

EFFECTIVE
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MINIMUM COURSE CONTENT
FOR
Recreational Scuba Instructor Certification

As Approved By

		
		
		

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RSTC Coordinator

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Recreational Scuba Training Council (RSTC)

Minimum Course Content

for

Recreational Scuba Instructor Certification

1. Scope and Purpose

This standard provides minimum course content requirements for recreational scuba instructor training. However, these requirements should under no conditions be considered to define a level of optimum training of a recreational scuba instructor. Instructional programs that extend beyond these requirements should, in fact, be encouraged. Some states, provinces or countries may have additional regulations for entry-level scuba training. Instructors should be aware of requirements in their local areas and adhere to the additional protocols when conducting training.

The requirements of this standard are meant to be comprehensive, but general in nature. That is, the standard presents all the subject areas essential for minimum instructor training, but it does not give a detailed listing of the skills and information encompassed by each area. These items are simply listed in this standard; training organizations shall publish detailed course outlines that meet this standard, which would include specific techniques.

Although the information categories are outlined in what may appear to be a logical sequence, the outline shall not be viewed as a lesson plan. That is, the order in which the information is presented in this standard, while logical as a framework for the basic requirements of this standard, does not necessarily define the sequence of a class lesson plan. Similarly, the requirements presented in this standard do not indicate the emphasis that should be placed upon a particular subject area, or the manner in which subjects are to be taught. Rather, course outlines, lesson plans, and other training aids prepared by training organizations responsible for training recreational scuba instructors shall be used as guidelines for the sequencing and emphasis of course content requirements presented in these standards. Decisions as to sequencing and emphasis are at the discretion of the certifying training organization, to be made within the context of environmental factors, instructor characteristics, and other relevant considerations.

Instructor certification qualifies a certified instructor to engage in training and certifying of recreational scuba divers. It is the intent of these standards that such individuals will have received sanctioned training in the fundamentals of training recreational scuba divers. A certified instructor is qualified to apply the knowledge and skills outlined in these standards to conduct academic and scuba skills training and to certify recreational divers through a training organization.

2. Definitions

certification. A document indicating that the bearer has completed all requirements of a recreational scuba instructor certification course. This verification is issued by a training organization upon the instructor trainer/evaluator's written authorization, confirming satisfactory completion of all course requirements, as documented in the bearer's individual log/training record and the training organization's equivalent documentation.

current. Certification or documentation issued that has not reached its expiration date prior to the issuing of scuba instructor certification.

dive supervisor. An individual who is currently qualified and sanctioned by a training organization to assist an instructor in teaching recreational scuba divers and to conduct supervised diving activities as outlined by his/her training organization. Completion of formal training in planning, management and control of diving activities, first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and diver-rescue techniques is required. The dive supervisor shall also have passed a written examination demonstrating dive supervisor-level knowledge, as required by the training organization. To be sanctioned, the dive supervisor must meet the annual renewal requirements of the training organization. (See the RSTC Recreational Dive Supervisor certification standards for details).

diver rescue. Training offered by a training organization that includes diving-specific classes in emergency planning and accident management, along with open water training in the areas of self aid, self assist, buddy aid, buddy assist, locating, surfacing and egress of an unresponsive diver, diver emergency planning and accident management procedures.

instructor. An individual who is currently qualified and sanctioned by a training organization to teach recreational scuba diving and authorize the issuance of recreational scuba certification. To be sanctioned, the instructor must meet the annual renewal requirements of the training organization.

instructor course. The course of instructor training leading to instructor certification by a training organization. Successful completion of a course that meets or exceeds these standards qualifies an individual to apply the knowledge and skills outlined in these standards to conduct academic and scuba skills training and to certify recreational scuba divers through the training organization.

minimum instructor candidate diving system. The equipment required to be worn by candidates while performing the skills listed in 4.7, 4.8, 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6. This equipment includes, as a minimum: fins, mask, snorkel, cylinder and valve, buoyancy control device with low-pressure inflator, back-pack, regulator, alternate air source (active scuba/air delivery system), submersible pressure gauge, weight ballast system, and exposure suit (if appropriate), timing device, depth gauge, knife/diver's tool (unless prohibited by law or regulation at the dive site), dive tables, compass/direction monitor and emergency signaling device.

out-of-air emergency alternatives. Procedures allowing a diver to ascend to the surface in the event of an out-of-air situation.

dependent procedures include: alternate air source; buddy breathing; redundant air supply (provided by buddy).

independent procedures include: emergency ascent; redundant air supply.

3. Prerequisites

In order to qualify for enrollment in an instructor course, a candidate shall meet the following minimum prerequisites:

(1) Age. The candidate shall be at least 18 years of age; there is no upper limit.

