

ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ADMINISTRATION
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION, PUBLICITY &
TOURISM
A & N ISLANDS

Draft

GUIDELINES FOR REGISTRATION OF
SCUBA DIVING CENTRES
IN
ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS
2018

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1. Purpose of Guidelines

The Guideline for the Scuba Diving is to ensure that the activity is performed with due regard to safety concerns of tourists undertaking these activities, dive professionals and fragile ecology of islands. The standards for equipment & manpower along with operating procedures defined herein are intended to establish the minimum acceptable norms for safe and responsible operation of the activity in these islands. Guideline is in coherence with “Tourism Policy 2010” envisaging to encourage Self-Regulation and to establish a simple system for operation of the activity as envisaged in ease off doing business. The broader aspects of the guidelines are as follows:-

- a. To promote A & N Islands as a diving destination in the National & International Market.
- b. To establish an open, transparent and safe framework for development of Scuba Diving activities in A & N Islands.
- c. To establish a simplified system for registration/renewal of operators in these Islands along with submission of information by the operators.
- d. To ensure protection of the marine ecosystems.
- e. To encourage self-regulation by operators.
- f. To ensure standards for Scuba Diving in the islands by continuous interaction between reputed institutes, Administration and operators.
- g. To create statistics regarding activity for taking suitable policy decisions in future.

2. Definitions

- a. **Administration** means Andaman & Nicobar Administration, Port Blair
- b. **Alternate air source** mean an extra regulator for sharing air with another diver in an emergency
- c. **Approved** means approved by the Administration or Government of India.
- d. **Authorized Agency** means an agency approved for identified purposes.
- e. **Base leader** means the person who shall be present at the SDC all the time to coordinate in all emergencies. Base leader also looks after day-to-day activities of SCUBA Diving Center and coordinates with Nodal department.
- f. **BCD** means Buoyancy Compensator Device that is an inflatable jacket to control your buoyancy by adding or releasing air and helps diver to float at the surface or swim effortlessly over the bottom.

- g. **Boat Diving** means use of a suitably designed Boat for the entry and exit of the Divers to/from water during diving activities
- h. **BSAC** means British Sub-Aqua Club.
- i. **Buddy** means Scuba Dive Instructor/Dive Master qualified and certified by the agencies like PADI/CMA/NAUI/SSI/BSAC to accompany with the tourist undertaking Dive Activities.
- j. **Cave Diving** means Dive activities carried out by the qualified, certified and experienced Scuba divers to explore the marine life of underwater caves.
- k. **CMAS** means Confederation Mondiale Des Activities Subaquatiques
- l. **Compressor** means a machine that produces breathing gas for SCUBA activities.
- m. **Cylinder** means cylinder that holds high-pressure compressed air used to either provide air for breathing underwater or provide pure oxygen for treating compression sickness.
- n. **Depth Measuring Device** means a device used for measuring vertical distance below water surface.
- o. **Dive Boat** – Boat used for conduct of SCUBA Dive activities registered under relevant act, i.e., IV Act/ MS Act excluding those not permitted to ply for SCUBA Diving by extant rules/regulation/acts etc.
- p. **Dive Computer** means an equipment that allows diver/buddy to track depth and time underwater & calculating remaining allowable time underwater.
- q. **Guided dive** means organized dive where clients are also accompanied underwater by an individual appointed by the service provider
- r. **Dive Instructor**- Dive Professional qualified and certified as a Dive Instructor by NIWS or any of the recognized agency such as PADI/SSI/CMAS/NAUI/BSAC
- s. **Dive Master**-- Dive Professional qualified and certified as a Dive Master by NIWS or any of the recognized agency such as PADI/SSI/CMAS/NAUI/BSAC
- t. **Dive Site** means the area permitted by the Administration for conduct of diving activities including shipwrecks & caves.
- u. **Diving Activity** means an activity with details as prescribed.
- v. **Emergency Signaling Device** means a device used by a diver/buddy for indicating emergency.
- w. **Fins** mean equipment that provides a broad surface area for legs to push against and allows the diver to swim without using hands.
- x. **Form** means form appended to guideline.
- y. **IV Rule** means extant Inland Vessel rule notified under Inland Vessel Act, 1917 (Central Act 1 of 1917) by Administration
- z. **Life-Buoy** mean a life buoy approved by SG (SH)/IRS/any member of IACS or life buoy approved by Nodal Department.

