above safety stop procedures are not required.

12. Nitrox may be used on Club dives, provided that:
 - a) the diver possesses the level of certification to do so ;
 - b) all policies and procedures specified by the certifying agency are adhered to;
 - c) the equivalent air depth formula must be used in conjunction with recognized decompression tables unless using air decompression computers as though the breathing mixture was air or using a Nitrox decompression computer adjusted to the proper mix. If using computers, the requirements of Rule #8 must also be met;
 - d) if not all divers in the dive team are certified to use Nitrox, those diving on Nitrox must follow the decompression tables or computers as though the breathing mixture was air.
 - e) the maximum partial pressure of oxygen on any Club dive where Nitrox is used must not exceed 1.6 ATA for non deco dives or 1.4 ATA for deco dives.

13. The use of oxygen or high % Nitrox as a breathing mixture for decompression and for safety stops on ascent will be allowed on Club dives provided:
 - a) All equipment is specially cleaned and maintained for use with pure oxygen;

- b) the divers involved have received specific training in the use and potential hazards of oxygen use;
 - c) The partial pressure of oxygen does not exceed 1.6 ATA.
14. Mixed gas may be used on Club dives, provided that:
- a) the diver possesses the level of certification to do so;
 - b) all policies and procedures specified by the certifying agency are adhered to;
 - c) all equipment, tables/computers are compatible to allow all team members to complete the dive as a group (i.e., start and finish the dive together).
15. Any additional rules and regulations imposed by the charter operator or the dive site operator must be adhered to by all divers participating in a Club dive.
16. By the very nature of the sport, the conduct of the diver cannot be regulated or supervised once the dive has commenced. The diver assumes full responsibility for his or her own safety during all dives made with the Club. Failure to adhere to the Club's Policies and Procedures and Rules and Regulations places the diver and all other participants on the dive at additional unnecessary risk. Those divers who fail to comply with the Club's Policies and Procedures and Rules and Regulations will be suspended or dismissed from the Club.

NIAGARA DIVERS' ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

NOTE: ALL PARAGRAPHS MUST BE INITIALLED BY THE DIVER

I, _____ hereby confirm that I have read, understand and agreed to abide by the Niagara Divers' Association Rules and Regulations and Policies and Procedures when participating in any Club dive.

Initial

I also understand that scuba diving is a hazardous activity in which serious injuries and even fatalities occur. By participating in a Club dive, I acknowledge that I am voluntarily assuming the risk with full knowledge of the dangers inherent in this type of activity.

Initial

I agree to engage only in the type of diving for which I am certified by a recognized training agency.

Initial

I am also aware that some of the sites selected for Club dives are located in remote areas where emergency medical treatment facilities, including hyperbaric chambers, are not easily accessible in terms of distance and/or time. Such facilities may be critical in the treatment of a dive-related injury.

Initial

I acknowledge that the Dive Co-ordinator appointed by the Niagara Divers' Association is not performing the duties of a Divemaster, regardless of whether or not he or she is certified to do so. I understand that the Dive Co-ordinator may restrict my diving activity at his or her sole discretion to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all divers participating in the Club dive. I agree to abide by the decisions of the Dive Co-ordinator on all Club dives in which I participate.

Initial

I hereby acknowledge that I voluntarily assume all risks relating to my participation in scuba diving activities organized by the Niagara Divers' Association. I and my executors hereby agree to waive any liability on the part of and to hold forever harmless the Niagara Divers' Association, its Executive, Dive Co-ordinators and members for any and all injuries and/or damages arising from any act or omission.

Initial

Diver's Signature _____ Date _____

Witness: _____ Date _____

NIAGARA DIVERS' ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING AND PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

**NOTE: ALL PARAGRAPHS MUST BE INITIALLED BY THE DIVER
AND PARENTS (OR LEGAL GUARDIAN, IF APPLICABLE)**

I, _____(minor diver) and _____ (the parents, or legal guardian if applicable) hereby confirm that we have read and understand the Niagara Divers' Association Rules and Regulations and Policies and Procedures. The diver agrees to abide by the Rules and Regulations and Policies and Procedures when participating in any Club dive.

Initial

Initial

It is understood by both the diver and his or her parents (or legal guardian, if applicable) that scuba diving is a hazardous activity in which serious injuries and even fatalities occur. By allowing the minor diver to participate in a Club dive, it is acknowledged that the minor diver's parents (or legal guardian, if applicable) consent to the minor diver's participation and voluntarily assume all risk with full knowledge of the dangers inherent in this type of activity.

Initial

Initial

The minor diver agrees to engage only in the type of diving for which he or she is certified by a recognized training agency.

Initial

Initial

The minor diver and his or her parents (or legal guardian, if applicable) are also aware that some of the sites selected for Club dives are located in remote areas where emergency medical treatment facilities, including hyperbaric chambers, are not easily accessible in terms of distance and/or time. Such facilities may be critical in the treatment of a dive-related injury.

Initial

Initial

The minor diver and his or her parents (or legal guardian, if applicable), acknowledge that the Dive Co-ordinator appointed by the Niagara Divers' Association is not performing the duties of a Divemaster, regardless of whether or not he or she is certified to do so. It is understood that the Dive Co-ordinator may restrict any diving activity at his or her sole discretion to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all divers participating in the Club dive. The minor diver agrees to abide by the decisions of the Dive Co-ordinator on all Club dives in which he or she participates.

Initial

Initial

It is hereby acknowledged that, on behalf of the minor diver, the undersigned parents (or legal guardian, if applicable) consent to the participation of the minor diver in diving activities organized by the Niagara Divers' Association and voluntarily assume all risks relating to the minor diver's participation in these activities. We/I, our/my heirs and executors hereby agree to waive any liability on the part of and to hold forever harmless the Niagara Divers' Association, its Executive, Dive Co-ordinators and members for any and all injuries and/or damages arising from any act or omission relating to participation in any diving activity organized by the Niagara Divers' Association.

Dated at _____ this _____ day of _____, 19____.

Signature of Diver's Mother

Signature of Diver's Father

Signature of Diver's Legal Guardian

Signature of Witness