

NOAA-OWNED DIVING EQUIPMENT OFF-DUTY USER AGREEMENT

The NOAA Diving Control and Safety Board (NDCSB) recognizes the safety benefits of NOAA divers maintaining a high level of proficiency by diving as often as possible. Using NOAA-owned gear (SEP or unit-owned) during dives, either on-duty or off-duty, further increases the safety margin by increasing familiarity with the gear and ensuring the use of high-quality, well-maintained gear. Therefore, the use of NOAA-owned gear for off-duty dives is permitted provided the users agree to abide by the following stipulations:

AGREEMENT for OPEN CIRCUIT DIVING

1. I agree to limit my maximum dive depth to 130 feet without prior approval to exceed this limit.
2. I agree to use the NOAA Reserve Air Supply System (RASS), as a minimum, on dives >100 Feet Salt Water (FSW), in overhead environments, or if visibility precludes easy reading of the pressure gauge.
3. I agree to keep my bottom times within the NOAA no-decompression limits.
4. I agree to always dive with a buddy (i.e., no solo diving) that is certified by a nationally recognized training agency and outfitted with a secondary air delivery system (e.g., octopus regulator).
5. I agree to always surface with at least 500 psi in my scuba cylinder.
6. I agree to always have access to an emergency oxygen kit within 30 minutes of the dive site.
7. I agree to submit an electronic dive plan to NDP.Diveplans@noaa.gov (if possible). This dive plan does not require UDS approval.
8. I agree no tasks will be performed for commercial purposes or that support or enhance NOAA projects.
9. I understand that my use of NOAA-owned gear during off-duty hours may be revoked for violation of any of the above requirements.
10. I agree to submit a Decompression Diving Request (NF 57-03-28) to the NDCSB for any off-duty dives using NOAA-owned gear which will exceed 130 FSW, incur a decompression obligation, or use breathing gases other than air or nitrox. I also agree to follow all standards for these diving modes as apply to on-duty dives, follow all special instructions from the NDCSB and not conduct these dives until written approval has been provided by the NDCSB.

DIVER NAME	DIVER SIGNATURE	DATE of SIGNATURE
UNIT DIVING SUPERVISOR (UDS) NAME	UNIT DIVING SUPERVISOR (UDS) SIGNATURE	DATE of SIGNATURE

This form shall be retained at the Diving Unit while the Diver is issued SEP or other NOAA-owned equipment.

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AGREEMENT for CLOSED CIRCUIT DIVING

1. No-decompression diving

- a. I agree to file a dive plan with NDP.Diveplans@noaa.gov, NDCSB approval not required.
- b. I agree to document build-up and break-down procedure with a NOAA or manufacturer approved checklist that is signed and dated by the diver and maintained in the maintenance file for the rebreather unit.
- c. I agree CO2 scrubber material used will not exceed NOAA/manufacturer standards for usage time.
- d. I agree galvanic oxygen cells used in the unit will not be greater than 12 months in the unit or 18 months since manufacture.
- e. I agree to carry sufficient volume and mix of bailout gas for the planned dive depth/duration.
- f. I agree my dive buddy must be familiar with the CCR unit, it is preferred that the dive buddy also use CCR, but an appropriately trained OC diver carrying a sufficient gas volume to complete the planned dive is acceptable. OC buddies must also have compatible connections on bottles to plumb into CCRs.
- g. I agree task-loading will be limited to photography.
- h. I agree no tasks will be performed for commercial purposes or that support or enhance NOAA projects.
- i. I agree the support vessel for dive must have a boat operator and topside support personnel.
- j. I agree all dives will be logged as "Off-Duty" dives in the NOAA Dive Log (NDL).

2. Decompression diving that meets the Tech Lite standards

- a. I agree all elements for no-decompression diving apply.
- b. I agree to submit a generic plan to the NDCSB for approval each year.
- c. I agree topside support must include a certified divemaster that is familiar with the CCR unit and experienced with running technical diving operations.

3. Decompression diving that exceeds the "Tech Lite" standards

- a. I agree all elements identified in no-decompression and Tech Lite apply.
- b. I agree to submit a CCR Decompression Diving Request (NF 57-03-29) to the for NDCSB approval at least two weeks prior to planned dive.
- c. I agree dive buddy(ies) must use CCR.
- d. I agree both divers in a buddy team will be familiar with both units.
- e. I agree a minimum of two CCR buddy teams must be in the water during the planned dive, or if one CCR team is in the water, a second team must be standing by on the boat and capable of entering the water within 2 minutes and reaching the depth of the first team.