- aa. **Log Book** means register/journal kept for recording in chronological order the diver undertaking Dive activities along with name of the Dive Instructor/Dive Master and signature of the Diver with specific mention of IN and OUT from the water
- bb. **Mask** means a half-face mask used by the Diver while diving to cover the eyes and nose but not the mouth.
- cc. **MS Act** means Merchant Shipping act, 1958
- dd. **NIOT** means National Institute for O T
- ee. **NAUI** means National Association of Underwater Instructors
- ff. **NIWS** means National Institute of Water Sports, Goa.
- gg. **Nodal Department** means Directorate of Tourism, A & N Administration, for all kinds of dives
- hh. **Node** means tehsil nearest to Dive site as decided by the Nodal Department.
- ii. **OEM** mean Original Equipment Manufacturer of equipment used by operator.
- jj. **Open Water** means a body of water significantly larger than a swimming pool offering conditions typical of a natural body of water
- kk. **Operator** means the firm/company/individual/organization conducting Scuba Diving activities with a valid permit issued by the Nodal Department.
- ll. **PADI** means Professional Association of Diving Instructors
- mm. **Permitted Area** means the area permitted by the Administration for SCUBA Diving activities.
- nn. **PMB** means Port Management Board, A & N Islands
- oo. **Recreational Diving** means a type of diving that uses SCUBA equipment for the purpose of leisure and enjoyment, and carried out by diver under supervision of a buddy.
- pp. **Reflective Surface marker buoy** means an accessory anchored to demarcate Dive Site or diving in progress. SMB or 'blob' is a buoy/float used to indicate the diver's position to their surface safety boat while the diver is underwater
- qq. **Regulator** means an instrument that delivers air from cylinder on demand to inhale.
- rr. **Risk assessment** means identification of likely hazards and who may be harmed by them, the likelihood of harm and the applicable control measures
- ss. **SCUBA** means Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus.
- tt. **SCUBA DIVING** means means a form of [underwater diving](#) where the diver uses a [self-contained underwater breathing apparatus](#) (SCUBA) to breathe [underwater](#), which is completely independent of surface supply.
- uu. **SCUBA DIVING CENTER** means an establishment registered under this guideline by operator for conducting SCUBA diving activities.

- vv. **Shipwreck diving** means a form of underwater diving where the SCUBA diver uses a Shipwreck ecosystem of for diving.
- ww. **Shore Diving** means water entry and exist for diving are undertaken from the shore rather than a boat.
- xx. **Submersible pressure gauge** means a device that shows the diver about quantity of air left in cylinder.
- yy. **Suit** means body suit used by Diver/buddy for providing insulation and protection and floatation
- zz. **ZSI** means Zoological Survey of India.

3. Procedure for registration/renewal of Scuba Diving Centre

To facilitate operator of SCUBA Diving Centres, Nodal Department will grant registration to Operator to undertake SCUBA Diving activities in these Islands in permitted areas only in accordance with the following procedure:

3.1 In-principle approval:

- a. Nodal department shall provide an in-principle approval for allowing application for registration under following conditions:
 - A. If a carrying capacity is fixed by Administration for Dive site in which intention to operate is expressed by the applicant.
 - B. If e-auction is not required for the grant of permission in Dive site.
 - C. The in-principle approval shall be valid for a period prescribed by Nodal department not exceeding 180 days from date of such approval.
 - D. The in-principle approval shall be deemed cancelled and fee forfeited in case of either non-starting of operation in time limit prescribed by the Nodal Department on grounds of non-submission of application form for registration complete in all respect to Nodal department or starting of operation before issue of registration by Nodal department.
 - E. The applicant has to submit application for registration of SCD and get itself registered before start of operation.
- b. All application for in-principle approval in prescribed format shall be received online on the website of Tourism Department, i.e., www.andamantourism.gov.in . No such application shall be received in hard copy.
- c. The fee for in-principle approval is Rs. 20,000 (Rupees Twenty thousand only) for each SCD.
- d. The application complete in all respect shall be deemed approved after acceptance.
- e. Nodal department shall reject all applications with wrong information and forfeit the submitted fee. Nodal Department shall communicate the reason for rejection electronically to applicant. Nodal Department

shall accept appeal of Applicant only for rechecking the information provided in original application. The decision of Director (IP&T) in this regard shall be final and binding.

3.2 Registration-

- a. Nodal Department shall receive all applications for fresh registration in the first week of every month. It shall not receive any application after or before this window period.
- b. Nodal department shall receive all application on the website of Tourism Department, i.e., ***www.andamantourism.gov.in***. Nodal department shall not receive any application in hard-copy.
- c. The fees for registration shall be Rs 15,000 (Rupees Fifteen Thousand only) for each SDC in the island.
- d. Nodal department shall reject all applications with wrong information and forfeit the registration fee. Nodal Department shall communicate the reason for rejection electronically to applicant. Nodal Department shall accept appeal of Applicant only for rechecking the information provided in original application. The decision of Director (IP&T) in this regard shall be final and binding.
- e. Nodal Department shall forward all complete applications with valid data to Inspecting Authority for inspection SDC.
- f. If Inspecting Authority finds any of the information provided by the applicant wrong, the Nodal Department shall reject the application and forfeit the registration fee.
- g. If Inspecting Authority finds any lacuna/deficiency because of ground conditions, Nodal department shall provide the applicant opportunity to rectify such defect and submit the compliance within a prescribed period.
- h. Nodal Department shall communicate the approval to all SCUBA Dive Operators recommended by the Inspecting Authority for registration electronically. This approval shall be auto generated and shall be valid till 30th June of next year of application irrespective of date of Issue of permission subjected to validity of all submitted documents. Thus, if any permission issued in the year 2018 by Nodal department, registration shall be valid till 30 June, 2019.