(2) Dive Experience. An evaluation conducted by the instructor trainer/evaluator of the candidate's dive experience that includes, but is not limited to:

1. At least 6 months of diving experience;
2. 60 logged dives
3. Broad based experience (e.g., advanced, night, deep, navigation, and search and recovery) since entry level certification, as documented in the candidate's individual log book/training record or equivalent documentation.

(3) Minimum Instructor Candidate Diving System. The candidate shall possess the minimum instructor candidate diving system.

(4) Minimum Candidate Certification. The candidate shall have completed the requirements and be certified at the dive supervisor level, or must receive the required dive supervisor training during the instructor course.

4. Eligibility for Certification

(1) Medical Examination. The candidate shall have, within the past year, a medical examination and approval for diving, without conditions or restrictions, by a licensed physician prior to engaging in water activities. In no event shall medical approval be accepted, wherein the physician signing the approval is the participating candidate.

(2) Physical Conditioning and Watermanship Evaluation. The candidate shall effectively demonstrate basic watermanship ability by performing the watermanship evaluation required by the training organization. This watermanship evaluation shall include a continuous 400 yard (366 metre) surface distance swim and a 10 minute survival swim/float without the use of mask, fins, or snorkel, or of other swimming aids.

(3) Acknowledgment and Assumption of Risk. Candidates shall be informed of the inherent risks of scuba and shall agree to sign appropriate forms acknowledging and assuming those risks prior to participating in water activities. These forms may include, but are not to be limited to: liability release; waiver and release of liability; affirmation and liability release; assumption of risk; limitation of liability; safe diving practices; standards for safety; statement of understanding; etc.

(4) Knowledge. The candidate shall demonstrate instructor-level knowledge of scuba diving by taking and passing a written examination. Documentation of the examination shall be permanently retained by the training organization. This examination shall test instructor-level knowledge of equipment, physics of diving, physiology of diving, medical problems related to diving, decompression theory, use of dive tables, dive computers, dive environment and training standards as specified by the training organization and as outlined in 5.2.

(5) Scuba Skills. The candidate shall satisfactorily demonstrate, to an instructor trainer/evaluator, instructor-level scuba skills required by the training organization and as outlined in 5.4 and 5.5, covering pool/confined water and open water scuba skills, respectively.

(6) CPR. At the time of certification, the candidate shall complete, and have current, training in CPR as required by the training organization. CPR may be taught during the instructor course, but may not be counted toward the 100 total training hours.

(7) First Aid. At the time of certification, the candidate shall complete, and have current, training in First Aid as required by the training organization. The candidate shall be competent in practical use of emergency oxygen during a diving emergency, unless prohibited by local law. First Aid may be taught during the instructor course, but may not be counted toward the 100 total training hours.

(8) Diver Rescue. The candidate shall complete training in diver rescue skills as required by the training organization and as outlined in 5.6. The candidate shall also satisfactorily demonstrate, to an instructor trainer/evaluator, at least one complete open water rescue as required by the training organization. Diver Rescue may be taught during the instructor course and may be counted toward the 100 total training hours.

(9) Dive Supervisor. The candidate shall complete training in group control and supervision of diver activities as required by the training organization. Dive Supervisor may be taught during the instructor course and may be counted toward the 100 total training hours.

(10) Teaching Presentation Training. The candidate shall complete training in lesson preparation, planning and delivery of lecture, pool/confined water skills and open water skills teaching presentations as required by the training organization and as outlined in 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5.

(11) Training Hours. The candidate shall complete at least 100 total training hours of specialized training/evaluation. A minimum of 50 training hours are to occur under the supervision of an instructor trainer/evaluator and include the topics outlined in Section 5. The remaining hours are to include, but are not limited to, the training outlined in 4(8) and 4(9).

(12) Dive Experience. At the time of certification, the candidate shall have at least 100 verifiable logged dives.

5. Minimum Course Content

The course shall consist of the topics and scuba skills required by the training organization and as outlined in this section.

5.1 Introduction. The following information should be made available to candidates before or during the first class meeting.

- (1) Certification requirements (see Sections 3 and 4)
- (2) Scope of course
 - (a) Content
 - (b) Limitations of eventual qualification
- (3) Equipment requirements
- (4) Course procedures

5.2 Course Topics. The candidate shall complete training under the supervision of an instructor trainer/evaluator. Training is to include the topics required by the training organization and as outlined in this section.

