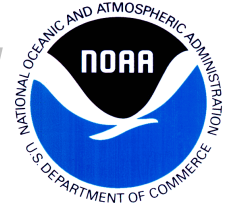




TOPSIDE



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The NDP Newsletter for NOAA Diving Supervisors and Divers

October 2002

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IN MEMORIAM

Topside is deeply saddened to report that **Douglas R. Cooper** was killed October 07, 2002 in the Florida Keys by a hit-and-run driver. Doug was a contractor for the FKNMS office in Key West, FL and a NOAA working diver since January 2000. He was an important member of the lobster trap salvage program, and more recently, of the FKNMS Mooring Buoy Maintenance Team. Doug will be sorely missed by the FKNMS office and the NOAA Diving Program. ☐

SEP ASSESSMENT LETTERS

So, you thought all of that nice diving equipment was provided by the equipment fairy, huh? Not exactly, Virginia...

Annual Standardized Equipment Program (SEP) assessment letters will be mailed to each UDS the middle of October. Unit Diving Supervisors are requested to carefully review these letters, comment on any inaccuracies, and mail or fax corrected letters back to NDC by November 01, 2002. All units will be assessed for divers in possession of SEP equipment, or NOAA employees actively diving for the unit during FY2002. Divers will be charged one-half or all of the assessment fee depending upon their diving activity and equipment possession during the previous fiscal year. Additional assessments may be made for divers with lost or damaged equipment. All monies collected are used solely for the maintenance, replacement, or purchase of diving equipment used by NOAA divers. ☐

TRAINING SCHEDULE

Training requests are being accepted for the **January 2003 Working Diver and Divemaster** courses in Key West, Florida. Training slots cannot be guaranteed at this stage because of the popularity of this course. Please contact Laurie Barber if you would like to place a candidate's name on the enrollment list.

EMT Competency Based Training (CBT) will be held November 06 at the Diving Center in Seattle. This course meets annual continuing education requirements for Washington state EMT's. Contact Laurie if you are interested in attending. ☐

The following classes are scheduled for:

2002

Sep 09 - 27	Working Diver	Seattle, WA
Sep 23 - 27	Divemaster	Seattle, WA
Nov 06	EMT CBT	Seattle, WA

2003

Jan 13 - 31	Working Diver	Key West, FL
Jan 27 - 31	Divemaster	Key West, FL
Jun 02 - 20	Working Diver	Seattle, WA
Jun 16 - 20	Divemaster	Seattle, WA

SEPTEMBER WD CLASS

Eighteen divers successfully completed the September 2002 Working Diver course. An additional seven diving supervisors successfully completed Divemaster training. In addition to NOAA participants, divers from the local police and fire, FBI, Secret Service, and USGS participated in training. Congratulations to all for a job well done! ☐

ENTER THOSE DIVE LOGS!

FY2002 data for the NOAA Diving Program will be compiled shortly. Please ensure all of your diving activity from October 31, 2001 through September 30, 2002 is logged and submitted. Thanks! [K]

ANNUAL REPORT

A reminder that **completed annual reports are due to your unit's LODO/OMAO FDO by October 15, 2002.**

NMFS LODO—Ian Workman, Pascagoula, MS

NOS LODO—Bill Valley, Key Largo, FL

OAR LODO—Jules Craynock, Miami, FL

OMAO FDO—LT Bill Cobb, Seattle, WA

These reports are very important for documenting NOAA Diving Program activities and are used to create the NDP Annual Report. [K]

COLD OR ARDUOUS DIVING

Your body can absorb and/or retain more nitrogen when performing cold (any time a diver is cold, regardless of water temp) or arduous (strenuous) dives making you more susceptible to DCS. Therefore, when using diving tables, it's recommended that you build in a safety factor that avoids pushing the limits of the table used. This "cushion" can be created by using the next longer bottom time, or a longer surface interval. Whatever method is used, the diver should avoid the maximum no decompression time for the depth dived. [K]

CALL FOR DIVING PHOTOS

NDC still needs your help..... The Center is in constant need of diving photographs that depict NOAA diving operations both above and below the surface. These photos are used on the NDP web site, in NDC publications, and in training lectures. It is a great opportunity to get free publicity for your divers, diving unit, and program. Please submit any photos you would like used to LT Bill Cobb at the NDC mailing address, or e-mail bill.cobb@noaa.gov. E-mailed digital photographs are preferred, but regular photographs, digital photograph files on disk, slides, or negatives are acceptable formats. Please include a note if you need the submitted items returned. Thanks! [K]

ROSTER REVIEW

A monthly unit diving roster is included with this Topside mailing to Unit Diving Supervisors and ship Divemasters to assist them in their supervisory duties. Diving supervisors receiving this roster should take the time to review the status of the divers in their unit and correct any deficiencies noted. Some common problems encountered and how to deal with them:

Diver's physical is expired: Divers without a current physical on file at NDC are not authorized to dive for NOAA or to use NOAA diving equipment. A new diving physical must be submitted to the UDS for review and submission to NDC. A diver's NOAA diving certification can be revoked for failure to submit a diving physical.

Diver transferred to different dive unit: The diver or UDS must contact NDC and inform them of the move. We'll update the roster to reflect this change.

Diver no longer diving: Contact NDC and we will remove their name from the roster. But, if they still have SEP equipment then their name will remain on the roster and SEP charges will continue to accrue until the equipment is returned or the unit will be charged for the full replacement cost of the gear (ouch!). It's important that a UDS/ship's Divemaster be proactive in retaining dive gear from divers leaving NOAA or transferring within NOAA to a non-diving position. The return process gets difficult and time consuming once a diver has left the ship or facility. Legal action can be taken against a diver that walks off with equipment, but often times it also costs the unit money and the UDS time.

Lapse in diving proficiency: Divers without a dive in 6 weeks or more are not authorized to dive or use NOAA diving equipment until completing a UDS, LODO, or NDC specified refresher program. Diving supervisors need to contact lapsed divers to determine why this occurred and formulate a refresher plan. Failure to follow the dive proficiency and refresher guidelines outlined here and in the regulations can cost a diver their NOAA certification.

The take home message is to review the roster each month and be proactive in correcting any deficiencies noted. It will save you time and trouble in the end! [K]