

## The Dive Leader Course

This section outlines the Dive Leader course and provides guidance and definitions specific to the Dive Leader grade. As with the previous grades, much of this information is common to many of the lessons and hence is consolidated here, rather than repeated in each lesson.

### Definition of a Dive Leader

A Dive Leader is defined as a diver who:

- Can plan and lead a range of dives including those requiring detailed dive, air and decompression requirements planning
- Has the skill and level of knowledge to progressively extend his/her skills to take part in a wide range of adventurous dives
- Has rescue management skills
- Is competent to manage and supervise branch dives to locations well known to the branch, or using experienced skippers, or in conditions not normally described as 'challenging'
- Can dive to a depth which is initially limited to 35m, but which can subsequently be extended progressively to a maximum of 50m
- Can conduct dives with divers of any grade, to expand their experience beyond that previously encountered by those divers, under the supervision of a Dive Manager
- Can conduct experience building dives with trainee Ocean Divers, within the restrictions of the conditions already encountered by the trainee Ocean Diver, and under the supervision of a Dive Manager

### Dive Leader Course Outline

The Dive Leader Course consists of the following elements:

- Twelve classroom lessons
- A theory assessment
- Seven open water lessons
- Two dry practical lessons
- Twenty dives (which may include the open water lessons), in a range of conditions, since qualifying as a Sports Diver

All practical training includes the achievement of specific performance standards at appropriate points throughout the lessons.

The Ocean Diver and Sports Diver courses were biased towards learning skills and knowledge while underpinning this with appropriate experience. The Dive Leader course continues to build on these skills and knowledge, but the experience element becomes increasingly important. The definitions of the qualifying dives therefore cover a wide range of

conditions to provide the essential consolidation of the skills and knowledge.

### Instructor Requirements

Dive Leader Training is required to be carried out by, or supervised by, a suitably qualified BSAC Instructor (see below for detail).

- **Assistant Diving Instructors** do not hold the appropriate Instructor qualifications to teach this Diving Grade
- **Assistant Open Water Instructors** - can teach classroom and sheltered water lessons under on-site supervision, Open Water lessons under the direct (i.e. in-water) supervision of an Instructor who holds the minimum qualification of BSAC Open Water Instructor.
- **Theory Instructor** - can teach classroom lessons unsupervised.
- **Practical Instructor** - can teach Open Water lessons unsupervised'.
- **Open Water Instructors** - can teach all elements of the Dive Leader Course.

### Student/Instructor Ratios

Classroom lessons can normally be conducted by one instructor, constraints of classroom size dictating the maximum number of students. Where additional considerations apply, for instance for those classroom lessons involving skill practice, the appropriate ratios are detailed in the relevant lesson notes.

Dry practical and Open Water lessons should generally be conducted on a one-to-one basis. For particular lessons involving rescue skills and management, the appropriate ratios are detailed in the relevant lesson notes.

### Equipment Configuration

As divers experience expands, and the range of conditions in which they dive broadens, the range of appropriate equipment configurations also expands. Instructors should review students equipment configurations with them to ensure that they are appropriate to the particular lesson or dive. In particular, aspects which should be reviewed should include:

- adequacy of main breathing gas supply
- adequacy of alternate air supply to cope with a main air supply failure at the most critical point in the dive
- AS visible and readily accessible by buddy
- weight properly adjusted for the configuration
- ancillary equipment (gauges, hoses, reels etc.) stowed securely to avoid loops or dangling items which can snag, drag along the bottom or become an impediment in an emergency

Instructors should wear a configuration of equipment compatible with that of the student. Instructors should be equipped with an AS supplied from an independent breathing gas supply, which has adequate capacity to cope with a failure of either their own, or their student's, main breathing gas supply at the most critical point in the dive.

For deeper dives where the use of mixed gas is appropriate, such gas mixes may be used in open circuit breathing equipment by instructors and/or students during Dive Leader lessons and experience dives provided that they:

- hold a BSAC recognised qualification
- follow BSAC recommended practices

Except as noted below, rebreathers may be used by instructors and/or students during Dive Leader lessons and experience dives, provided that the rebreathers divers:

- Have completed a recognised training course for the type of rebreather being used
- Have at least 20 hours diving experience using the rebreather since completing their rebreather training course
- Follow BSAC recommended rebreather diving practices
- Are buddied by a diver appropriately experienced in the implications of accompanying a rebreather diver, as recommended by the BSAC

Rebreathers may not be used for the Dive Leading lessons (DO2 & DO3), as these represent circumstances where the Dive Leader is accompanied by a much less experienced diver. Under these circumstances, use of equipment with which the less experienced diver is familiar is essential.

## Open Water Conditions

The build-up of experience of diving in a wide range of conditions is as important a part of Dive Leader training as the specific lessons. Dive sites should include those encompassing a wide variety of topography and underwater life, and which have noticeable water movement due to waves or current (max 1.5kn). Water conditions should also include a range of underwater visibilities. Access from both shore and boats should be included.

Until qualified as a Dive Leader depth should not exceed 35m. Subsequently, and with appropriate experience, this can be increased to 50m.

## Lessons Sequencing

The following integrated sequence of lessons is structured to ensure a balanced build-up of knowledge and skills relative to the student's increasing diving experience and to provide a variety between theory and practical lessons.

While the majority of lessons are sequenced to

develop pre-requisite knowledge and skills gained in previous lessons, the lessons concerning BLS and oxygen administration (DT2 to DT7) form a self contained sequence. These lessons may have been completed at any time after qualifying as an Ocean Diver. If undertaken as part of the Dive Leader course, or for the purposes of refresher training, they may be run in parallel to open water lessons DO1 to DO3.

