

KM/AB

15<sup>th</sup> June 2006

Dear Member,

### **CHANGES TO BUDDY BREATHING ASCENT TRAINING**

As a result of intensive research across a number of UK and worldwide diving organisations, the practice of buddy breathing ascents has raised a number of concerns. A full discussion took place at the National Diving Council meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2006. A recommendation was then made to the General Committee to suspend buddy breathing ascents.

On 14<sup>th</sup> June 2006, the General Committee approved the following proposal:

“With immediate effect, suspend all open water buddy breathing shared ascents at Sport Diver and Master Diver level until further discussion and approval at the Diving Officers Conference and Annual General Meeting.”

In line with the SSAC constitution, although effective immediately, this change will be proposed to the Diving Officers Conference in November 2006 for further consideration before final ratification at the Club AGM in March 2007.

In the latest version of the SSAC Qualification Record Book, the assessments should now read as follows:

- Sport Diver level, Open Water Assessment 9:
  - *“From a depth of 15m, conduct assisted ascents using an alternative air source, once as donor and once as recipient. Candidates should perform a suitable safety stop before proceeding to surface. Care must be taken not to exceed 10m/min on ascent.”*
  
- Master Diver Level, Open Water Assessment 10:
  - *“From a depth of 20m, conduct assisted ascents using an alternative air source, once as donor and once as recipient. Candidates should perform a safety stop(s) before proceeding to surface. Care must be taken not to exceed 10m/min on ascent. Partner must be of at least Sport Diver level.”*
  
- Master Diver Level, Open Water Assessment 11:
  - *“From a depth of 30m, conduct assisted ascents using an alternative air source, once as donor and once as recipient. Candidates should perform suitable safety stop(s) before proceeding to surface. Care must be taken not to exceed 10m/min on ascent. Partner must be of at least Sport Diver level.”*

However, previous editions of the Qualifications Record Book may differ. Please confirm with your Diving Officer or Regional Coach that you are using the most recent version required.

Sport Diver assessment 6 remains in place as stated as does elements of Buddy Breathing during confined (pool) training.

An alternative air source is considered to be an additional second stage regulator. This may also include a device used for inflation of Buoyancy Control Device which allows breathing such as an 'Air II'. An alternative air supply is classed as a pony, twin set configuration or similar where the supply is from another independent cylinder and regulator. Such configurations may also be used for assisted ascents.

For some time, SSAC have strongly recommended that all divers carry an alternative air source (octopus) or equivalent. This remains in place.

Trainees working towards either Sport or Master Diver Award who have not yet completed the buddy breathing ascents will not be required to perform these assessments. Branch Diving Officers should make a note in Qualification Record Books to record the change in training requirement.

The NDC believes any training should be carried out as safely as possible and incidents should not happen as a result of training. A risk assessment should take place before any training activity in order to minimise potential risk.

If you have any queries regarding this change please contact your BDO, Regional Coach in the first instance.

Yours Sincerely,

Kevin Miller  
National Diving Officer