3.3 Renewal

- a. Nodal Department shall receive all applications for fresh registration in the month of May, every year. Nodal department shall not receive any application for renewal after or before this window.
- b. All other procedure for Renewal of the registration of SDC's shall remain same as mentioned at Clause (b) - (h) of Section- 3.2 (Registration) except the registration fees payable. Towards renewal fees, SDC's shall deposit Rs. 10,000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand Only) for each SDC in the island.

4. Terms and Conditions for grant of Registration/Renewal of Scuba SDC.

4.1 SCUBA Diving Centre:

- a. The applicant(s) shall either own the space used for establishing SCD or take it on lease.
- b. Each SCD shall have minimum office space area of 500 sq.ft.
- c. Each SCD shall have well-equipped Classroom, separate compressor room with proper cross ventilation/exhaust, Storage Room for equipment, repair & maintenance room & washroom with shower facilities and toilets.
- d. The SDC shall have provision for classroom for effective training, and the classroom shall be equipped with audio-visual and dive equipment for proper learning.
- e. Each SCD shall be located in an accessible and clean surrounding.
- f. Each SCD shall have easy access to toilets.
- g. Each SCD shall be safety audited by fire department.
- h. The board displayed outside SCD shall be visible from the road.
- i. SCD shall have signboards of direction if office is not located on the main road.
- j. There shall be separate space for storage of fuel and shall be located outside the SCD.
- k. **Dive Services:** Recommendation of the dive services to be offered by each SDC shall be determined in accordance to the assessment by the designated agency. It shall inter alia examine the requisite manpower, equipments etc. available with a SDC to carry out the dive services SDC is proposing to offer.
- l. **Certification Courses in Diving:** For all types courses involving certification in SCUBA Diving courses in A&N Islands, Boat-diving practicals shall be mandatory and the SDC should be equipped accordingly.

4.2 Equipment:

4.2.1 Diving Equipment:

- a. **Set of Diving equipments:**
 - A. Each set of equipment shall have Oxygen cylinder with pressure gauge, depth meter and dive watch or deco-computer, mask, snorkel, fins buoyancy compensating jacket (BCD), quick release weight belt and alternate air source with adequate spare parts.
 - B. Each SCD shall be well equipped with minimum Y+3 sets of equipment, where Y is the number of Dive Instructors and Dive masters engaged by the operator.
- b. **Cylinder:**
 - A. The number of cylinder shall be twice the number of set of equipment at all point of time.

- B. SCD shall possess a certificate of pressure testing from an authorized testing center every three years, or as per rules of the Govt. of India, regarding high-pressure cylinder. The SCD shall entered details of inspection in a maintenance logbook along with the cylinder number. Tanks shall not be allowed to be used twelve years after the date of manufacturing. All bills/ test certificates, as case may be, shall be produced when demanded by Nodal Department/Inspection Agency.
- C. SDC shall carry out periodic check of Air Quality and the Test Certificate shall be maintained for the verification of the Authorities.
- c. **First Aid:** SCD shall have medial first aid as prescribed by Nodal department from time to time in consultation with NIWS and Health department.
- d. **Communication:** SCD shall have specified wireless communication (walkie-talkie)/ or any other effective communication system to facilitate communication between base station (SDC) and permitted area for diving.
- e. **BCD:** SCD shall have Buoyancy Compensator Device (BCD) approved for recreation diving by the manufacturer and shall have allowed pressure inflator. The SCD shall maintain BCD according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- f. **Compressor:**
 - A. SCD shall use only compressor oil prescribed by OEM.
 - B. Operator shall change Air purifying filter as per guidelines of the compressor manufacturer and shall maintain record of filter changes in the compressor logbook prescribed.
 - C. The Centre shall also obtain a certificate from an authorized agency stating the quality of output of Air Compressors, every six months.
 - D. SDC shall maintain a Logbook of Compressor maintenance and entries shall be made regularly and separately in a prescribed format on: Cylinder filling, filter and oil change, system maintenance etc.
- g. Each SDC shall maintain a complete list/inventory of equipments and gears in the SDC and should be made available for verification to the authorities.
- h. The equipments and gears certified as 'unusable/damaged, not operational' etc. shall be kept away from active equipment store and should be removed from the Stock Inventory list.

4.2.2 Dive Boat:

- a. Nodal department shall allow only boats registered under IV rule or MS Act for SCUBA Diving by operator based on Permitted area.