- (1) Lesson preparation, lesson planning and lesson delivery
- (2) Pool/confined water and open water procedures
- (3) Pool/confined water and open water problem solving
- (4) The training organization's training standards
- (5) The training organization's requirements for diver certification
- (6) Professional and ethical responsibility of a recreational scuba instructor
- (7) Instructor-level knowledge of equipment, physics of diving, physiology of diving, medical problems related to diving, decompression theory, use of dive tables, dive computers and dive environment.
- (8) Local laws and regulations affecting scuba diving services.
- (9) Dive site selection.

5.3 Candidate Lecture Presentations. The candidate shall demonstrate, to an instructor trainer/evaluator, lesson preparation, planning and delivery of at least three teaching presentations from the topics outlined in the agencies training materials as required by the training organization.

The suggested topics may include:

- (1) Equipment
- (2) Physics of diving
- (3) Medical problems related to diving
- (4) Use of dive tables
- (5) Dive Environment
- (6) Dive planning
 - (a) Planning and preparation, with emphasis on the prevention of out-of-air situations and emergencies
 - (b) Emergency procedures
 - (c) Accident management/prevention
- (7) Communications, both under water and on the surface
- (8) Diver assistance (self/buddy)
- (9) Recommended diving practices, including safety stops
- (10) Procedures for diving from boats

5.4 Pool/Confined Water Scuba Skills. The candidate shall demonstrate, to a certified instructor trainer/evaluator, personal scuba skills as outlined in this section and as required by the training organization. In addition, the candidate is to complete lesson preparation, planning and delivery (including briefing and debriefing), group control and supervision, and problem solving for at least three pool/confined water skills teaching presentations from the topics outlined in this section and as required by the training organization.

- (1) Diving system assembly and disassembly (at water's edge)
- (2) Equipment inspection (at water's edge)
- (3) Entries and exits
- (4) Proper weighting
- (5) Mouthpiece clearing - snorkel and regulator
- (6) Regulator/snorkel exchanges at the surface
- (7) Controlled descents and ascents
- (8) Underwater swimming
- (9) Mask-clearing, including removal and replacement
- (10) Underwater exercises - with and without mask

- (11) Buddy-system techniques
- (12) Underwater and surface buoyancy control
- (13) Underwater problem-solving (regulator recovery/retrieval, etc)
- (14) Surface-snorkel swimming with full diving system
- (15) Surface operation of the quick release/emergency function of the weight system
- (16) Removal and replacement of weight/ballast system
- (17) Removal and replacement of scuba system
- (18) Out-of-air emergency alternatives
- (19) Equipment care and maintenance (at water's edge)

5.5 Open Water Scuba Skills. The candidate shall demonstrate in open water, to a certified instructor trainer/evaluator, lesson preparation, planning and delivery (including briefing and debriefing), group control and supervision, and problem solving for at least three open water skills teaching presentations from the topics outlined in this section and as required by the training organization.

- (1) Diving system assembly and disassembly (at water's edge)
- (2) Equipment inspection (at water's edge)
- (3) Entries and exits
- (4) Proper Weighting
- (5) Mouthpiece clearing - snorkel and regulator
- (6) Regulator/snorkel exchanges at the surface
- (7) Controlled descents and ascents
- (8) Underwater swimming
- (9) Mask-clearing
- (10) Buddy-system techniques
- (11) Underwater and surface buoyancy control
- (12) Diver assistance techniques (self/buddy)
- (13) Surface-snorkel swimming with full diving system
- (14) Underwater problem-solving (regulator recovery/retrieval, etc.)
- (15) Removal and replacement of weight/ballast system
- (16) Removal and replacement of scuba system
- (17) Out-of-air emergency alternatives
- (18) Equipment care and maintenance (at water's edge)
- (19) Underwater navigation

5.6 Open Water Rescue. The candidate shall demonstrate in open water, to a certified instructor trainer/evaluator, at least one complete open water rescue as required by the training organization.

**For more information, contact:
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Appendix A

RSTC Members

IDEA

International Diving Educators Association
P.O. Box 8427
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1-904-744-5554 Fax: 1-904-743-5425
Email: info@ideascuba.com

PADI

Professional Association of Diving Instructors
30151 Tomas Street
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688-2125 USA
1-949-858-7234 Fax: 1-949-267-1266
Email: Julie.taylor.sanders@padi.com or jeff.nadler@padi.com

PDIC

Professional Diving Instructors Corporation
1015 River Street
Scranton, PA 18505 USA
1-570-342-9434 Fax: 1-570-342-6030
Email: info@pdic-intl.com

SDI

Scuba Diving International
18 Elm Street
Topsham, ME 04086 USA
1-207-729-4201 Fax: 1-207- 729-4453
Email: worldhq@tdisdi.com

SSI

Scuba Schools International
2619 Canton Court
Ft. Collins, CO 80525 USA
1-970-482-0883 Fax: 1-970-482-6157
Email: wdevore@divessi.com

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