

	OFFICE OF MARINE AND AVIATION OPERATIONS	POLICY 0310	VERSION 2.0
		EFFECTIVE DATE 03/31/2014	
	AUTHORIZED BY: /s/ RADM David A. Score, NOAA _____ RADM David A. Score, NOAA Director, Office of Marine and Aviation Operations	REVIEW DATE 03/01/2015	
		RESPONSIBLE POSITION Chief, NOAA Dive Program	

OFF-DUTY USE OF NOAA ISSUED DIVING EQUIPMENT

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy specifies the requirements for and administrative management of the use of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)-issued diving equipment by NOAA divers for off-duty proficiency dives within the NOAA Diving Program (NDP).
- 1.2 This revision
 - 1.2.1 Is the triennial review.
 - 1.2.2 Updates attachments to NOAA Forms.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all NOAA divers.

3. POLICY

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 Diving is an essential activity allowing NOAA to complete its mission to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, and conserve and manage coastal and marine resources to meet our Nation's economic, social, and environmental needs. In order to maximize the safe conduct of diving operations, NOAA divers are required to regularly train to maintain a high level of proficiency through the performance of diving activities on a routine basis.
- 3.1.2 In recognition of the important benefits of regular dive training with a uniform set of diving equipment, NOAA divers may use NOAA-issued diving equipment on off-duty dives for the purpose of maintaining diving proficiency. Such training helps maintain familiarity with the controls and function of the equipment, develop muscle memory needed to react automatically during emergencies, and promote physical fitness.

3.2 Minimum Requirements

- 3.2.1 NOAA divers must be currently authorized to dive by the NDP in order to use the Standardized Equipment Program (SEP) gear off-duty. Divers whose diving proficiency has lapsed may participate in the off-duty program for the purpose of obtaining reauthorization, with Unit Diving Supervisor (UDS) approval.
- 3.2.2 Prior to using NOAA-issued diving equipment on off-duty dives, each diver must sign and comply with the SEP Off-Duty Equipment User Agreement (NOAA Form (NF) 57-03-69) and the SEP Off-Duty Equipment User Release of Liability (NF 57-03-70). User Agreements and Release of Liability waivers are valid until

December 31 of the year in which they are signed. Copies of these documents, with original signatures, will be maintained at the Diving Unit by the UDS.

3.2.3 Divers using SEP equipment on off-duty dives must complete two of the following skills during each dive:

- A. Ditch and don (Buoyancy Compensation Device (BCD))
- B. Weight belt removal/replacement
- C. Disconnect/reconnect inflators (BCD/Dry suit)
- D. Dry suit roll outs and venting
- E. Buddy breathing
- F. Air sharing
- G. Deploy and use Reserve Air Supply System
- H. Recover unconscious diver from water
- I. Mask removal, replace, and clear
- J. Maintain neutral buoyancy for 2 minutes
- K. Control descent/ascent rate
- L. Under Water (U/W) communication (hand signals)
- M. U/W navigation and orientation
- N. Regulator recovery

3.2.4 Completion of requirements in Section 3.2.3 above must be noted on the SEP Off-Duty Proficiency Dive Skills Checklist (NF 57-03-71) and verified (in writing) by the diver's buddy following any off-duty dive with SEP gear. A copy of the signed checklist will be forwarded to the UDS and kept on file at the unit for a minimum of 30-days or forwarded electronically to: ndp.diveplans@noaa.gov.

3.2.5 All off-duty dives using SEP equipment must be logged as "Training/Proficiency" and "Non-Duty" using the Monthly Dive Log (NF 57-03-24) or the NDP online dive logging system available at: www.ndc.noaa.gov.

3.3 Eligibility

3.3.1 Only those NOAA divers in active status with the NDP and possessing SEP-equipment are eligible to participate in the SEP off-duty diving program.

3.3.2 Only NOAA employees are eligible to participate in the SEP.

3.4 Authority for Accepting Divers into the SEP Off-Duty Diving Program

3.4.1 Authority for accepting divers into the SEP off-duty diving program rests with the UDS.

3.4.2 The NOAA Diving Program Manager (DPM), Line/Staff Office Diving Officers (LODO/ODO), or UDS may revoke approval for participation in this program for cause, at any time.

3.5 Limitations

3.5.1 Maximum depth and tasks authorized may be limited by the DPM, LODO/ODO, or UDS based on review of the divers' resumes and dive logs.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 NOAA Unit Diving Supervisor

4.1.1 Reviews the NF 57-03-69 and NF 57-03-70 for compliance with minimum requirements.

4.1.2 Maintains records of the NF 57-03-69 and NF 57-03-70 and ensures the NF 57-03-71 checklists are maintained for 30 days post-dive or forwarded electronically to: ndp.diveplans@noaa.gov.

- 4.1.3 Monitors adherence to standards outlined in the NF 57-03-69 and suspends SEP off-duty use if violations are detected.

4.2 **NOAA Line/Staff Office Diving Officer**

- 4.2.1 Reviews and grants approval for SEP off-duty equipment use for divers whose proficiency has lapsed by more than 6 months.
- 4.2.2 Monitors adherence to standards outlined on the NF 57-03-69 and suspends SEP off-duty use if violations are detected.

4.3 **NOAA Diving Program Manager**

- 4.3.1 Monitors adherence to standards outlined on the NF 57-03-69 and suspends SEP off-duty use if violations are detected.

5. **DEFINITIONS**

NOAA Divers	Individuals certified by the DPM 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.
NOAA Unit Diving Supervisors	NOAA divers appointed by a NOAA Line/Staff Office (LO/SO) Diving Officer and approved by the NOAA Diving Control and Safety Board (NDCSB) to oversee, direct, and approve diving activities conducted within their respective LO/SO unit and to administer to the needs of assigned divers.
NOAA Line/Staff Diving Officers	Individuals appointed to oversee and direct diving activities within specific LO/SO and to serve on the NDCSB.
NOAA Diving Control and Safety Board	An appointed board of representatives from LO/SO who report jointly to the Director, Office of Marine and Aviation Operations, and NOAA Chief Administrative Officer and have autonomous and absolute authority over and promote 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, policies, and procedures.
NOAA Standardized Equipment Program	The formalized system used by the NDP for the maintenance and distribution of diver-worn equipment issued to NOAA divers.
Proficiency Dives	Dives performed solely for the purpose of maintaining previously acquired diving skills.

6. **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
http://www.ndc.noaa.gov/pdfs/NWDSSM_version%201.0.pdf

Document Management System (DMS)

<http://10.49.29.4/WebDesktop/Binders.aspx>

- NF 57-03-24 – Monthly Dive Log
- NF 57-03-69 – Standardized Equipment Program Off-Duty Equipment User Agreement
- NF 57-03-70 – Standardized Equipment Program Off-Duty Equipment User Release of Liability
- NF 57-03-71 – Standardized Equipment Program Off-Duty Proficiency Dive Skills Checklist

7. AUTHORITY

OMAO Policy 0301, Category 0300 – Diving

8. NOTES

Effect on other documents: This version supersedes all previous versions.

Distribution: All NOAA Divers and their Supervisors

DOCUMENT HISTORY		
Version	Description of Change	Effective Date
2.0	Expiration Review. No significant changes. Minor formatting changes.	3/31/2014
1.0	Initial Document.	6/8/2010