

# INTRODUCTION OR INITIATION TO DIVING GUIDELINES

v1123



## Points of special consideration

- *This is not a mandatory standard, but rather a voluntary guideline for those who wish to follow it*
- *These are programs where no certification is obtained*
- *They only include one dive, either in a pool or protected waters with similar characteristics (initiation) or in open water (introduction).*
- *The initiation program can be offered by an ACUC Divemaster or higher level*
- *The introductory program can be offered by an ACUC Entry Level Instructor or higher level.*

## FOREWORD

ACUC introductory and initiation diving programs are not certification programs and as such, these are to be considered for those who wish to provide this type of introductory Scuba experiences, voluntary guidelines and not mandatory RSTC or ISO sanctioned standards. The sole purpose of this guideline is to increase the safety of this type of programs, but as mentioned, it is not mandatory to follow the suggestions and program presented here. ACUC does not offer non-certification courses and therefore, this type of courses cannot be advertised as “ACUC Introduction course” or “ACUC Baptism” or anything similar. Both programs end with a dive; In the case of the initiation program, it must be done in a pool or confined water with similar characteristics and at a maximum depth of 3 meters (10 feet), and in the case of the introductory program, it is done in open water and at a maximum depth of 10 meters (33 feet). The initiation program could be taught by any ACUC Divemaster or higher level, while the Introduction program should be taught by an ACUC Entry Level Instructor or higher level.

This is an ACUC International guideline and therefore is always subject to the different national or local legislations.

Regarding required training hours, none are specified because these could vary depending on many factors (number of participants, diving environment, etc), therefore the training hours needed are dependent on the fulfilment of learning objectives. In the ACUC manuals and documents where hours are specified, these are only to be considered recommendations.

## 1. SCOPE

This Guideline specifies safety related minimum competencies to be achieved in recreational scuba training at the ACUC Initiation or Introduction to Diving levels. This Guideline applies only to **contractual training** in recreational scuba diving.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

For definitions, please see this [page](#)

## 3. COMPETENCES

Participants must be trained to have sufficient competencies through knowledge and ability to participate in **one dive** in confined water (initiation) or in open water (introduction) under the direct supervision of the Divemaster or Instructor who gave them the training. Participants must dive within the following parameters:

Initiation programs:

- Dive to a maximum depth of 3 meters (10 feet) in confined water
- Dive as long as they are directly under the supervision of the Divemaster (or higher level) who gave them the program.

Introduction programs:

- Dive to a maximum depth of 10 meters (33 feet) in open water
- Dive if they are directly under the supervision of the Entry Level Instructor or higher level who gave them the program.

If accompanied by an ACUC instructor, participants can gain progressive experience beyond these parameters by taking a certification program, such as the ACUC Scuba Diver or Open Water Diver, and develop competencies managing dives with more challenging conditions designed to earn certification.

## 4. TRAINING PREREQUISITES

To enrol in a program under this guideline, the participants must meet the following prerequisites:

**4.1 Minimum age:** Initiation Program: 8 years; Introductory Program: 12 years. The consent of parents or guardians is required when the participant is a minor. (The definition "minor" will be according to the legislation of each country).

**4.2 Medical requirements:** Participants must pass a medical examination suitable for recreational diving, or if the legislation of the country where the program takes place allows it, fill in an appropriate questionnaire. In case of doubt, participants should be referred to an appropriate doctor. If the participant is not examined by a doctor, the participant shall be required to confirm, by signing it, written information given by the instructor about illnesses or physical conditions that may be a risk related to diving. Participants will be advised on the importance of appropriate regular medical examinations

**4.3 To know how to swim.**

## 5. INSTRUCTOR:PARTICIPANT RATIOS

- **Theory (in dry environment):** No limit
- **Pool/Confined Water:** 4 participants per Divemaster or higher level, with 2 additional participants for each Divemaster or higher level, with an absolute maximum of 8 participants.
- **Open Water:** 2 participants per Instructor, with 2 additional participants for each Divemaster or higher level, with an absolute maximum of 4 participants.

## 6. INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

The following information shall be made available to the candidates prior to, or during the first class.

- Prerequisites according to 4,
- Scope of program,
- Program procedures,
- Costs, insurance and contractual issues according to national regulations,
- Equipment requirements,
- Diving related legislation and legal requirements.

