

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

Subject:	Occupational Safety and Health – Diving Safety
Purpose:	This Directive and Standard establishes program requirements, defines responsibilities, and clarifies procedures for the Bureau of Reclamation to manage and implement diving operations. The benefits of this Directive and Standard are that all Reclamation diving will be conducted in a manner to maximize safety and prevent injury, occupational illness, or loss of lives or property.
Authority:	Public Law 91-596, Section 19, Federal Agency Safety Programs and Responsibilities; 29 CFR 1910, Subpart T, Commercial Diving Operations; 29 CFR 1910.20, Access to Employee Exposure and Medical Records; Department of the Interior Safety and Health Manual, 485 DM 27; Department of the Interior Occupational Medicine Program Handbook; Reclamation Safety and Health Standards, Section 29
Approving Official:	Deputy Commissioner, Policy, Administration, and Budget
Contact:	Reclamation Safety and Health Office, 84-43000

1. **Introduction.** Reclamation adheres to high standards of diving safety. All diving operations will be conducted in accordance with the Reclamation Diving Safe Practices Manual (RDSPM) as the means to implement regulatory requirements and provide uniformity in diving activities throughout Reclamation.
2. **Definition.** Diver refers to diving employees, including journeyman diver, divers, standby divers, lead diver, dive tenders, and Dive Masters who participate in diving activities or are exposed to hyperbaric conditions.
3. **Scope.** This Directive and Standard applies to all Reclamation personnel who are performing or overseeing Reclamation diving operations and activities.
4. **Responsibilities.**
 - A. **Designated Agency Safety and Health Official.** The Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO) provides overall leadership, direction, and oversight for the Diving Safety Program. In the event of a serious accident or near-miss incident that could have resulted in serious injuries or other consequences, the DASHO will appoint an Accident Investigator or Serious Accident Investigation Team.
 - B. **Manager, Reclamation Safety and Health Program.** The Manager, Reclamation Safety and Health Program is responsible for overall management, coordination, and oversight of the Diving Safety Program.

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

- C. **Regional Directors and Director, Technical Service Center.** Each regional director and the Director, Technical Service Center is responsible for ensuring that this Directive and Standard and the RDSPM are followed. The responsibilities include:
- (1) ensuring that diving activities are conducted in compliance with this Directive and Standard, the RDSPM, and the safety requirements in the *Reclamation Safety and Health Standards* (RSHS);
 - (2) ensuring adequate resources to meet this Directive and Standard and the RSHS; and
 - (3) each regional director with an active dive team appointing a Regional Diving Advisory Committee (RDAC), with the majority of the members being active divers, for the purpose of implementing this Directive and Standard at the regional level, and ensuring a safe and efficient underwater examination and inspection program.
- D. **Contracting Officer.** The Contracting Officer will insert appropriate safety clauses in solicitations and contracts and coordinate diving contracts for review by the safety manager.
- E. **Reclamation Diving Safety Advisory Board.** The Reclamation Diving Safety Advisory Board (RDSAB) is endorsed by the DASHO as a body of technical knowledge to collaborate on safe diving practices and review operational procedures required by this Directive and Standard. The majority of the RDSAB will be current active divers.
5. **Functions.**
- A. **Reclamation Diving Safety Advisory Board.** The RDSAB will:
- (1) Elect one of the dive team leaders to serve as Chair, RDSAB. The individual will be trained and experienced in Reclamation diving operations. Responsibilities of the Chair, RDSAB include the following:
 - (a) representing the RDSAB at meetings and workshops with other agencies and private entities involved in diving activities;
 - (b) ensuring that accidents are reported in accordance with this Directive and Standard;
 - (c) serving as the focal point for all diving concerns within Reclamation; and
 - (d) preparing the Annual Action Plan for the upcoming year and Accomplishments Report for the preceding year.

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

- (2) Develop, revise, and maintain a RDSPM as required by 485 DM 27.3E; accessible at <http://www.usbr.gov/ssle/safety> by:
 - (a) reviewing the Reclamation diving program;
 - (b) reviewing the infrastructure, procedures, and resources prior to recommending approval of any dive team within Reclamation;
 - (c) reviewing requests for variances from safety and diving requirements and making recommendations in accordance with Reclamation Manual Directive and Standard, *Request for Waiver From A Reclamation Manual Requirement and Approval or Disapproval of the Request*, RCD 03-03, and recommending approval/disapproval of the request to the approving official; and
 - (d) meet annually or more frequently as necessary.

B. The Regional Diving Advisory Committee.

- (1) Each regional director with an active dive team will appoint a RDAC with the majority of its members being active divers, to implement requirements in the RDSPM at the regional level. The regional chairperson will report directly to the regional director or to the designated program manager. The RDAC will consist of at least five members and include the Regional Safety Manager and the Regional Dive Team Leader.
- (2) The RDAC will provide oversight of the region's diving activities and divers. When a diver fails to meet proficiency and suitability requirements, the RDAC will review the diver's records for suspension from Reclamation diving activities. Suspended divers may be reinstated, by a review and recommendation from the RDAC, when the diver can demonstrate proficiency and suitability.

C. Regional Dive Team Leader.

- (1) A Regional Dive Team Leader will be a senior Reclamation dive team member who has the experience and training necessary to ensure that the diving operations are conducted safely and in accordance with Reclamation policy and Federal regulations. The Dive Team Leader has authority to suspend diving operations at any time due to unsafe conditions.
- (2) A Regional Dive Team Leader must have the experience and formal training in diving procedures including Surface-supplied Air diving and Remotely Operated Vehicles training, Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation and first aid, and specialized courses to conduct assigned diving operations. In addition, the Dive Team Leader

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

must have experience in conducting underwater inspections of structures, expertise to manage dive operations, and working knowledge of this Directive and Standard, the RSHS, and the RDSPM.

- (3) Divers will comply with training and safety requirements as specified in the RDSPM and RSHS; and will report problems and unsafe conditions to the team leader. Reclamation divers will not undertake a dive beyond their individual experience, training, and comfort level.

D. **Other Agency Divers.** Divers from other agencies or contractors cannot dive with Reclamation divers unless they meet the minimum diver qualifications as specified in the RDSPM and a signed reciprocity agreement has been approved by the RDAC.

6. Medical Requirements for Divers.

- A. All employees who are assigned as divers shall have successfully completed a physical examination within the past 12 months by a licensed physician, preferably one who is trained and experienced in hyperbaric medicine, and at intervals and events specified in the RDSPM. Costs of the examinations will be paid by the region conducting the diving operation.
- B. Divers will not dive during any physical or mental impairment or condition that is likely to adversely affect the safety of a dive team member.
- C. Diving physical examinations will follow the criteria set forth in the Department of the Interior Occupational Medicine Program Handbook and the RDSPM.
- D. Medical records will be retained in accordance with regulatory requirements at 29 CFR 1910 Subpart T and Reclamation records management. Medical information is considered confidential. All persons who gain personal or medical information on an individual will protect the confidentiality of such information. The Regional Dive Team Leader will keep a medical clearance record of each diver, and the original detailed reports will be retained by Human Resources in the employee's medical folder.