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UNIT DIVING SUPERVISOR (UDS) NAME	UNIT DIVING SUPERVISOR (UDS) SIGNATURE	DATE of SIGNATURE

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Assumption of risk and release of liability for NOAA employees to use NOAA dive gear for personal or recreational use during off-duty diving; hereinafter "Release".

In consideration of NOAA permitting my use of NOAA owned and maintained dive equipment for non-work related dive activities (e.g., personal, recreational, proficiency, educational, weekend, or vacation use), I, for myself and on behalf of all my personal representatives, heirs, and next of kin do execute and certify the following:

INITIALS

I, _____, hereby declare that I am a NOAA employee, that I am a certified NOAA diver trained in safe diving practices, and that I am fully informed of, aware of, and thoroughly understand the inherent hazards and risks associated with snorkeling, skin diving, scuba diving, compressed air diving, nitrox diving, trimix diving, decompression diving, open circuit diving, and rebreather diving (hereinafter collectively referred to as diving). I understand these risks can lead to severe injury, loss of life, or property damage and liability to others. I understand hazards include, but are not limited to, decompression sickness, embolism, barotraumas or other hyperbaric/air expansion injury that may require treatment in a recompression chamber, drowning, equipment failure, and other perils of the sea. I understand and agree that diving is dangerous whether engaged in depths above or below the recommended 130 foot limitation for sport/recreational diving activities. I further acknowledge and agree that injuries received may be compounded or increased by negligent rescue operations or procedures.

By signing this Release, I certify that I am making full and honest representations of my dive skills and certifications, and I am fully aware of and expressly assume all risks involved in making dives, whether conducted recreationally, for proficiency, or as part of any organized dive endeavor (class, excursion, or trip).

By signing this Release, I further certify that I am responsible for my own actions and use of dive gear, including gear owned and maintained by NOAA, and being used by me while off-duty, and I am financially responsible for expenses, including medical expenses, arising from my off-duty use of NOAA dive gear.

By signing this Release, I acknowledge that past or present medical conditions may disqualify me for diving. I declare that I am in good mental and physical fitness for diving, and that I am not nor will I be under the influence alcohol or any drugs contraindicated for diving. If I am taking medication, I declare that I have seen a physician and have approval to dive while under the influence of medications or drugs I am taking.

By signing this Release, I acknowledge diving is a physically strenuous activity and that I will be exerting myself during this activity. I further acknowledge that if I die or am injured as a result of heart attack, panic attack, hyperventilation, drowning, or any other cause, I expressly assume the risk of said injuries or death, and neither myself, nor my representatives, heirs, agents, or assigns will hold NOAA or the U.S. Government responsible for the same.

By signing this Release, I agree that I will inspect the air supply and all equipment prior to use, and will notify NOAA if any equipment is not working properly or if I have any problems with the air supply or the equipment. I will not hold NOAA responsible for my failure to inspect the air supply or the equipment prior to diving, or for my use of such faulty equipment regardless of any inspection.

By signing this Release, I agree to adhere to NOAA policies and procedures regarding proper use, storage, cleaning, maintenance, operation, configuration, and all other instruction related to use of NOAA dive equipment and gear, consistent with the written instructions NOAA has provided, and which is incorporated by reference herein.

By signing this Release, I agree to replace, repair, or otherwise compensate NOAA for any loss, damage, or destruction of any NOAA dive gear in my possession and use under this Release.

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INITIALS

By signing this Release, I hereby assume full responsibility for any and all risk of bodily injury, wrongful death, property loss or damage, and liability to myself or any third party, now and forever, arising out of my use of any NOAA dive gear or during diving related activities using NOAA dive gear, whether foreseen or unforeseen, and whether caused by the negligence of myself, third parties, or NOAA.

By signing this Release, I hereby release, waive, discharge, and give up any and all claims against NOAA, the U. S. Government, and all its employees, agents and representatives for any and all liability, claims, and demands by me or made by my personal representative, heirs, agents, assigns, and next of kin for any and all loss or damage, and any claim or demands therefore on account of injury, death, or loss arising out of or related to my use of NOAA dive equipment during off-duty hours.

By signing this Release, I understand and agree that this Release means that if I am injured or die in a diving related incident, I am giving up my rights and the rights of my heirs, representatives, executors, or successors to sue NOAA or the U. S. Government, or any of its representatives, employees, or agents for any damages or for any form of compensation.

