	OFFICE OF MARINE AND AVIATION OPERATIONS	POLICY 0311	VERSION 1.0
		EFFECTIVE DATE May 4, 2011	
	AUTHORIZED BY: RADM Jonathan W. Bailey, NOAA Director, Office of Marine and Aviation Operations	REVIEW DATE May 4, 2014	
		RESPONSIBLE POSITION NOAA Diving Program Manager	

NOAA DIVING CONTROL AND SAFETY BOARD

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This policy specifies the terms of reference for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Diving Control and Safety Board (NDCSB) within the NOAA Diving Program (NDP).

2. SCOPE

2.1 This policy applies to the NDCSB.

3. POLICY

3.1 General

3.1.1 The NDCSB is an appointed board of representatives from NOAA's Line and Staff Offices (LO/SO) who report to the Director, Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO), and are responsible for the safety and effectiveness of the NOAA Diving Program.

3.1.2 Although the NDCSB reports to the Director, OMAO, per 29 CFR 1910, Subpart T, the NDCSB exercises autonomous and absolute authority over operations of the NDP for both working and scientific dives.

3.1.3 The NDCSB shall meet annually in person and should meet monthly via teleconference, unless special meetings are required to address time sensitive issues.

3.2 Composition and Qualifications

3.2.1 The voting members of the NDCSB shall include the following individuals:

- NOAA Diving Program Manager (DPM)
- NOAA Line and Staff Office Diving Officers (LODOs/SODO) with active diving programs
- NOAA Deputy LODOs/SODO
- NOAA Diving Safety Officer (DSO)

3.2.2 The NOAA Diving Program Diving Medical Officer (NDP/DMO) shall be a non-voting member of the NDCSB.

3.2.3 The NDCSB may consult individual advisors or advisory panels with subject matter expertise to provide additional information.

3.2.4 All Members of the NDCSB shall be NOAA certified divers with a majority being qualified, active scientific divers.

3.2.5 A separate, non-voting Executive Secretariat, appointed by the Chairperson, may be appointed to assist the NDCSB administratively.

3.3 Selection of NDCSB Members

3.3.1 NOAA Diving Program Manager (DPM) – Selected by the Director, OMAO, from a list of candidates provided by the Workforce Management Office.

3.3.2 Line Office Diving Officers – Appointed by NOAA Assistant Administrators from Line Offices with active diving programs.

3.3.3 Staff Office Diving Officer – Appointed by the Director, OMAO.

3.3.4 Chairperson – Selected from the above list of members by majority vote of all members.

3.3.5 Deputy Line and Staff Diving Officers – Appointed by the respective Line and Staff Diving Officers with concurrence of their immediate supervisors.

3.4 Decision Making Process

3.4.1 The Chairperson shall strive for consensus on all NDCSB issues and decisions, and every attempt shall be made to query each voting member of the NDCSB on all decisions.

3.4.2 A quorum of two-thirds of the voting members must be present, in person or electronically, to conduct official business.

3.4.3 Decisions will be made by majority vote with the Chairperson casting the deciding vote in the case of a tie.

3.4.4 Major objections to majority votes shall be made part of the meeting minutes. Any voting member of the NDCSB may request that an item be raised to the Director, OMAO, via written communication from the Chairperson.

3.5 Term Limits

3.5.1 The Chairperson shall serve a one (1) year term, and may be re-elected.

3.5.2 The DPM and DSO are non-rotating members of the NDCSB. All other members should serve a maximum of five (5) consecutive years.

3.5.2 Appointments should be scheduled so only one member rotates off the NDCSB per year.

4. GUIDANCE

Associated procedures will provide guidance.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 General

5.1.1 Exercises autonomous and absolute authority over and promotes the safe and effective operations of the NDP for both working and scientific dives.

5.1.2 Establishes such processes and program structure as necessary to effectively approve and monitor diving projects across NOAA's geographically dispersed diving program.

