



# TOPSIDE



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The NDP Newsletter for NOAA Diving Supervisors and Divers

APR 2004

Director - David Dinsmore, (206) 526-6705, dave.dinsmore@noaa.gov

Operations Manager - ENS Eric Johnson, (206) 526-6460, eric.t.johnson@noaa.gov

Equipment Manager - Steve Urick, (206) 526-6223, steve.urick@noaa.gov

SEP Technician - Bill Gordon, (206) 526-6450, bill.j.gordon@noaa.gov

SEP Technician - Lisa Glover, (206) 526-6446, lisa.glover@noaa.gov

Budget/Program Analyst - Laurie Barber, (206) 526-6695, laurie.barber@noaa.gov

Office Automation Secretary - Sondra Huber, (206) 526-6623, sondra.huber@noaa.gov

E-mail fax numbers: Lisa Glover (206)529-2757 Steve Urick (206)-529-2758, and Eric Johnson (206)529-2759.

Fax - 206-526-6506

Web Site Address -

<http://www.ndc.noaa.gov>

Mailing Address -

NOAA Diving Center

7600 Sand Point Way NE

Seattle, WA 98115-0070

## TRAINING

Requests are being accepted for the Refresher course in August and the Working Diver course in September.

Diver candidates must submit the following forms to Laurie Barber by July 16, 2004 for the Refresher Class and August 8, 2004 for the September Working Diver Class:

- NOAA Diving Training Request & Authorization,
- **Completed** NOAA Diving Physical, and
- Standardized Equipment Measurement.

All of these forms are available at the following web address: [www.ndc.noaa.gov/forms.html](http://www.ndc.noaa.gov/forms.html). Completed forms can be mailed or faxed to the Diving Center.

Course schedules through September 2004:

May 10 - 28	Working Diver	Seattle
May 24 - 28	Divemaster	Seattle
Aug 16 - 19	Diver Refresher	Seattle
Sep 13 - Oct 01	Working Diver	Seattle
Sep 27 - Oct 01	Divemaster	Seattle



## UPDATING PERSONNEL FILES

When changing stations, ships, line offices, or labs remember to inform the Dive Center of your new information. Keeping your records current will have an impact on dive orders, UDS tracking, SEP billing, gear distribution, records maintenance, and safety notices.



## U.S. AND INT'L CHAMBER LISTS

All dive units should have on-hand a current list of chambers within their working area. If you need an updated list here are two links you can access for information. Full North and South America lists can be downloaded from the UHMS site.

<http://www.uhms.org>

<http://scuba-doc.com/listchmbr.htm>



## UNIT DIVE INSPECTION

As of January 15th all dive units and sub-units should have completed and forwarded to their respective LODO/FDO the annual Unit Dive Inspection Checklist. For those units that have completed these, thank you. For those who have yet to complete the inspection, your LODO/FDO's will be contacting you in the near future to obtain a report. This inspection is essential to allow the NDC to identify what is working in the field and what needs to be addressed. The checklist also lets the respective units identify training needs, equipment issues, and staffing levels to the NDC. If you have any questions about any part of this inspection, don't hesitate to contact the NDC.



## OTHER DIVE RELATED EVENTS

### Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center divers cooperate with FBI and USCG investigation of diver spotted in Honolulu Harbor. ...by Ray Boland, UDS PIFSC

February 24, 2004 had just barely begun when at 0003 hours a night-watchman at the USCG base in Honolulu spotted what appeared to be a diver in the water near a 47 foot patrol boat. The night-watchman described a head and what appeared to be a set of black double tanks on the diver's back.

This prompted a massive search of Honolulu Harbor the following morning. Army and Navy divers searched for any sign of explosives or tampering of all nearby vessels and piers. Divers also searched for abandoned dive gear or any other signs that would indicate a diver had been in the area. Nothing was found.

On the night of February 28 at 2223 hours a diver was spotted again in the same area, but near the USCG Buoy tender Kukui. Searches conducted the following day found nothing.

Late in the afternoon of March 4th, the FBI contacted the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center and asked if we would be able to assist them in a dive survey of Honolulu Harbor. The Center's Deputy Director, Michael Seki, handed me the number of the FBI agent in charge of the investigation and we contacted him. The FBI and USCG divers of MSST-1 were planning to conduct a survey dive of the USCG piers and were curious if we could assist them.

That same afternoon, a six-foot diameter sewer pipe down the road from the Coast Guard base burst sending millions of gallons of raw sewage into the harbor. Nearby beaches were closed for nearly four days. Despite the sewage spill, a dive meeting was held on March 5th at the Coast Guard base by the FBI, USCG, HPD, USFWS and DLNR. All attendees were brought up to speed on the investigation by Special Agent Sam Mum. Special Agent Rip McGuinn was the leader of the FBI SWAT team and coordinator of the dive. The USFWS enforcement branch and Hawaii's Department of Aquatic Resources had suggested an alternative possible motive to a diver being spotted near USCG base. The alternative theory was that the diver could be possibly collecting, or cultivating (growing) a marine species that could either be endemic or an illegal alien for the aquarium trade or consumption. NOAA divers were being asked to assist because of our expertise at identifying marine organisms, particularly our ability at being able to discern endemic and alien species. It was also thought that we might be able to note any evidence of fishing, including illegal fishing practices such as bleaching. For the time being the dive was postponed until the Health Department determined that the water was safe to swim in.

The water was deemed safe for swimming on March 11 and I received a phone call from Rip informing me that the dive would take place at 0830 on March 12. We gathered up our SEP gear and two tanks a-piece and rendezvoused with the FBI SWAT team and USCG MSST-1 at the USCG base. After a quick orientation, teams were divided up and areas assigned. The dive was to last no longer than 50 minutes.

The visibility in the harbor was very good about, 20 feet, even near the bottom at about 35 feet. However the sediment was light and easily stirred up. We were careful not to disturb the bottom. I had brought along a video camera in the event we did see something significant. Because the visibility was good we were able to swim an effective search pattern beneath the USCG piers and vessels moored to them.

Nothing unusual, in a biologic sense, was found. There were not many fish, or creatures worth collecting and no disturbance from illegal fishing practices was found. The FBI was satisfied with our observations and thanked us. It seemed that the diver was probably not in the harbor for the purposes of collecting fish or other marine life.



The mystery continues.