



# Risk Assessment Guidelines

## What is Risk Assessment?

A Risk Assessment is nothing more than a common sense approach to identifying significant hazards; who is likely to be affected by those hazards; the risks associated with the hazards; what measures you will take to control the risks – thus reducing the harm to anyone during diving activities; recording the precautions / procedures you have put in place. The assessment needs to be reviewed periodically while the activity is on going or whenever there is a significant change.

## Definitions:

**Hazard-** anything that can cause harm.

**Risk -** is the chance, high or low, that somebody will be harmed by the hazard.

## 5 Steps to Risk Assessment

Step 1: Look for the hazards.

Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how.

Step 3: Evaluate the risks. Decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done to lower the risk.

Step 4: Record your findings.

Step 5: Review your assessment and revise if necessary.

The consideration of risk is inherent in diver training and is paramount in course content, standards and procedures taught by SSAC.

Sensible risk assessment procedure does not seek to :

- Scare people by exaggerating trivial or unlikely risks.
- Create a totally risk free sport.
- Prevent challenging / learning opportunities where risks are managed.
- Generate mountains of useless paperwork.

Sensible risk assessment procedure is about:

- Ensuring that all members, instructors and the public are protected from harm during diving activities.
- Focusing on reducing real risks – those which arise most often and those which have most serious consequences.
- Enabling all members to further their diving experience safely.
- Ensuring all members taking part in a diving activity understand all measures in place for their protection and also the need to exercise responsibility for their own and their buddy's safety.
- Ensuring that those in charge of a diving activity understand that a failure to manage real risks responsibly is likely to lead to robust action.

## Types of Risk Assessment

**Generic** : Considering the hazards and risks associated with diving in general.

Divers' experience – suitable buddy pairing.

Maintained standard scuba equipment plus personal safety equipment

Air / gas mix – sufficient for proposed dive plus reserve . ( Do the divers know their average air consumption for the given depth?)

Exposure suit – type ; suitability for cold water – possible need to adjust dive time.

## Dive site

Water entry / exit; u/w terrain; tide times and tidal range; expected current; possible visibility. Safety equipment; Oxygen kit; First Aid kit; Communications.

## Boat dives

Carrying all necessary safety equipment for area operating in; experienced cox; up to date weather report; recall system known to all divers on board.

**Specific** : To be completed on site prior to any diving activity on the day.

Identify any unforeseen / significant hazards.

Evaluate the associated risks for: **(a) Likelihood of occurrence**  
**(b) Severity of Risk**

Use a scale of 1-3;

1 highly unlikely to occur; 2 unlikely to occur; 3 highly possible

1 minor harm; 2 harmful ; 3 severe risk of injury or death



## Risk Assessment Guidelines

**Risk Evaluation = Likelihood of occurrence x Severity of Risk**

	Slightly Harmful = 1	Harmful = 2	Extremely Harmful = 3
<b>Highly Unlikely = 1</b>	Minimal Risk (1x1=1)	Tolerable Risk (1x2=2)	Moderate Risk (1x3=3)
<b>Unlikely = 2</b>	Tolerable Risk (2x1=2)	Moderate Risk(2x2=4)	Substantial Risk (2x3=6)
<b>Likely = 3</b>	Moderate Risk (3x1=3)	Substantial Risk (3x2=6)	Intolerable Risk (3x3=9)

Here, "Tolerable Risk" means slightly higher than minimal, where any necessary measures taken make the remaining risk low. If you cannot get rid of a hazard completely what can you reasonably do to control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

### When / What Actions are Necessary?

Risk Evaluation	Actions Necessary
Minimal / Tolerable Risk score 1 or 2	No additional control measures required; monitor and maintain any measures already in place.
Moderate Risk score 3 or 4	Can you introduce further control measures to lower the risk? If not, proceed with caution and monitor activities thoroughly.
Substantial Risk score 6	Diving should not be carried out until the risk can be lowered. e.g. Additional safety equipment – personal, on site or on boat; safer access / exit point; more sheltered site.
Intolerable Risk score 9	Diving should not be considered / continued unless immediate measures can be put in place to reduce risks. Otherwise, abort the planned dive and try to arrange a safer alternative.

There will obviously be + / - to decisions on evaluation. Use common sense but always opt for maximum safety. Remember, the objective is to ensure the precautions you have taken are reasonable.

Risk Assessments are conducted at various stages during preparation for diving activities whether it be pool training, open water skill practise or a pleasure dive.

Making a written Record merely clarifies these steps and provides a check that all areas have been covered. The Risk Assessment Form and Dive Marshall's Slate cover the steps which should be recorded.

#### PLAN THE DIVE

- Dive Marshall's Dive Plan      Record on Risk Assessment Form and Dive Slate.  
Communicate to all involved on the day.
- Dive Marshall's Slate          Fill in on the day.
- Dive Briefing Plan.            D.L. for each Buddy pair / group. Ensure all understand and agree the Dive SEEDS : Safety; Exercise; Equipment; Discipline; Signals

#### DIVE THE PLAN

- Buddy Check                    (Begin With Reviewing A Friend)  
Buoyancy; Weights; Releases; Air; Final Check
- Debrief                            D.L. to review dive; report back to Dive Marshall.
- Record                            Slate completed by Dive Marshall with Risk Form as a record of proceedings. These are the documents which would be required to be produced in the event of an incident occurring, therefore be thorough but not over complicated.

#### SUMMARY

##### Objectives

- To place emphasis on prevention of incidents rather than remedial action.
- To reduce the number and seriousness of diving incidents.
- To continue to promote safe diving practices.
- To ensure that divers can continue to enjoy their sport as safely as possible.