- b. Nodal Department shall not allow boats for use by SDC which are prohibited under other applicable extant act/regulation/etc. for SCUBA Diving.
- c. The dive boat shall be custom made to suit the requirement of diving and shall have following in addition to the requirements of the Act under which it is registered:
 - A. Chambers for placing of the filled cylinders, all essential safety, rescue and recovery gears and equipment, i.e., First Aid kit, Emergency oxygen cylinders, stretcher etc.
 - B. Dive Flag (as prescribed)
 - C. Oars, wherever such boat is capable of independent propulsion by oars
 - D. Flares
 - E. Walkie-Talkie or alternate communication device.
 - F. Search light.
- d. The dive boat shall have sufficient space to administer First Aid, CPR etc. to the diver in the event of emergency.
- e. The Dive Boat registered under IV Rule shall be equipped with two engines of minimum 60 HP each; or it shall have a backup engine of minimum 60 HP in case of engine failure.
- f. Passenger carrying capacity of the Dive Boat shall be reduced in proportion to the weight of total fully-loaded cylinders as provisioned, number of chambers for cylinders and other dive equipments onboard by rounding off the number to next smaller number arrive as below:

$$\left(\frac{\text{Prescribed capacity of boat und relevant} \text{Prescribed capacity of boat under relevant act of registration act of regis}}{\text{Number of chambers Number of chambers for cylindersfor cylinders}} \right)$$

- g. If Dive-boat is not launched and recovered from a Jetty/secured launch platform, SDC shall have to provision a Ferry-boat for the transfer of the divers and diving equipments from the shore to the dive-boat and back. It shall be built for sufficient buoyancy with adequate safety features and propelled by an engine of not less than 20 HP.
- h. If the Dive-boat is stationary and anchored at Dive Site, the Ferry-boat shall fulfill the requirements as stipulated at section- '4.2.2. a to f' as above.
- i. The Dive boat Master/Boat-handler should have a certification in Life Saving Techniques besides the certification prescribed for handling a specific class of vessel.

4.2.3 Fire equipment:

- a. The SDCs shall have adequate number of fire extinguishers in the SDC and also ensure that fire extinguisher are checked and duly filled up on expiry.

- b. It shall be placed appropriately in the equipment storage room, cylinder filling station (compressor room) and such areas prone to fire.

4.3 Information to be displayed prominently:

- a. Operator shall place boards (5 ft X 6 ft) having following information:
 - A. Registration Number and date of issue of permission by Nodal department
 - B. Date of expiry of permission
 - C. Timings in which Dives are allowed
 - D. Time slots for queue system as prescribed
 - E. Name of Instructors, Dive masters, Site In-charge/Manager etc.
 - F. Availability of complaint register
- b. Operator shall place boards (5 ft X 6 ft) having information of all dive services and courses conducted by them with Rate List prominently displayed at all SDC.
- c. The Operator shall place boards (5 ft X 6 ft) with information as prescribed by Nodal department from time to time at the prominent places (including at the registration desk of SDC) to make divers aware about the risk involved in Scuba Diving. The board shall contain information with regard to physical fitness required for diving and conditions in which the diver shall not conduct activities.
- d. The Operator shall place signboards (5 ft X 6 ft) at registration desk projecting the detailed SOP (Standard Operating Procedures) for recreational diving.
- e. The Operators shall place a board at area demarcated for audio-visual pre-briefing session having details as prescribed by Nodal department of Dive Instructors & Dive Masters engaged by operators. The display board shall also reflect their availability on daily basis.
- f. Each SDC/office shall have a record of each diver, including
 - A. Full name and contact details.
 - B. Emergency contact details.
 - C. Details of dives/courses that they did (including duration, depth, surface intervals)
 - D. Operator shall maintain all of the information mentioned at 4.4(l) for a minimum of 07 years.

4.4 Requirements of Manpower:

4.4.1 Diving Professionals

- a. The SDC shall have in its staff at least 01 (one) Dive instructor and 02 (Two) Dive Master who is certified by NIWS/PADI/CMAS/NAUI/BSAC/SSI.
- b. For every Dive Instructor, SCUBA Diving operator shall engage up to 4 (four) Dive Masters only, i.e., the ratio of Dive Master and Dive Instructor shall not exceed 4 at any point of time.

- c. Operator shall engage Rescue divers for photography, deployment as surface monitor and maintenance of equipment only. Rescue divers shall neither function as Buddy nor carry out any diving activity.
- d. Dive Instructor/Dive Master shall do undertake only 4 dives in a day.
- e. SDC shall ensure that only qualified Instructors as prescribed at '4.6.i' is allowed to undertake instruction activities.

4.4.2 Surface monitor:

- a. SDC shall engage a diving staff with following qualification as surface monitor:
 - i. A boat diving license from the concerned authority, with significant experience.
 - ii. SDC staff with adequate knowledge of the dive location or other person approved by base leader and have first Aid certification.
 - iii. Oxygen resuscitation and therapy certificate of PADI/recognized oxygen provider course.

4.4.3 Base leader:

- a. Each SCD shall have minimum two Base leaders available all time at the spot prescribed for smooth coordination in case of emergency.
- b. Nodal department shall allow manpower certified in Emergency First Responder course by recognized agencies such as PADI/SSI/CMAS/NAUI/BSAC/NIWS to be engaged as Base leader.

4.4.4 Maintenance of equipment:

- a. Operator shall engage minimum 1 (one) manpower trained by OEM in maintenance of dive equipment.