## 7. PROGRAM CONTENT

- 7.0. Introduction and brief history of diving
- 7.1. Physics and physiology of diving
  - Pressure
  - Vision
  - Sound
- 7.2. The equipment
  - Mask
  - Snorkel
  - Fins
  - Weight belt

- Regulator
- Compensating vest
- Pressure gauge
- 7.3. Assembly and disassembly of the equipment
  - 7.3.1 Equipment Assembly
    - Attaching the vest to the tank
    - Valve check
    - Attaching the regulator to the tank
    - Attaching the vest hose to the vest
    - Air opening
    - Regulator check
  - 7.3.2 Equipment disassembly
- 7.4. Hand signals and marine life
- 7.5. Aquatic skills
  - 7.5.1 Snorkeling exercises
    - Snorkel rinse
    - Release of weight belt (if it is going to be used)
    - Water entries
      - Giant step
      - Controlled sitting
      - Backwards roll
    - Surface dives
      - Head first
      - Feet first
    - Underwater swimming without a mask (Note: Special precautions should be taken when taking the mask off underwater, in open water, especially in cold water areas)
  - 7.5.2 Practices with scuba (Important note: none of these exercises should be done unless under the direct supervision of a divemaster or higher ACUC level)
    - Dropping of weight belt
    - Water entries
      - Giant step
      - Controlled sitting
      - Backwards roll
    - Surface dives
      - Feet first
    - Compensating vest
      - Inflation and deflation of the vest on the surface
      - Inflation and deflation of the vest on the bottom and obtaining neutral buoyancy
    - Breathing from an alternate air source
    - Descents and ascents

## 8. PRACTICAL TRAINING PARAMETERS

- 8.1** All **confined** water underwater skills will be introduced, demonstrated and directly supervised by an ACUC Divemaster or higher level, who will be in the water during each session. The Divemaster or higher level will be in direct control of the participants throughout all sessions.
- 8.2** Before the open water dive the participants will demonstrate to a diving instructor the aquatic skills in confined waters, to be able to do it properly during the open water dive.
- 8.3** The maximum depth of the dive will not exceed the parameters indicated before (conditions permitting). Underwater visibility should be at least 3 meters (10 feet); there should be no significant currents and there should be no waves greater than 50 cms (around 2 feet).
- 8.4** The open water dive shall be done during daylight hours in water that allows direct vertical access to the surface. Open water diving will therefore not be done in caves, inside wrecks or under ice.
- 8.5** During the open water dive the participants will be equipped with at least the diving equipment according to 2.9 (see [Definitions](#)).
- 8.6** According to clause 5, the absolute maximum number of participants per diving instructor, under ideal conditions, for direct supervision and escort in open water is two. The maximum number of participants per qualified assistant for direct supervision and accompaniment in open water is two.

- 8.7 At no time should a participant be left unattended on or under the water.
- 8.8 Under no circumstances will groups of certified divers (certified diver as buddy of another certified diver and so on) and groups of participants from an introductory program be allowed on the same dive, under the direct supervision of the same instructor.
- 8.9 Under no circumstances is it allowed to pair a certified diver with a participant (unless said diver has the necessary certification — Divemaster as a minimum).
- 8.10 Before the dive the diving instructor will prepare an “emergency plan”. In the immediate vicinity of the dive site there will be:
- A proper first aid kit
  - An emergency oxygen unit with a capacity to deliver at least 15 l/min. For at least 20 min.
  - Adequate communication system to alert emergency services.
- 8.11 The diving instructor will cancel or abort the open water dive if the environmental conditions or the physical or mental condition of a participant so requires.

## 9. PROGRAM DIVE

**These programs include only one dive** and must be directly supervised by the Divemaster or instructor who gave the program. The maximum depth for the initiation program is 3 meters / 10 feet (confined water) and for the introductory program 10 meters / 33 feet in open water, and only in ideal conditions.

Under no circumstances is the participant qualified to do more dives, every time the participant wants to do a new dive, the participant must be informed that he must do an initiation or introduction program again. Therefore, it is recommended that if the participant likes the experience, the instructor suggests that they complete a full certification program, such as the ACUC Scuba Diver or Open Water Diver programs.

## 10. WHO CAN OFFER THESE PROGRAMS

The theory and the pool (confined water) can be given by any ACUC Divemaster or higher level in “active” status, with the necessary logistics and valid CL insurance. The open water portion must be done by any ACUC Entry Level Instructor or higher in active status, with the necessary logistics and with valid CL insurance, as long as this instructor has been directly involved in the training in a pool or confined water of the participant. In cases where the program dive takes place in a pool or confined water, instead of in open water, this can also be done by any ACUC Divemaster or higher level in active status and with a valid CL insurance, as long as s/he has been directly involved in the participant's confined water or pool training