



**South Carolina
Aquarium**

DIVE TEAM

**Volunteer Diver Policy Manual
2016**

Revised 1/07/16

Mission Statement

It is the mission of the South Carolina Aquarium Dive Team to provide excellence in animal care and husbandry, to actively support the educational, conservation, and research endeavors of the South Carolina Aquarium, and to provide a memorable, positive guest experience to all those who visit our facility.

Welcome to the South Carolina Aquarium Volunteer Dive Program!

The purpose of this manual is to assist you in learning the basics of being a volunteer diver at the South Carolina Aquarium. There is a lot to learn, most of which cannot be read in a manual. Feel free to approach the Dive Operations staff or team leader with any questions or concerns you may have regarding the volunteer dive team and their duties. **After you have read the manual, sign the enclosed Statement of Understanding form and return it to Dive Operations.**

Thank you for sharing your time and talents with the South Carolina Aquarium Dive Program. You make it all possible!

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Management of the Volunteer Dive Program

The Husbandry and Volunteer Departments of the South Carolina Aquarium (SCA) cooperate in the management of the Volunteer Dive Team.

The Husbandry Department, primarily Dive Operations, supervises the volunteer dive program on a daily basis. Dive Operations coordinates the dive schedule for daily dives and special events, provides both dive and husbandry training, and maintains all dive gear repairs. On days the Dive Operations staff is not onsite, a qualified Dive Person in Charge (DPIC) from the Husbandry Department will be covering the Great Ocean Tank (GOT) and dive needs.

The Volunteer Department is responsible for the initial recruitment of applicants via advertisements and for the subsequent receipt of applications. At various times, this department contacts applicants in order to initiate general aquarium training classes. In addition, the Volunteer Department handles relevant administrative tasks as part of its larger volunteer coordination, including distribution of parking passes, uniforms and other non-diving needs.

In order to efficiently work as part of the team, divers are responsible for reading memos, letters, etc., that are sent to them. Such correspondence will also be posted on the bulletin board in the dive locker room. It is important to adopt a routine of checking e-mail daily and the bulletin board whenever you are on duty.

Diver Commitment and Status Classification

Generally, a one year commitment is required to become a volunteer diver. However, we realize that unexpected events may arise that temporarily prevent diving. There are several options for taking time off from the commitments of the Volunteer Dive program:

- 1) Inform the dive office of any conflicts before the schedule is generated.
- 2) Take a sabbatical for up to three months by informing Dive Operations in writing. Your spot will be saved.
- 3) Become inactive. A replacement will take your spot. Once you decide to become active again, you will be considered for the first available opening.
- 4) If you do not expect to return, you may formally resign by notifying Dive Operations and the volunteer office.
- 5) If you have any medical procedures that keep you from diving, a written note from your doctor clearing you to dive again must be submitted.**

Scheduling

Each volunteer diver is required to provide SCA a minimum of two days per month. Standard shift hours are **8:00am-4:30pm**. The following guidelines apply to scheduling:

- Divers are responsible for communicating changes in their dive dates to the Dive Operations staff by the 1st of the prior month.

- On the 1st of the month Dive Operations will send out the proposed schedule for the following month. Standby divers will then fill in the gaps on the schedule by notifying Dive Operations when they are available. No more than 7 divers typically will be scheduled for any day.
- **The final schedule will be sent out by the 20th of the prior month. It is the diver's responsibility to find a replacement once the final schedule is published.** All divers have access to email our list-serve at scadiver@scaquarium.org . If/when a replacement is found, Dive Operations must be notified of the change.
- The **list-serve** is to be used only for aquarium related information, personal gear swap, or trip planning. NO dive shop or commercial information is allowed out of respect for our relationships with all dive shops and other dive entities. We don't want to upset or discriminate against anyone.
- Although your position is a non-paid one, it requires the same commitment and dedication as a regular job. You wouldn't consider doing a 'no-show' at your work place; please treat your fellow divers with the same respect.
- Divers that must cancel last minute must send an email to the list-serve, call Dive Operations **and** call Security (843) 579-8507.
- If you are sick and unable to dive, you should email the listserve looking for help, even if you are planning on coming in to help topside.

Appearance and General Conduct

Remember, to the public, volunteers are representatives of the entire South Carolina Aquarium. Whether in or out of the water, divers must present themselves appropriately. Your "dry-side" appearance should be neat and conservative. Uniform shirts are available through the aquarium and must be worn as instructed with khaki-colored shorts or pants. Shoes must have both a closed toe with a heel, and should be neutral in color.

Volunteer divers have access to the dive locker room, which also includes a shower and changing facility. Lockers are provided for volunteer divers for day use only. Divers must supply their own towels.