The remaining lessons should however be completed in the order indicated.

The build up of experience is particularly important with respect to appreciating all the implications of Dive Management. Lessons should therefore be interspersed with the required experience dives, such that the Dive Management lessons (DT12, DP1 & DP2) are the final elements completed before award of the Dive Leader qualification.

Classroom lesson	DT1	The Role of the Dive Leader
Open water lesson	DO1	DSMB Use
Open water lesson	DO2	Dive Leading Demonstration
Open water lesson	DO3	Dive Leading Practice
Classroom lesson	DT2	Basic Life Support
Classroom lesson	DT3	Oxygen and Diving Incidents
Classroom lesson	DT4	Casualty Assessment
Classroom lesson	DT5	Oxygen Administration Equipment
Classroom lesson	DT6	Oxygen Administration in Practise
Classroom lesson	DT7	Use of Oxygen Administration Equipment
Classroom lesson	DT8	Dive Planning
Open water lesson	DO4	Shot Recovery by Simple Lift
Classroom lesson	DT9	Rescue Management - Part 1
Open water lesson	DO5	Rescue Management Scenarios
Classroom lesson	DT10	Helicopter Operations
Classroom lesson	DT11	Rescue Management - Part 2
Open water lesson	DO6	Diving and Rescue Skills Review

Open water lesson	D07	Rescue Skills Review
Classroom lesson	DT12	Dive Management
Dry practical lesson	DP1	Dive Management Part 1
Dry practical lesson	DP2	Dive Management Part 2

## Open water lessons

Some open water lessons involve multiple ascents. Decompression considerations dictate that they be performed at the start of diving activities and before diving to any greater depth.

Practice ascents which may exceed the normal ascent rate, such as AS ascents or a CBL, should either be terminated at a depth of 6m, or interrupted at 6m, followed by a normal ascent to the surface where the exercise can be resumed.

Instructors should ensure that the impact on decompression considerations for the remainder of the particular lesson, and on any subsequent diving activities, are taken into account.

## Experience dives

The Dive Leader syllabus includes open water lessons and experience dives which should total a minimum of 20 dives and 600 mins. underwater time since qualifying as a Sports Diver.

To ensure that students receive experience in a range of conditions, the open water dives must include at least 5 conditions from the following, appropriate to the local conditions in which they will subsequently be diving:

- **planned decompression dive** - dive involving at least 5mins. planned decompression, using an appropriate equipment configuration and decompression technique
- **navigation dive** - dive requiring navigation around a site, involving multiple changes of direction throughout, and returning to the entry point. Compass and/or pilotage techniques used as appropriate. Minimum duration 30mins..
- **low visibility dive** - dive in visibility in the range between 1.5 and 3 metres
- **night dive** - dive during the hours of darkness, using artificial light as the sole source of illumination.
- **wreck dive** - dive in tidal waters, involving a direct descent to the wreck following a shot line, to dive on the wreck in a slack water window. Ascent either via shot line or under DSMB as appropriate to tidal conditions at end of dive.
- **drift dive** - dive in moving water in the speed range between 1.0 and 1.5kn
- **wall dive** - dive along a vertical or near vertical wall, with deep water below the

divers

Only one of the above conditions may be logged per dive.

Of the twenty dives:

- at least six should be carried out from boats
- on at least eight the student should act as dive leader
- at least ten should show depth experience greater than 25m.

## Adapting Lessons for Differing Conditions

For most open water lessons the content is not affected by different standards of protective clothing. In those few instances where some adaptation may be required this is addressed at the end of the relevant lesson notes.

The main impact on the lesson will be that due to buoyancy of any protective clothing. The objective of keeping the task of buoyancy control as simple as possible by using the minimum number of volumes of air should be maintained. In practical terms this means:

- no protective clothing or wet suits – buoyancy control and CBL using the BC
- dry suits - buoyancy control and CBL using the air in the suit/BC as appropriate to the overall equipment configuration
- surface support - BC in all cases

## Depth Experience dives

Following qualification as a Dive Leader, students' depth experience should be progressively increased, in increments of approximately 5m. They should be accompanied on such dives by a diver holding a minimum qualification of Dive Leader. Ideally all such dives should be performed under the supervision of a NQI.

Where this is not possible, nor is there a more experienced diver present, Dive Leaders may extend their depth experience in increments not exceeding 5m beyond their recent diving experience, in the company of another Dive Leader wishing to similarly extend their experience. Both divers should discuss in detail the plans for the dive and, in particular, agree more frequent and detailed monitoring of their depth/time/breathing gas status and of each other for indications of narcosis. There should be no 'peer pressure' to undertake or continue with such a dive if either is not entirely happy.

## Performance Assessments and Standards

Dive Leader training includes a specific theory assessment and continuous assessment of the practical skills.

## **Practical Assessments**

As in the training for the previous diver grades, where specific performance standards are required to be achieved, these are identified in the lesson notes by the words "competent and confident". Where these words appear in the lesson content, students should have progressed sufficiently to be able to achieve the specified performance standards without supervision.

The appropriate performance standards are therefore incorporated at the end of the relevant lesson notes.

During the lessons, students should also be monitored for any deterioration in skills learned during training for previous diver grades. Where necessary corrective instruction should be provided to re-establish the appropriate performance standard.

## **Theory Assessment**

The theory assessment can be undertaken any time after the completion of the classroom lessons but must be successfully completed before undertaking the Dive Management Practical lessons (DP1 & DP2). A pass mark of 75% must be achieved.