

AAUS Scientific Diving History and Regulations

Update 2/25/16



South Carolina
Aquarium

Objectives

- Upon completion of this module, the participant will be able to:
 - > **Define scientific diving**
 - > **Outline the History of Scientific Diving and the exemption to OSHA commercial diving standards**
 - > **Identify the mission, purposes and goals of AAUS**

Objectives

- Upon completion of this module, the participant will be able to:
 - > **Outline the operational control mechanism within Scientific Diving**
 - > **Discuss policies, procedures, and requirements detailed in AAUS Scientific Diving Standards**

Scientific Diving

- Scientific diving is defined (29 CFR 1910.402) as diving performed solely as a necessary part of a scientific, research, or educational activity by employees whose sole purpose for diving is to perform scientific research tasks

History of the Scientific Diving Exemption

- In 1982, OSHA exempted scientific diving from commercial diving regulations (29 CFR Part 1910, Subpart T) under certain conditions which are outlined below
- The final guidelines for the exemption became effective in 1985 (Federal Register, Vol. 50, No. 6, p. 1046)

History of the Scientific Diving Exemption

- 1975 - Petition filed by United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America AFL-CIO
- Urged an emergency temporary standard (ETS) be issued with respect to diving operations
- ETS issued on June 15, 1976 to be effective July 15, 1976

History of the Scientific Diving Exemption

- Challenged in U S Court of Appeals by several diving contractors
- ETS withdrawn in November 1976 and permanent standard was formulated
- Final Standard for Commercial Diving became effective October 20, 1977
- Scientific diving was not exempted

History of the Scientific Diving Exemption

- American Academy of Underwater Sciences (AAUS) was formed to petition OSHA for an exemption
- Submitted arguments for ANPR on October 15, 1979
- Self-regulation
- Consensual standard for over 20 years
- Low accident incidence rate
- Final Ruling granting exemption effective November 28, 1982

Scientific Diving Exemption

29CFR 1910.401(2)(iv)

- OSHA exempted from commercial diving regulations any diving operation defined as scientific diving and which is under the direction and control of a diving program containing at least the following elements:

Scientific Diving Exemption

29CFR 1910.401(2)(iv)

- **A diving safety manual which includes at a minimum: Procedures covering all diving operations specific to the program; including procedures for emergency care, recompression and evacuation; and the criteria for diver training and certification**

Scientific Diving Exemption

29CFR 1910.401(2)(iv)

- **Diving control (safety) board, with the majority of its members being active scientific divers, which shall at a minimum have the authority to:**
 - *approve and monitor diving projects, review and revise the diving safety manual, assure compliance with the manual, certify the depths to which a diver has been trained, take disciplinary action for unsafe practices, and assure adherence to the buddy system (a diver is accompanied by and is in continuous contact with another diver in the water) for scuba diving*

29CFR 1910.401(2)(iv)

Appendix B to Subpart T

- OSHA has granted an exemption for scientific diving from commercial diving regulations under the following guidelines (Appendix B to Subpart T):
 - *The Diving Control Board consists of a majority of active scientific divers and has autonomous and absolute authority over the scientific diving program's operation*

29CFR 1910.401(2)(iv)

Appendix B to Subpart T

- **The purpose of the project using scientific diving is the advancement of science; therefore, information and data resulting from the project are non-proprietary**
- **The tasks of a scientific diver are those of an observer and data gatherer**
- **Construction and trouble-shooting tasks traditionally associated with commercial diving are not included within scientific diving**

29CFR 1910.401(2)(iv)

Appendix B to Subpart T

- **Scientific divers, based on the nature of their activities, must use scientific expertise in studying the underwater environment and therefore, are scientists or scientists-in-training**

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF UNDERWATER SCIENCES (AAUS)

AAUS

- Incorporated in California in 1983
- Active since before the OSHA exemption of 1982
- Currently over 100 organizational members
- Recognized by OSHA as the scientific diving standard setting organization

AAUS

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AAUS

- AAUS Organizational Members, or OM(s), include Universities, Marine Labs, Museums, and others involved in scientific diving activities throughout the United States and around the world

AAUS Mission Statement

- The mission of the American Academy of Underwater Sciences (AAUS) is to facilitate the development of safe and productive scientific divers through education, research, advocacy, and the advancement of standards for scientific diving practices, certifications, and operations

AAUS Purposes and Goals

- To develop, review and revise standards for safe scientific diving certification and the safe operation of scientific diving programs;
- To collect, review and distribute statistics relating to scientific diving activities and scientific diving incidents;

AAUS Purposes and Goals

- To conduct symposia and workshops to educate the membership and others in safe scientific diving programs and practices;
- To represent the scientific diving interests of the membership before other organizations and government agencies, and;

AAUS Purposes and Goals

- To fund research, education and development of safe scientific diving programs and practices

Research Diver (Recreational)

vs. Scientific (AAUS)

- NO STANDARDIZED INSTRUCTION
 - PRACTICAL TRAINING ONLY
 - VARIABLE NUMBER OF TRAINING DIVES
 - NO MEDICAL
 - LIFETIME CERT
 - NOT RECOGNIZED AS A PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION
- OSHA DEFINED
 - MUST MEET AAUS TRAINING STANDARDS
 - AAUS MEDICAL REQUIRED
 - MINIMUM 100 HOURS TRAINING
 - MUST MAINTAIN CERTIFICATION STATUS
 - EMERGENCY TRAINING REQUIRED
 - RECOGNIZED AS A PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION