




# TOPSIDE



NOAA Diving Program News - August 2008


## NDC Current Events

A new NOAA Diving Control and Safety Board was created July 1, 2008 by action of the Director, OMAO and CAO, to strengthen the safety and effectiveness of the NOAA scientific diving program. The establishment of the Board meets the requirements for scientific diving operations pursuant to OSHA regulations at 29 CFR 1910 Subpart T. The Board is chaired by a Diving Safety Officer (DSO). This position is still being developed and is temporarily held by Steve Urick. The voting members of the Board are the DSO, Diving Program Manager, the LODOs and the OMAO Diving Officer. The Board now has permanent advisory members including Office of General Counsel and Safety and Environmental Compliance representatives as well as the NOAA Diving Medical Officer.

During the week of August 4 - 8, the new Board members and advisors held a charter meeting at NDC. The purpose of the meeting was to finalize the NOAA Scientific Diving Standards & Safety Manual. The Board also made progress on the development of new Diving Medical Standards & Procedures. 

## Die-Hard Divers



All divers from the NMFS lab in Panama City, FL participated this month in the full gamut of skills refresher training including recovering an unconscious diver. The lone diver from the NOS - Navigation Response Team 1 in Pensacola also joined in. Kudos to this team for training in drysuits in Florida's August heat - 93F on this day. Luckily, beautiful Vortex Springs in Ponce de Leon is a refreshing 68F. 

## NOAA'S NEW SCIENTIFIC DIVING STANDARDS & SAFETY MANUAL


To all NOAA divers, UDSs, and other interested individuals,

On 15 August, 2008, RADM Jon Bailey, Director, OMAO, and Bill Broglie, NOAA's Chief Administrative Officer, approved the new NOAA Scientific Diving Standards and Safety Manual, submitted to them from the NOAA Diving Control and Safety Board (NDCSB). The manual prescribes the standards and policies to be followed when conducting scientific tasks. Non-scientific tasks must be performed in accordance with the OSHA Commercial Diving Regulations. With the adoption of this manual, plus the formation of a new Diving Control and Safety Board, NOAA now meets the requirements outlined in the OSHA Commercial Diving Regulations for exemption for scientific dives.

The standards outlined in the manual apply to all NOAA divers (i.e., employees, contractors, volunteers), as well as, reciprocity divers diving from NOAA-owned vessels.

All NOAA divers are required to comply with the standards in the manual when performing "scientific" tasks. Prior to conducting scientific dives per the new standards, NOAA divers must inform their UDSs that they have read and understand the contents of the manual. A pdf copy of the new scientific diving standards will be posted in the NOAA Diving Center website under "Dive Regulations." Copies of the manual will also be sent to all reciprocity organizations with a note telling them that we now meet the OSHA scientific exemption. A series of articles on the new manual will appear here in TOPSIDE.

During the week of August 25<sup>th</sup>, the NOAA Diving Center will be conducting a series of question and answer sessions on the new manual. All interested parties are welcome to call-in to ask questions about the new standards. The sessions will be conducted each day next during that week at 12:00 pm PDT. The toll-free telephone number is: 1-877-795-9847 and the passcode is: 8470327.

I'd like to thank the members of the NDCSB for the time and effort they put forth in developing the manual. Thanks also to all members of the NOAA diving community for your patience, understanding, and cooperation during this transitional period. 

~ Dave

## NOAA Ship *Ka'imimoana*

In this picture, you see that the ship has properly deployed its fast rescue boat to support a working dive. The crew consists of a coxswain, standby diver, tender and designated person in charge. The standby diver is dressed out with a tether around his waist and is prepared to enter the water within one minute. Next to him is a replica of the dive tending system described in the online training module. The ship plans to train their entire deck department to be standby dive tenders. The ship had been experiencing overheating of its generators. Divers were deployed to inspect the sea water intakes and propellers. Here is what the Commanding Officer, CDR James Illg, had to say. "Thanks for the go-ahead to dive on the screws today. It was indeed the problem. Divers Koes and Murakami found both screws fouled with growth. They were under for 25 minutes and made significant progress removing the growth. As the Chief Engineer suspected, the clean propellers have reduced the effort to move the ship and thus reduced the load on our generators and motors. We can now proceed at our top speed, 180 RPMs, without triggering high temperature alarms. The divers were pretty fatigued by the end of the dive from trying to accomplish work while fighting the ship's surge. We talked about this risk beforehand and felt we could mitigate it satisfactorily so we went ahead with the dive." **NDC says good job!**



## Training fee announcement

By order of the Director, Marine And Aviation Operations Centers, **the NOAA Diving Program will charge training fees for its classes, beginning in FY09.** NOAA employees are included. The fees shall be pass-through costs. The fee for the Working Diver course will be \$1000; the Divemaster course will be \$100. Other course fees will be announced in the future.



The NOAA Diving Center, in association with the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society and Undersea Research Foundation, is hosting a Physician's Diving Medicine Course, August 11-22, 2008. Twenty-eight medical professionals are in attendance from the United States, Switzerland, St. Lucia, Puerto Rico, Canada, United Arab Emirates, and Bermuda. The Course Director and assistant Course Director, are Dr. J. Morgan Wells and Dick Rutkowski, respectively, both former NOAA employees with a long history with the NOAA diving program. The participants will learn how to identify and treat diving-related illnesses. As part of the rigorous curriculum, these new NOAA Diving Medical Officers will conduct several dives in NDC's hyperbaric chambers as well a surface-supplied dive in the training tower, using the DSI Superlite 17 diving helmet. Participants will receive 82 Continuing Medical Education (CME) units for completion of the class.



Dave Dinsmore, Director NDP, takes a break from the office on a sunny Seattle afternoon to provide topside support for physicians conducting a tower dive.

A team of divers from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center in Miami, FL recently experienced nausea, dizziness and disorientation while on a dive to conduct a fish census in the Florida Keys. The astute divers immediately realized they had received a bad air fill and aborted the shallow dive. While on travel, they had filled their cylinders at an unfamiliar dive shop. In this case, they should have examined the shop's air quality test results. Subsequently, in addition to notifying the dive shop, they contacted NDC to ask about reporting requirements. This was not considered a near-miss incident. However, in this instance, the Safety and Environmental Compliance Office (SECO) should be notified using the NOAA Web-based Accident/Illness Reporting System. [http://www.seco.noaa.gov/Safety/Incident\\_Reporting.htm](http://www.seco.noaa.gov/Safety/Incident_Reporting.htm) NDC requests that all divers who suspect bad air in their cylinder obtain an air sample. NDC will assist by sending a TRI-Air Test Kit.