4.5 Dive Site

- a. SDC shall conduct SCUBA Diving at dive sites approved by the Nodal department only.
- b. Nodal department shall take approval of Chief Wildlife Warden if scheduled species as per the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 are present in the Dive sites.
- c. The Nodal department shall allow number of SCUBA Dives per hour such number rounded to next integer which shall be calculated by formula give below:

(Total usable area for SCUBA Diving Total usable area for SCUBA Diving at Dive site)

(Minimum s4×50)

- d. The operator with no boat shall be permitted for to conduct courses in shore diving only with its office at Node.
- e. The operator with boat(s) shall be permitted to conduct diving activities in dive sites where boats are permitted to ply.

- f. Operator with boats registered under IV rule shall be permitted to conduct activity in Dive sites for which Node is same as location of office.
- g. Operator with boats registered under MS act may be permitted to conduct activity in Dive sites with multiple Nodes based on assessment of boats by NIWS for such purpose.
- h. The Nodal Department shall demarcate/delineate Dive sites in coordination and cooperation with the SDC for safety of the divers and for protection of corals & associated marine life from damage due to SCUBA diving.
- i. The Nodal Department shall make evaluation of dive sites on six month basis to study the influence of diving activities on the biodiversity of the sites by engaging institutions like ZSI, NIOT, Pondicherry University or equivalent and submit the report of the study to Chief Wildlife Warden, A & N Islands.
- j. **Allotment of Dive site:**
 - i. Nodal department shall permit a SDC to operate in a Dive site for 10 years from date of grant of first registration or till date of cancellation of registration.
 - ii. Nodal Department shall e-auction the permission for Dive site as prescribed after registration of SDC expires as per f(i).
- g. Fee for using Dive site:**
 - i. SDC shall pay fee levied by PMB or such amount arrived after e-auction to PMB for using dive sites in Port limit.
 - ii. SDC shall pay fee levied by Department of Environment & Forest for to Department of Environment & Forest for using dive sites in notified national parks and sanctuaries.
 - iii. SDC shall pay fee prescribed by PMB or such amount arrived after e-auction to Nodal department for areas not falling in above two categories at g(i) and g(ii).

4.6 Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

a. Inspections & Maintenance

- A. Before commencing each activity on each day, operator shall conduct an inspection of permitted area for removing any hindrance that may cause accident and shall maintain a log as prescribed.
- B. Instructors engaged by operator shall carry out an inspection of all equipment before each dive and shall maintain a log as prescribed.
- C. SDC shall not use cylinders that have not been hydrostatically pressure tested in the last five years by authorized agencies.
- D. Instructor/Dive Master shall wash, dry and check all equipment thoroughly after each dive.

b. Age restrictions for Diver:

- A. Minimum age of Diver shall be 10 years.
- B. Maximum age for Diver participating without Medical certificate shall be 50 years.
- C. For Diver participating with Medical Certificate from recognized Medical Practitioner, there shall be no maximum age.
- D.

c. Queue system:

- A. SDCs shall follow Queue system at all Dive sites where shore diving is permitted and more than one SDC are existing.
- B. SDCs shall follow Queue system at all Dive sites where Boat diving is permitted and more than one SDC are existing.
- C. SDCs shall maintain queue system as prescribed.

d. Permitted Diving:

A. Maximum Depth Limitations

- 1. Maximum depth for all recreation diving is 20 meters. This applied to the divers training in deep diving techniques, who participate in recreation diving activities in A & N Islands, Tourists, SDC staff, Instructors, on or off duty and all instructors and students involved in Advanced and Deep Diving Training. This maximum depth limitation also applied without exception to diving activities on live-aboard and safari boats.
- 2. Entry level divers may dive to a depth of 10 meters or within the limits as set forth by standards of their certifications agency, but not exceeding 20 meters.
- 3. Not until entry level divers have received training in Deep Diving Techniques, may they go deeper than 20 meters.

B. The fact that the entry level diver is diving under the supervision of an instructor shall not be the grounds to diver deep than 20 meters unless the diver is trained or is receiving training in Deep Diving Techniques as per standards.

C. Decompressions Dive Limitations: Only no-stage decompression diving is allowed in A & N Islands. This applies to everybody who participates in diving activities within the Islands, tourists, and SDC staff, instructors and off duty also instructors and student involved in Advanced and Deep Diving Training. This no stage decompression limitation also applies to live aboard or safari boats. No exception whatsoever is allowed.

D. Diving is prohibited in the following circumstances-

- a. Solitary diving.
- b. Decompression dives (Other than mentioned at Clause 4.6(d)(C))
- c. Night Diving
- d. Dives deeper than 20 meters
- e. Dives less than 24 hours before flying (a pressurized aircraft)
- f. If swell and /or wave height exceeds 0.5 meters.
- g. If underwater visibility is less than 04 meter
- h. If underwater current is intense

E. SDC shall conduct following Diving based on permission granted by the Nodal department:

1. Shore Diving
2. Boat Diving
3. Ship- wreck Diving
4. Cave Diving
5. Research Diving

e. Permitted SCUBA Diving courses:

A. All SDCs shall use same name for courses offered as well as conduct activities in same manner as prescribed by Nodal department from time to time.