By signing this Release, I further agree separately to indemnify, save, and hold harmless NOAA and the U. S. Government from any loss, liability, damage, or cost that they may incur, now and forever, arising out of or related to my use of NOAA dive gear off-duty, whether caused by the negligence of NOAA, the U. S. Government, or me.

By signing this Release, I certify that I am trained in diving and safe dive practices by NOAA, and my certification and qualifications are up to date.

By signing this Release I also represent that I have authority to do so and my heirs, assigns, representatives, or beneficiaries will be stopped from claiming otherwise.

By signing this Release, I affirm that I am not relying on any oral or written representation or statements made by NOAA or the U. S. Government, other than what is set forth in this document. I further agree this document shall be interpreted in accordance with the laws of the United States.

By signing this Release, I agree that if any provision of this Release is found to be unenforceable or invalid, that provision shall be severed from this release. The remainder of the Release will then be construed as though the unenforceable provision had never been contained in this release. All other provisions shall survive.

ACCORDINGLY, WITH FULL UNDERSTANDING, BEING OF RIGHT MIND AND DULY TRAINED, I, BY THIS INSTRUMENT, EXEMPT AND RELEASE NOAA AND THE U. S. GOVERNMENT, ITS OFFICERS, AGENTS, REPRESENTATIVES, AND ASSIGNS FROM ALL LIABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR PERSONAL INJURY, PROPERTY DAMAGE, OR WRONGFUL DEATH, HOWEVER CAUSED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO EQUIPMENT FAILURE AND NEGLIGENCE, WHETHER PASSIVE OR ACTIVE. I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ AND INITIALED THE FOREGOING PARAGRAPHS, FULLY UNDERSTAND THE POTENTIAL DANGERS INCIDENTAL TO MY USE OF NOAA DIVE EQUIPMENT, AM FULLY AWARE OF THE LEGAL CONSEQUENCES OF SIGNING THIS INSTRUMENT, AM AN EMPLOYEE OF NOAA, AND I AM OLDER THAN 18 YEARS OF AGE.

I UNDERSTAND AND AGREE THAT THIS DOCUMENT IS LEGALLY BINDING AND WILL PRECLUDE ME FROM RECOVERING MONETARY DAMAGES FROM NOAA OR THE U. S. GOVERNMENT FOR PERSONAL INJURY, PROPERTY DAMAGE, OR WRONGFUL DEATH CAUSED BY MY USE OF NOAA GEAR AND EQUIPMENT DURING OFF-DUTY HOURS, WHETHER PASSIVE OR ACTIVE. I UNDERSTAND THAT BY SIGNING IT I AM GIVING UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS.

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I HAVE FULLY INFORMED MYSELF OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS RELEASE BY READING IT AND INITIALIZING IT. I ALSO UNDERSTAND I SIGN IT ON BEHALF OF MYSELF, MY HEIRS, MY REPRESENTATIVES, NEXT OF KIN, AND ASSIGNS. ACCORDINGLY, I AM BOUND BY THIS RELEASE AND ANYONE WHO SUCCEEDS TO MY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES SUCH AS MY HEIRS OR THE EXECUTOR OF MY ESTATE IS ALSO BOUND.

I HAVE SIGNED THIS DOCUMENT FREELY AND VOLUNTARILY WITHOUT ANY INDUCEMENT, ASSURANCE, OR GUARANTEE BEING MADE TO ME. I INTEND MY SIGNATURE TO BE A COMPLETE AND UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF ALL LIABILITY TO THE GREATEST EXTENT ALLOWED BY LAW.

**NOAA PERSONNEL USING THE EQUIPMENT:
I HAVE READ THIS DOCUMENT, I UNDERSTAND IT, AND I AGREE TO BE BOUND BY IT.**

DIVER NAME	DIVER SIGNATURE	DATE of SIGNATURE
LINE OFFICE	WORK TELEPHONE NUMBER	EMERGENCY CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER

**NOAA PERSONNEL RELEASING THE EQUIPMENT:
I HAVE REVIEWED THIS DOCUMENT AND CONFIRM IT HAS BEEN PROPERLY COMPLETED.**

UNIT DIVING SUPERVISOR (UDS) NAME	UNIT DIVING SUPERVISOR (UDS) SIGNATURE	DATE of SIGNATURE
DIVING UNIT NAME	WORK TELEPHONE NUMBER	

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