Divers must change out of their wet gear and into their aquarium uniform when entering the break room area, food prep, another exhibit or public areas. Divers may go offsite for lunch providing they return on time for the next activity. If you will not be back immediately after lunch, you must notify the team leader.

Behind The Scenes Tours

Visiting the Behind the Scenes (BTS) areas is a privilege that SCA offers to volunteers. However, ***no family, friends, or guests are permitted in "behind the scenes" and back-up exhibit areas without prior approval and an "Official Visitor" badge.***

All BTS requests from volunteer divers should go through Dive Operations, preferably via email. Please give as much notice as possible to ensure you will be able to give the tour to your guests. Please be flexible with time as animal care requirements will override BTS tours.

When submitting a request, please include the names of your guests and the time you expect to take them BTS. Dive Operations will inform Security, and they will have BTS badges waiting for your guests. Dive Operations will also reserve the time slot you are requesting to prevent multiple tours at the same time. Please limit BTS tours of the GOT to 30 minutes.

Dive Operations will grant BTS tours of the GOT area only. If you wish to tour other backup areas, you must specify that, too, so that the appropriate Husbandry member(s) can be contacted for approval.

Approval for a BTS tour does not grant admission to your guests. You must use membership or tickets to get your guests into the building.

You must stay with your guests at all times while they are BTS. Please keep them grouped together. To view the top of the GOT, use the visitor side opposite from the diver equipment side. Please do not go past the gate by the shark feed area. Guests may not feed the fish.. Remind guests not to put hands in the backup tanks.

Welcome to the Team

Diving at the South Carolina Aquarium is a privilege to be enjoyed. Again, welcome to this exciting and rewarding dive program. We look forward to you joining our team!

Roles and Responsibilities

Dive Safety Officer

The Dive Safety Officer (DSO) ultimately makes all decisions regarding both the dive team and the duties to be carried out by the divers, as well as developing procedures by which dive candidates are evaluated and trained. In addition, the Dive Safety Officer is responsible for the husbandry of the GOT and the animals therein, and will take all actions necessary to ensure that these animals are properly cared for.

Assistant Dive Safety Officer

The Assistant Dive Safety Officer (ADSO) works with the DSO to manage the dive program, dive volunteers, and assist with care of the GOT.

Dive Person in Charge

The Dive Person in Charge (DPIC) is a paid staff member that is qualified to supervise a dive team in the absence of Dive Operations staff. A DPIC is required to be onsite for all dive activity at SCA.

Team Leader

Team leaders are volunteer divers that are responsible for the daily activities of each day's dive team. They are chosen by Dive Operations based upon their diving skills, reliability, responsibility, initiative and attitude.

A team leader's duties include but are not limited to:

- Proper feeding of animals and cleaning of the GOT
- Proper completion of opening and closing duties
- Ensuring that food preparation instructions are carried out
- Ensuring that every diver **returns to the surface with at least 1000 psi on each dive**
- Ensuring that both the dive log and the feed log are correctly completed
- Ensuring that gear in need of repair is properly labeled and set aside for repair
- Ensuring that all dive equipment is properly disinfected, rinsed, drained, stored and accounted for at the end of the shift

Volunteer Diver

A volunteer diver's primary task is the care and maintenance of the GOT and the animals residing therein.

Duties include:

- Preparing food for the day's feeds
- Maintaining a clean environment for the animals
- Diving in the exhibit at the scheduled times
- Performing daily dive communication shows
- Keeping aware of changes in the exhibit and throughout the SCA
- Detailed observation and record keeping
- Maintaining a professional level of diving skills
- Ensuring that the AAUS computer based individual dive log is completed at the end of each day <http://sca.diveaus.com>

In addition to feeding fish, a diver needs to be familiar with fish behavior, adhere to SCA's appearance guidelines, maintain clean/safe work areas, and function well in a team environment. Occasionally, a volunteer diver will assist staff in another area as needed. As for diving itself, safety is the diver's main concern. The volunteer diver must be familiar with all safety procedures as specified by the South Carolina Aquarium. The volunteer diver must always represent the South Carolina Aquarium in a professional, courteous, and knowledgeable manner.

Basic Requirements and Evaluation Process For Divers

Minimum Qualifications

- 18 years of age or older
- Advanced diver certification or equivalent
- Able to make required time commitment: two 8-hour days per month for 1 year

Step 1: Volunteer Orientation and Preliminary Interview with Dive Safety Officer

Step 2: Written Test

40 questions intended to be a basic dive skills and knowledge review.