B. Nodal department shall allow SCUBA Diving courses based on requirement in consultation with NIWS and SDCs.

f. Pre-activity Class-room briefing

A. Diver shall receive a pre-activity classroom-training course before commencement of activity in water. The basic minimum training course shall cover the following:

1. Briefing of the equipment prescribed for each course/activity
2. Theory and Dive skills corresponding to each course/activity level
3. Hazards, top visual priorities etc. pertaining to the dive site
4. SDCs shall be aware of local weather conditions and inform divers of special conditions at each dive site prior to the dive.
5. Instructors accompanying the trip and his/her expertise etc.
6. Proper audio and video visuals shall be used for classroom training.

B. It shall be made sure by Instructor that divers pay attention to the instructions provided and shall not allow any diver to dive if not found following directions.

C. Instructor shall inform Diver about all the risk verbally followed by Diver signing an indemnity bond as prescribed. If diver is below 18, parent/legal guardian shall sign the indemnity bond as prescribe.

g. Pre-activity pool briefing:

A. Instructor shall undertake a pre-activity pool training covering following:

1. Breathing under-water
2. Dive signs/signals
3. Descent and Ascent techniques
4. Clearing of nose, ear etc.
5. Besides above, other techniques as prescribed for different levels of the diving certification.
6. An exclusive video of the Dive-site highlighting majors features and potential risks shall be screened to every diver, including at the entry-level.

B. Instructor shall take pool briefing either in a swimming pool or a confined water body area demarcated in sea for this purpose.

h. Conduct of Activity

- A. **Planning of Dive:** Instructor shall be responsible for planning the Dive and then executing the plan.
- B. **Dive equipment:** All divers shall wear set of equipment consisting of those mentioned at 4.2.1(a)(i).
- C. All equipment mentioned at 4.2.1(a)(i) shall be properly fitted to the diver.
- D. **Dive boats:** The Dive Boats shall have sufficient fuel to make prearranged dive trips and any expected changes there to.
- E. The Instructor shall ensure availability of spare tank, spare diving equipment, first aid kit, SMB, oxygen kit, dive flag and a boat ladder that allows for a comfortable exit from the water on the Dive Boat used for activity.
- F. Diver: The Diver having following conditions shall not be allowed to dive:
 - 1. serious ailments/medical conditions,
 - 2. any kind of heart ailments or had heart surgery, angina or blood vessel surgery,
 - 3. asthma or wheezing with breathing or exercise, sinusitis or bronchitis any lung disease, epilepsy, seizures or convulsions or take medications to prevent them,
 - 4. history of blackouts or fainting, had a diving accident or decompression sickness,
 - 5. high blood disorder,
 - 6. a history of ear or sinus surgery, ear disease, hearing loss, or problem with balance, equalizing (popping)ears with airplane or mountain travel, or
 - 7. any history of diabetes affecting ability to participate in strenuous activity
 - 8. pregnancy
- G. Operator shall allow only divers qualified as Instructors to participate in Shipwreck/cave dive.
- H. Buddy system:
 - 1. All SDCs shall ensure that an Instructor/Dive Master without fail accompanies each Diver.
 - 2. All SDCs shall ensure that an Instructor does not supervise more than 5 Divers in each dive. Among 5 divers, Dive Instructor shall be buddy for one Diver and other Dive Master/Dive instructor shall accompany other four divers.
- I. SDC's shall put buoys red (SMB) in color in the diving area. SDC's shall be aware of any changes to the dive plan of the Dive boat and divers.
- K. The operator shall have video recording of all underwater scuba activities and the footage shall remain with the operator for a period of three months.
- L. For all diving activities, a dive logbook shall be kept stating the divers dive time (Diver getting into the water along with Dive Instructor/ Dive Master and getting out of water after