5.1.3 Reviews and approves all working diving operations involving equipment other than open-circuit SCUBA, breathing mixtures other than air, or depths greater than 100 fsw (feet of seawater). Reviews and approves all scientific diving operations involving equipment other than open-circuit SCUBA, breathing mixtures other than air or nitrox, depths greater than 130 fsw, or bottom times beyond the U.S. Navy no-decompression limits.

5.1.4 Delegates authority to Unit Diving Supervisors (UDS) to review and approve routine dive operations conducted at the unit level.

5.2 **Safety**

5.2.1 Ensures sufficient oversight for safety exists within NDP.

5.2.2 Participates in safety assessments as necessary.

5.2.3 Advises the Director, OMAO, and the Director, Safety and Environmental Compliance Office (SECO), of circumstances adversely impacting safety and/or efficiency of the NDP.

5.2.4 Instructs and reminds divers, lead divers, divemasters, and UDSs to adhere to all NDP diving regulations, standards, policies, and procedures.

5.3 **Incident Review and Action**

5.3.1 Serves as a board of review for inquiries into the nature and cause of diving incidents (including near-misses) as well as violations of NOAA or other applicable policies and standards, and reports the results to the Director, OMAO, and the Director, SECO.

5.3.2 For Class 'A' incidents involving a fatality or severe injury, or other cases constituting a "serious incident" under the NOAA Safety Policy (NAO 209-1), responsibility for the conduct of the official investigation and corrective action is retained by SECO.

5.3.3 Institutes appropriate measures to mitigate the reoccurrence of dive incidents.

5.3.4 Prescribes action for unsafe or noncompliant practices or actions.

5.4 **Manuals and Procedures**

5.4.1 Develops and promulgates NOAA Diving Standards and Safety Manuals, and reviews and revises them as necessary.

5.4.2 Monitors compliance with NOAA Diving Standards and Safety Manuals, including establishing such compliance inspection and certification programs as necessary, and reports non-compliance to the DPM for action.

5.4.3 Reviews and makes changes in other NOAA diving regulations, standards, policies, and operational procedures.

5.5 **Training and Certification**

5.5.1 Establishes and/or approves training and certification programs for NOAA divers and non-NOAA divers participating in NOAA-sponsored dive projects.

5.5.2 Reviews, adopts, and enforces physical conditioning and medical standards required to promote diver safety.

5.5.3 Recommends to the DPM the revocation of diving certifications.

5.5.4 Determines equivalency of applicant entities with that of the NDP for diving reciprocity.

5.5.5 Considers appeals from divers whose dive certifications are suspended.

5.6 **Standardized Equipment Program**

5.6.1 Considers, reviews, and makes appropriate changes in diving equipment requirements.

5.6.2 Reviews and approves new diving technologies and techniques for possible implementation.

6. DEFINITIONS

NOAA Line/Staff Office Diving Officers	Individuals who oversee and direct diving activities within specific NOAA Line and Staff Offices and serve as voting members on the NDCSB.
NOAA Deputy Line/Staff Office Diving Officers	Individuals who assist Line/Staff Office Diving Officers in overseeing and directing diving activities within specific NOAA Line and Staff Offices and serve as voting members on the NDCSB.
NOAA Diving Control and Safety Board	An appointed board of representatives from NOAA Line and Staff Offices that reports to the Director, OMAO, and has authority over and promotes the safe and effective operations of the NDP.
NOAA Diving Program Manager	Individual responsible for managing the day-to-day affairs of the NDP and serving as the ranking NOAA diving official for matters relating to the interpretation and application of the NOAA Diving regulations, standards, policies, and procedures.
NOAA Diving Safety Officer	Individual responsible for advising the NDCSB, NOAA managers, and divers for diving safety and health related issues.
NOAA Diving Medical Officer	Health care provider assigned to the NDP to provide medical care and advice in support of the NDC and NDP.

7. REFERENCES

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

NOAA Working Diving Standards and Safety Manual (in press)

8. AUTHORITY

OMAO Policy 0301 – Category 0300

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9. NOTES

Effect on Other Documents: None

Distribution: NOAA Divers

Document History:

Version	Effective Date	Brief Description of Changes
1.0	May 4, 2011	Initial Document