



Science Diver in the Blue Economy Era - International Conference

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Hazard Identification, Risk assessment and First Aid training for Science Divers

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ABSTRACT

Scuba Diving is not without risks and Scientific Diving is no exception. We can however easily mitigate these risk by performing an appropriate Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment, not only focusing on what happens in the water, but by looking also at the operations done outside the water or in preparation of dive operations.

Scientific Divers might be scientists that started diving to perform scientific diving operations or might be divers that studied to become scientists. In both cases, it is important that the scientific divers have the needed skills and experience to perform their dives in a safe way. This includes a good knowledge and level of experience of basic diving skills or specific scientific diver skills, but also includes being prepared to react in case of emergencies.

In order to establish a safe dive environment and operation, an appointed Diving Safety officer should not only identify the different hazards that might be present during the dive, but also in the areas, such as for example on the boat or even in a compressor area. Once Hazards are identified, it becomes important to develop appropriate Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs), taking into account the different tasks that can be performed in the many areas that were assessed during a Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment. Scientific Divers should then be fully aware of these procedures and respect them in order to avoid accidents.

It is also understood that a Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment, or the use of SOPs are not a guarantee accidents will not happen, but will reduce them to a minimum. If accidents happen, it becomes important for the divers to react in a uniform way to avoid confusion and improvisation. The use of Emergency Action Plans are crucial in avoiding precious time getting lost or wrong decisions are taken and should be known by all the team members. Some actions will need to be taken immediately by the Scientific divers before professional rescue services or healthcare providers arrive at the site of the accident. This means that not only the different members of the team should be trained to perform the basic rescue skills to make sure a diver is removed from the water, or even from a certain depth, to a boat or shore, but also include appropriate First Aid training according to international accepted guidelines.