- completion of Dive activity and signature of the respective diver), maximum depth and remaining tank pressure after dive.
- M. Operator shall inform Nodal department about all wreck discovered during diving after marking the spot and noting GPS reading.
- N. Operator shall only observe and shall not touch the wreck.
- O. **No alcohol policy:** Under no circumstances, any diving staff/Boat crew/diver either shall bring alcohol into the dive boat/shore dive site or consumed alcohol.
- P. Except for shore and shallow dives, instructors shall ensure safety stop for at least 03 minutes at 05 meters after all dives. Divers shall commence their safety stop with a tank pressure not less than 50 bars. Instructors shall ensure safety stop for at least 05 minutes at 05 meters after all dives deeper than 09 meters
- Q. **Reporting of accidents or near misses:** Operator shall report any dive related accident/incident/near misses to Nodal Department immediately.
- R. **Assistance in case of accidents:** Operator shall provide all necessary assistance and provide insurance benefits/coverage to divers/manpower engaged as per the insurance policy, and bear all incidental expenses in case of accident.
- S. Operator shall pay Taxes as applicable to the concerned authority and shall submit the proof of the same at the time of renewal of the permission.
- T. Operator shall use dive flag wherever divers are diving to signal to boats, jet skis and others in the vicinity that divers are below, and that they shall approach with caution.
- U. **Fixation of rates:** The Nodal department may under exceptional circumstances for the reasons to be recorded in writing and after the approval of Secretary (Tourism) fix the reasonable maximum rates, which may be charged by a operator for the SCUBA activities conducted.
- V. **Surface Monitor/Look-out:** Except in shore diving, operator shall have a Surface Monitor on surface during entire diving operations:-
- W. **Leave no Trace policy:**
1. Operator shall not anchor boat at Dive sites at any point of time.
 2. Nothing shall be taken from the Dive site for example cultural monument, artifacts, corals etc..
 3. Damaging and extracting cultural monuments is prohibited.
 4. Divers shall protect the marine environment and its inhabitant.
 5. Proper care shall be taken to protect the marine environment, its associated living organisms and their habitat. Divers shall be briefed by the dive instructors on responsible behaviour, and avoid damage to the corals and physical contact with marine life/animals. Scuba divers shall not cause any damage to marine flora and fauna and do not block or attempt to alter their natural path.

6. Collection of corals, marine flora, fauna and other sea wealth is strictly prohibited and any violation of these will attract penal action under section 29 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972.
7. There shall not be any disposal of sewage or garbage in the reef areas. Divers shall also not use chemicals, explosive, or any other substance, which may cause injury to marine life/wild life or destroy its habitat.
8. The provisions, rules and regulations covering National Parks and Sanctuaries under Wildlife Protection Act 1972 and as prevailing in the Islands shall be adhered.
9. Operator shall not anchor dive boats within 50 mts from the boundary of Marine National Park/Wildlife Sanctuary except with prior permission from concerned DFO concerned. The fees for entry in Wildlife Sanctuary/National Park shall be paid as per existing fee structure.
10. Feeding of fauna available in the area of operation shall not be allowed.
11. Diver shall not carry any plastic and shall not throw anything during the activity.

i. Restrictions on Dive staff:

- A. Each Instructor/Dive Master shall undertake only 4 dives in a day.
- B. Only Instructors with Graduation Degree certificate and having a certification as 'Dive Instructor, Level-II' shall conduct training and certification of divers and Assistant Instructors and / or Dive Master shall only assist such instructors.
- C. If so considered necessary, Nodal Department may undertake a competency certification of the Instructor through a mechanism to be decided thereof, for a certified Dive Instructor to impart instructional courses in A&N Islands.

j. Emergency Action plan

- A. Operator shall have an Emergency Action Plan in position having following component: and regular training imparted to the staff for the same. The Emergency Action Plan shall:
 1. Rules and prescribed limits.
 2. Wearing of Diving equipment.
 3. Pre diving checks.
 4. Diver responsibilities and risk awareness.
 5. Diving Signals
 6. Handling dangerous fauna
 7. Indemnity bond by participant.
 8. Use of the oxygen equipment.
 9. Precautions regarding alcohol consumption
 10. List of possible risks in permitted area
 11. Location of First Aid kits.
 12. Contact numbers of the available emergency services.
 13. Evacuation routes
 14. Emergency procedures for list of risks
- B. Base leaders, Instructors, Dive masters & Rescue Divers shall conduct mock drill as per Emergency Action Plan once in a month and operator shall maintain a log as prescribed.

4.7 Registration under various existing regulations/rules/acts etc.

- a. The SDC shall register as per the companies act/registered partnership deed / Sole Proprietorship and shall possess valid relevant documents.
- b. SDC shall register under GST.
- c. SDC shall submit Income tax return/acknowledgment together with PAN details at the time of registration/renewal of registration.
- d. SDC shall comply with Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and shall submit proof of compliance/registration to Nodal department for registration/renewal of registration.
- e. The Operator shall register with the labor department as per the extant Shop and Establishment Act.
- f. SDC shall be safety audited for fire safety by A & N Fire Service.
- h. SDC shall have valid insurance coverage as prescribed in these Guidelines for SDC and equipments, its Dive Professionals and diving guests.

4.8 Feedback

- a. Operator shall maintain and make available a serially numbered complaint/suggestion register at the SDC and made available to the authorized officers/officials of Nodal Department, as and when required.
- b. Operator shall ensure that feedback is obtained from every diver as far as possible.

4.9 Insurance:

- a. Operator shall have an insurance Policy for minimum amount of **Rs 10 Lakh (Ten Lakh)** per person for Divers and Diving professional engaged through an accredited Insurance agency for minimum of $(2*5*N)$ persons, where N is number of Instructors engaged by operator.
- b. The SDC shall have standard fire and peril policy for the equipment's and accessories'
- c. The SDC shall carry out insurance of the passengers travelling by their dive boat
- d. The Administration shall not be responsible for any claims by the tourist served by the registered Operators.

4.10 Research Diving-

- a. Diver shall obtain permission from the Chief Wildlife Warden before engaging in such Scuba Dive activities.

