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**Recreational diving services —  
Requirements for introductory training  
programmes to scuba diving**

*Services relatifs à la plongée de loisirs — Exigences pour les  
programmes d'introduction à la plongée subaquatique*

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## Foreword

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International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 11121 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 228, *Tourism and related services*.

## Introduction

This International Standard specifies minimum programme content requirements for introductory scuba experiences in recreational scuba diving. Under no conditions are these requirements considered to be a standard for the training and certification of scuba divers. Instead, these requirements are used to introduce a non-diver to recreational scuba diving by means of a supervised, controlled dive experience, and to encourage the participant to seek further training.

The introductory diving programme does not result in certification, but is experiential in nature; consequently, in-depth knowledge of diving academics and skills is not necessary. Participants are taught only what is required of them to experience scuba diving under direct supervision.

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# Recreational diving services — Requirements for introductory training programmes to scuba diving

## 1 Scope

This International Standard specifies minimum requirements for training organizations that offer introductory scuba experience training programmes to non-divers.

This International Standard applies to programmes that include participants being taken into an open water environment. It does not apply to programmes that are exclusively conducted in a confined water environment (e.g. swimming pools).

This International Standard also specifies the conditions under which this service is to be provided, which supplement the general requirements for recreational diving services specified in ISO 24803.

## 2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 24801-3, *Recreational diving services — Safety related minimum requirements for the training of recreational scuba divers — Part 3: Level 3 — Dive leader*

ISO 24802-1, *Recreational diving services — Safety related minimum requirements for the training of scuba instructors — Part 1: Level 1*

ISO 24802-2, *Recreational diving services — Safety related minimum requirements for the training of scuba instructors — Part 2: Level 2*

ISO 24803, *Recreational diving services — Requirements for recreational scuba diving service providers*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

### 3.1

#### **training organization**

entity providing recreational scuba diving training systems and certification, and which is responsible for the implementation and quality management of scuba diver training

NOTE The entity can include scuba diving federations and scuba diver training agencies.

### 3.2

#### **scuba instructor**

individual qualified in accordance with ISO 24802-1 or ISO 24802-2, as appropriate

### 3.3

#### **dive leader**

individual qualified in accordance with ISO 24801-3

### 3.4

#### **participant**

individual who takes part in a scuba diving experience in open water by making introductory scuba dives, and who does not receive certification

### 3.5

#### **confined water**

swimming pool with a depth appropriate to the activity, or body of water that offers similar conditions with regard to visibility, depth, water movement and access

### 3.6

#### **open water**

body of water significantly larger than a swimming pool, which offers conditions typical of a natural body of water

### 3.7

#### **direct supervision**

supervision by a scuba instructor or a dive leader of a group of divers in a position allowing rapid intervention on behalf of the diver

### 3.8

#### **diving equipment**

equipment consisting of fins, mask, snorkel, demand regulator, alternative breathing gas system, cylinder, cylinder-support-system, buoyancy compensator, quick release weight system (if appropriate), submersible pressure gauge, means to measure depth and time and to safely limit exposure to inert gas, and diving suit (if appropriate)

NOTE 1 A demand regulator can also be referred to as a regulator.

NOTE 2 An alternative breathing gas system could range from a simple octopus system to a duplicate breathing system with a separate breathing gas supply.

NOTE 3 A submersible pressure gauge can be a breathing gas pressure monitor.

NOTE 4 Specific environments can require additional equipment, e.g. an underwater navigational aid or a knife/cutting device.

## 4 Competences

The programme shall ensure that participants are able to participate safely in an introductory open water dive. The completion of the programme in accordance with this International Standard does not qualify the participants to procure breathing gas, diving equipment or any other scuba diving services, nor does it allow the participant to engage in recreational diving without direct supervision by an instructor.

## 5 Prerequisites for participation

### 5.1 Minors

Documented parental or legal guardian consent shall be obtained when the participant is a minor.

## 5.2 Health requirements

Documented evidence shall be obtained that the participant has been medically screened as suitable for recreational diving, by means of an appropriate questionnaire or medical examination. In case of doubt, or at the scuba instructor's discretion, participants shall be referred to proper medical resources. If the participant is not examined by a physician the participant shall be obliged to confirm by signature that he or she has understood written information given by the scuba instructor on diseases and physical conditions which may pose risks in relation to diving.

NOTE Annex A provides an example of an information sheet for medical screening.

## 6 Introductory information

Information in accordance with ISO 24803 shall be made available to the participants prior to the programme taking place. In addition, participants shall be informed that the completion of a programme in accordance with this International Standard does not qualify the participants to procure breathing gas, diving equipment or any other scuba diving services, nor does it allow the participant to engage in recreational diving without direct supervision by an instructor.

## 7 Theoretical knowledge

### 7.1 Equipment

The programme shall ensure that participants have appropriate introductory knowledge on the use of the following equipment items:

- mask;
- fins;
- buoyancy compensator;
- quick release weight system (if appropriate);
- demand regulator;
- submersible pressure gauge (breathing gas pressure monitor);
- alternative breathing gas system.

### 7.2 Dive conduct

The programme shall ensure that participants have appropriate introductory knowledge of diving and the diving environment, i.e.

- reasons for:
  - not holding one's breath;
  - breathing continuously during the introductory dive;
  - ascending slowly;
- equalization techniques;

- potential local hazards (e.g. harmful aquatic life);
- hand signals;
- necessity for seeking further training, and where to obtain it.

## 8 Scuba skills

The following scuba skills shall be introduced to, and demonstrated by, participants in confined water in accordance with 9.2 prior to diving in open water:

- underwater breathing;
- mask clearing;
- ear clearing/equalization techniques;
- mouthpiece clearing and retrieval.

## 9 Requirements for in-water activities

### 9.1 General

**9.1.1** Activities in confined water (see 9.2) and open water (see 9.3) may be conducted separately or they may be combined into a single session, with skills being initially introduced in shallow water before participants are taken into deeper water.

**9.1.2** The safe supervision of students is exclusively the responsibility of the scuba instructor. Where environmental conditions are less than ideal (e.g. where underwater visibility is poor, or where there is significant water movement), the scuba instructor shall limit the number of students under his/her responsibility. The scuba instructor may also use additional aids to improve safety, e.g. ascent lines, surface support stations or safety scuba divers. Where safety scuba divers are used, they shall have an appropriate level of rescue competence, i.e. at least dive leader level.

### 9.2 Confined water

**9.2.1** During any in-water activities, a scuba instructor shall be present. All scuba skills shall be directly supervised by a scuba instructor. The scuba instructor shall determine whether the participant's performance is sufficient to be able to participate in the open water dive.

**9.2.2** Participants shall be introduced to, and shall be required to demonstrate, scuba skills in accordance with Clause 8.

**9.2.3** In a swimming pool, the maximum number of participants per scuba instructor shall be eight.

If a natural site is used for confined water activities (e.g. a sheltered area of shallow sea),

- the maximum number of participants shall be four, or
- when the scuba instructor is assisted by a dive leader, the maximum number of participants shall be six.

Additional dive leaders may be used as assistants, however, no additional participants shall be added to the responsibility of the individual scuba instructor.

**9.2.4** All scuba skills shall be conducted in daylight conditions, in confined water shallow enough for the participant to stand up in. When water shallow enough to stand up in is not available, these skills may be conducted from a device such as a descent line, bar, ladder or platform within 2 m of the surface.

### 9.3 Open water dive

**9.3.1** Open water scuba dives shall be directly supervised by a scuba instructor in accordance with ISO 24802-2.

**NOTE** For the purposes of this subclause, a scuba instructor in accordance with ISO 24802-2 is designated as a "level 2 scuba instructor".

**9.3.2** For open water dives,

- the maximum number of participants per level 2 scuba instructor shall be four, or
- when the level 2 scuba instructor is assisted by a dive leader, the maximum number of participants shall be six.

The level 2 scuba instructor shall limit the number of students where environmental conditions are less than ideal, e.g. where underwater visibility is poor or where there is significant water movement.

**9.3.3** All open water dives shall be conducted during daylight conditions, at depths not in excess of 12 m, and in water that allows direct vertical access to the surface.

**9.3.4** During an open water dive, the level 2 scuba instructor may delegate responsibility for direct supervision to a dive leader for the purposes of escorting participants during surface excursions and exits.

**9.3.5** During open water dives, the level 2 scuba instructor shall be equipped with

- diving equipment as defined in 3.8,
- a dive knife/diver's tool, and
- an emergency-signalling device.

**NOTE** When appropriate, the use of a surface support-station with dive flag is encouraged.

**9.3.6** During open water dives, participants shall at least be equipped with diving equipment as defined in 3.8, except that a snorkel, an alternative breathing gas system and a means to measure depth and time and to safely limit exposure to inert gas are not required.

**9.3.7** During open water dives, level 2 scuba instructors shall not engage in any activities other than direct supervision of the participants.

**9.3.8** Descents shall be conducted in a controlled manner that allows participants to equalize their air spaces.

**EXAMPLE** Descent following the bottom contour, along a descent line, 1:1 instructor/participant ratio.