Step 3: CPR/First Aid and Emergency Oxygen Provider Certifications

Current certifications in CPR/First Aid and Emergency Oxygen Provider are required to dive at the Aquarium. These certifications can be acquired at any time during the evaluation process. For convenience, we offer Divers Alert Network (DAN) "First Aid for the Professional Diver" for the cost of the materials only. This certification was designed especially for aquariums and public dive settings, and covers CPR, First Aid, AED, O2 Provider, and Hazardous Marine Life First Aid. Classes are offered regularly. Other certifications are accepted, but divers must maintain current certifications.

Step 4: Physical Evaluation

All divers at the South Carolina Aquarium must fully meet the AAUS physical standards for diving as outlined in *AAUS Appendix 2, Medical Evaluation*. The Medical Evaluation form must carry the signature of a physician who meets SCA requirements to verify that you meet these standards.

To simplify this process, The South Carolina Aquarium has established a relationship with Dr. Lance Davis (Roper Hyperbaric Director). Dr. Davis offers our divers a reduced rate to support our dive program. Prices vary based on age, ranging from \$75-\$239 for the complete examination, including the evaluation by Dr. Davis. Please visit <http://dr.lanceonline.com/divers/> for more information and access to all needed forms. For an appointment, please email Dr. Davis at lanceleedavis@yahoo.com and ask for the "Aquarium Dive Physical."

You may choose to use someone other than Dr. Davis to review your test results and perform your evaluation. However, the doctor you choose must meet at least one of the following credentials:

- 1) US Navy Dive Doctor (DMO)
- 2) NOAA Qualified Dive Doctor
- 3) Board Certified in Hyperbaric and Undersea Medicine
- 4) Qualified staff member of a hospital-based hyperbaric medicine facility
- 5) UHMS approved certification in Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine (DAN)

You may also choose to do your testing at a different facility, but all of the prescribed tests must be included. A general physical examination performed by a non-diving physician that is less than one year old may be reviewed and approved by a doctor who meets the criteria above. However, additional tests to satisfy the AAUS physical may be needed at the diver's expense.

Step 5: Swim Test and Diving Skills Evaluation in Pool

3-hour skills evaluation.

Swim Test (all skills must be performed without swim aids):

Swim underwater for a distance of 25 yards without surfacing.

Swim 400 yards in less than 12 minutes.

Tread water for 10 minutes, or for 2 minutes without the use of hands.

Transport another person of equal size a distance of 25 yards in the water.

Dive Skills (all must be performed comfortably):

Mask removal and replacement

Equipment removal and replacement

Regulator removal and replacement

Controlled Emergency Swimming Ascent

Regulator/Snorkel Exchange Buddy breathing use and ascent

Alternate air source use and ascent Buoyancy evaluation

Underwater signs and signals. Seated pool entry in full gear

Step 6: Full Day of Dry-side Observation (No Diving)

8:00 AM to 4:30 PM (normal shift schedule) on the day you are available to dive.

Observe the dive logistics and help with basic tasks. Complete Exhibit Diving presentation, Exhibit Feeding presentation and Volunteer Dive manual review.

Step 7: Full Day of Dry-side Observation (No Diving)

8:00 AM to 4:30 PM (normal shift schedule) on the day you are available to dive.

Observe the dive logistics and help with basic tasks. Complete Reserve Air Supply System Presentation (RASS) and Dive Computer Presentation.

Step 8: Great Ocean Tank Introductory Dive Day

8:00 AM to 4:30 PM (normal shift schedule) on the day you are available to dive.

Introduction dive in the GOT, our 42' deep, 375,000 gallon exhibit.

Skills covered: RASS Use. RASS use during ascent. Dive Computer use. Controlled Emergency Swimming Ascent and buoyancy evaluation

Final acceptance into the SCA Volunteer Dive Program will be made at the end of this evaluation process by the Dive Safety Officer. Once accepted into the program the new diver will be considered a Diver-in-Training and will follow the outlined training schedule found on page 26 of this manual.

Dive Equipment

Each diver must provide wetsuit, mask, booties, gloves, and hood. The temperature in the GOT ranges from 73°F to 79°F, depending on the season, so select your wetsuit accordingly. The hood is for protection more than warmth, and we recommend Lycra rather than neoprene.

The South Carolina Aquarium will provide regulators, tanks, buoyancy compensators, weights, and fins to use while diving. For liability reasons, SCA-provided equipment **MUST** be used – no exceptions.

Brightly colored equipment is discouraged. Ideally, all gear should be black to maintain a consistent appearance for our guests. Wet suits are necessary both for warmth and protection, thus ‘shorties’ are not permitted. Divers wishing to use drysuits must provide proof of certification.

Safety Rules and Procedures

Never Dive Alone: As we all know, one of the most important rules of dive safety is **NEVER DIVE ALONE**. Even though the Aquarium seems to be an unthreatening environment, this rule applies here, too.