4.11 Inspections

- a. The Directorate of Tourism may constitute a committee/team of Officials/officer/or any authorized other Officials by law, as and when

required basis to inspect the equipment/accessories logbook etc. of the SDC.

- b. The unusable equipments/accessories of the SDC shall be dismantled in front of the committee constituted during inspections.
- c. The safety audit of scuba SDCs shall be carried out annually by an agency nominated by the nodal department. All charges including travelling, boarding, lodging etc of the agency concerned for such safety audit shall be borne by the Operator.

4.12 Information to be submitted by SDC

- a. In case of any accident met by tourist or unresolved complaints received from the guest/tourist within 24 hours in the format prescribed.
- b. Following information shall be submitted quarterly by all registered SDC:
 - i. Details of tourist in the format prescribed.
 - ii. GST return filed

4.13 Incentives

- a. The names of the registered Scuba SDC alone will be included in all the promotional materials published by the department of tourism and also in the official website.
- b. Registered Scuba SDC will be entitled to the incentives and concessions if any granted by the Administration from time to time and shall have to abide by the terms and conditions of accreditation as prescribed from time to time by the Administration.

4.14 Requirement of quality advertisement materials

- a. All SDC's shall have a website of its own, and it shall have all information and details as required in running Dive Operations. The website shall compulsorily display the Permission/Registration certificate issued by Nodal Department.
- b. The Scuba Dive Operator shall maintain in its office premises all the maps and reference material concerning the particular activities it desires to pursue as business.
- c. The Scuba Dive Operator shall have good quality printing brochures and a website clearly describing its present activities.
- d. All pictures/videos used for publicity of activities in Andaman & Nicobar Islands shall be of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

4.15 Disposal of complaints:

- a. Nodal department shall refer the complaints received from the guests about the registered Operator to a complaint committee for a preliminary enquiry and if required a detailed enquiry thereafter and

Director(IP&T) shall consider their findings and recommendations taking further action.

- b. Complain committee shall have following composition:
 - I. Deputy Director(Tourism)- Chairman
 - II. Representative of ANC/PMF/Forest Department well versed in SCUBA Diving- Member
 - III. Representative of ACCI well versed in SCUBA Diving- Member

5. Cancellation of registration:

5.1 Conditions for cancellation:

The Nodal department shall cancel the registration under following conditions:

- a. If Operator ceases to operate for a continuous period of 6 months or ceases to operate for the purpose for which it has been registered.
- b. If is convicted of any offence under chapter XIV and XVI of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 or under any of the provisions of this Regulation, or of any offence punishable under any law providing for the prevention of hoarding, smuggling or profiteering or adulteration of foods or involvement in any cognizable offence or violation of foreign exchange Regulations or foreign contribution Regulations or the possession or sale of any narcotic drugs of (psychotropic) substances or corruption.
- c. If any manpower(s) engaged is(are) convicted of any offence under Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes (PAT) Regulation, 1956, including subsequent amendments or carrying out activities in contravention of the policies for Aboriginal Tribes.
- d. If a court of competent jurisdiction has declared owner(s) of SDC insolvent and has not discharged them.
- e. If Scuba Dive Operator fails to comply with any of the provisions of this guideline.
- f. If any complaint of malpractice is received and proved against the Operator.
- g. If the certificate of registration is obtained by misrepresentation or fraud.
- h. Non-compliance of govt. regulations relating to safety standards /measures prescribed by the Administration /Government of India from time to time.

5.2 Process of cancellation:

- i. Nodal department shall issue necessary show cause notice.
- j. Nodal department shall considered Reply of the Operator on merit.
- k. Nodal department shall cancel registration only after careful consideration and as a last resort.

1. Nodal department shall mention reasons for cancellation in the show cause notice and final order.

6. Suspension of registration:

6.1 Conditions for Suspension:

The Nodal department shall suspend the registration at any point of time under following conditions:

- a. If Nodal Department finds it necessary for public safety.
- b. If Nodal Department initiates process of cancellation.

6.2 Process of suspension of registration:

- a. Nodal Department shall mention the reasons for suspension in the suspension order.

7. Blacklisting of Scuba Dive Operator:

7.1 Condition for Blacklisting:

- f. Nodal department shall consider black listing of owner or any manpower engaged by operator for period as deemed appropriate if conditions mentioned under clause 5.1 of this guideline.

7.2 Process of Blacklisting

- g. Nodal department shall issue necessary show cause notice.
- h. Nodal department shall considered Reply of the Operator on merit.
- i. Nodal department shall blacklist only after careful consideration and as a last resort.
- j. Nodal department shall mention reasons for blacklisting in the show cause notice and final order.

8. Appeal

- a. Any operator aggrieved by an order made by the Nodal Department under section 5, 6 & 7 of guideline may, within fifteen days from the date of order, prefer an appeal to the Secretary(Tourism). The order issued by the Nodal Department shall be in force till the appeal is decided unless otherwise directed by the Secretary (Tourism).