

	OFFICE OF MARINE AND AVIATION OPERATIONS National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	POLICY	VERSION
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		RESPONSIBLE POSITION	
		NDP MGR	

SCIENTIFIC TRAINING AND PROFICIENCY DIVES

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy provides guidelines for conducting scientific training and proficiency dives per the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Science Exemption (29 CFR § 1910.401(a)(2)(iv)).
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2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) divers engaged in scientific training and proficiency dives conducted under NOAA auspices.
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3. Policy

- 3.1 All scientific training and proficiency dives conducted by employees and contract, reciprocity, and volunteer divers under the auspices of the NOAA Diving Program (NDP) that are undertaken in furtherance of *scientific diving* may be conducted consistent with the standards outlined in the NOAA Scientific Diving Standards and Safety Manual provided the requirements for the scientific exemption outlined in 29 CFR § 1910.401(a)(2)(iv) are followed.
- 3.2 Scientific training and proficiency dives are not required to comply with the commercial dive standards at 29 CFR § 1910 *et seq.* provided the dives are not combined with any element comprising a working or commercial dive.
- 3.3 NOAA divers are to conduct scientific training and proficiency dives per the standards outlined in the NOAA Scientific Diving Standards and Safety Manual. Included within the manual are specific requirements that must be met in order to conduct scientific training or proficiency dives under the OSHA scientific exemption.
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4. Guidance

Associated procedures, if required, will provide guidance.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 NOAA Unit Diving Supervisors are responsible for determining whether or not a dive can be performed under the OSHA Scientific Exemption (29 CFR § 1910.410(a)(2)(iv)) based on review of the dive plan and the credentials of the divers involved. Procedures associated with this responsibility are outlined in the NOAA Scientific Diving Standards and Safety Manual.

6. Definitions

NOAA Divers	Individuals certified by the NDP Manager to dive and perform work in a hyperbaric environment in support of NOAA's mission. These include NOAA employees (federal full-time and contract employees), reciprocity, and volunteer divers.
Contract Divers	Non-NOAA contracted personnel certified to dive as either NOAA science or working divers by the NOAA Diving Program Manager in support of NOAA's undersea activities.
Reciprocity Divers	Non-NOAA divers, employed by organizations, agencies, and institutions with whom NOAA has established official agreements for the purpose of conducting collaborative diving operations.
Volunteer Divers	Non-NOAA personnel authorized to dive by the NDP Manager in support of NOAA's undersea activities in a non-salaried capacity.
NOAA Unit Diving Supervisors	NOAA divers appointed by a NOAA Line/Staff Office Diving Officer to oversee, direct, and approve diving activities conducted within their respective LO/SO unit and to administer to the needs of assigned divers.
Scientific Dives	Dives performed solely as a necessary part of a scientific, research, or education activity by individuals whose sole purpose for diving is to perform scientific or research tasks for the advancement of science.

7. References

NOAA Scientific Diving Standards and Safety Manual –
http://www.ndc.noaa.gov/pdfs/NOAA_Scientific_Dive_Manual.pdf

Code of Federal Regulations (29 CFR § 1910.401(a)(2)(iv)) –
<http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/get-cfr.cgi?TITL=29&PART=1910&SUBPART=T&TYPE=PDF>

8. Authority

OMAO Policy 0301 – Category 0300

9. Effect on Other Documents

None.