



TOPSIDE



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The NDP Newsletter for NOAA Diving Supervisors and Divers

July 2003

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TRAINING SCHEDULE

Training requests are still being accepted for the August **Working Diver Refresher** and September **Working Diver/Divemaster** courses. Please contact Laurie Barber for enrollment or if you have any questions about requirements.

The **Working Diver Refresher** course is designed to certify NOAA divers whose dive activity has lapsed a year or more, certify NOAA Scientific divers in the use of a dry suit, or is an option for the initial certification of Scientific divers.

The **DMT Preparation** course has replaced EMT – more information in next month’s TOPSIDE.

Course schedules through January 2004:


2003:

Aug 19 - Aug 22	Diver Refresher	Seattle, WA
Sep 15 - Oct 03	Working Diver	Seattle, WA
Sep 29 - Oct 03	Divemaster	Seattle, WA
Dec 01 - 12	DMT Prep	Seattle, WA
Dec 15 - 20	Diver Medic	Seattle, WA

2004:

Jan 12 - 30	Working Diver	Key West, FL
Jan 26 - 30	Divemaster	Key West, FL


TRI TEST KITS

TRI dive compressor test kits were mailed out the second week of July. **Please complete the required dive compressor testing and return the kits ASAP.** NOAA Diving Regulations require the testing of all dive air compressors every 6 months. 

REPORTING INJURIES

Diving and the effects of increased pressure on the body is a complex issue and is not always well understood. Diving injuries (DCS, AGE, etc.) can still occur while following safe diving practices. Diving injuries are not always apparent to the diver or an outside observer and may present with signs or symptoms that are very subtle or can easily be mistaken for a non-diving injury.

All NOAA divers are reminded that **you should not be diving with any recent traumatic injury that is causing you any active symptoms.** Recent traumatic injuries can confuse the medical picture in trying to determine if presenting symptoms are dive related or not. Examples would include any injuries that are causing numbness, pain, swelling, reduced strength, reduced range of motion, etc.

In addition to cessation from diving, **divers are reminded to immediately report information concerning changes in their medical qualifications for duty.** Any new medical condition since the date of the diver’s last history and/or physical that may affect their fitness to dive must be reported as soon as possible to the UDS and then followed up in narrative form submitted to the NDC. Nondisclosure or falsification of medical information can result in suspension or termination of diving certification. Final medical approval for fitness to dive is given by the NOAA Diving Medical Review Board and not by the diver’s examining physician. 

COMPUTER USER AGREEMENT

A reminder that **before** you can use a dive computer you need to complete the Dive Computer User Agreement Form on the NDP website and submit to the NDC. **The NDC will notify you when you are cleared to begin using a dive computer for official duty dives.** [K]

NDP VIDEO

The new NDP video, "The NOAA Diving Program: Diving for Science and Technology," has been mailed to all Unit Diving Supervisors and selected individuals as of July 18th. Funded by NMAO and produced by Mark Kagan at the NOAA Video Studio in Silver Spring, the 16 minute video is intended as a general introduction to the NOAA Diving Program, and covers the "who, what, where, and how" of the Program. Thanks to all the diving units and divers who contributed outstanding underwater footage for this video! [K]

NOAA SCIENCE CAMP

The NOAA Science Camp for Kids ran from June 23rd through 27th here at the Sand Point campus. The Science Camp was a special outreach project sponsored by VADM Lautenbacher that hosted 100 middle school children who had the opportunity to learn more about NOAA. This pilot project was intended to teach kids how science can be fun, while supporting NOAA's Environmental Literacy, Outreach, and Education priorities for the 21st Century. The participants visited various programs here at Sand Point, as well as the Dive Center. Dive Center activities included a simulated hyperbaric chamber run, trying on dive gear, a demonstration of Boyle's Law using balloons and a pressure pot, and watching Nick Delich and Frank Wood in the dive tower while asking questions via the Superlite dive helmet communication system. An unofficial poll of the camp participants indicated that their favorite activity during the whole camp was asking Frank and Nick to do somersaults in the tower. Way to go, Nick and Frank! [K]

DIVING SAFETY BULLETIN

UWATEC announced that the company was voluntarily recalling all "Smart" dive computers sold between February 2002 and July 2003. Models affected include Smart PRO wrist, Smart PRO console, and Smart COM console. A software programming error may cause the alert signals to stop working properly, and in some instances, the screen freezes. If this occurs, inaccurate information is displayed, such as depth, cylinder pressure, ascent rate, etc. UWATEC has corrected the problem and has agreed to replace current models with new ones. **Effective immediately, all NOAA divers are to discontinue use of any UWATEC "Smart" dive computers purchased to date and to contact the company for a replacement.** Once contacted, UWATEC will provide a shipping box and postage paid shipping label for the return of the computer. The company has indicated that a replacement dive computer can be expected with ninety (90) days or sooner. Upon receipt of a replacement unit, NOAA divers may resume use of the dive computers. [K]



LT BILL COBB

Congratulations to Lt. Bill Cobb on his acceptance to UW School of Medicine, and to his outstanding performance as Executive Officer and Operations Manager at the Dive Center since September 2003. His professionalism and integrity, and especially his friendship, will be greatly missed by all of us involved in the Diving Program. Best of luck, Bill!

[K]