

Philippine Commission on Sports Scuba Diving

PHILIPPINE COMMISSION ON SPORTS SCUBA DIVING

PHILIPPINE COMMISSION ON THE DEVELOPMENT
AND PROMOTION OF SPORTS SCUBA DIVING
RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE
ACCREDITATION OF SPORTS SCUBA DIVING
ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF LOI NO. 745
CREATING THE PHILIPPINE COMMISSION ON
THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF
SPORTS SCUBA DIVING, THE FOLLOWING
RULES AND REGULATIONS ARE HEREBY
PROMULGATED TO GOVERN THE ACCRE-
DITATION OF SPORTS SCUBA DIVING
ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

CHAPTER 1

DEFINITION OF TERMS

SECTION 1. When used in these Rules, the following terms shall, unless the context otherwise indicates, have the following meaning:

- a. *PCSSD* – refers to the Philippine Commission on the Development and Promotion of Sports Scuba Diving which is the agency mandated to ensure the safety of both domestic and foreign diving enthusiasts and to promote the Philippines as a premiere dive destination.
- b. *DOT* – refers to the Department of Tourism.
- c. *LGU* – refers to the Local Government Unit.
- d. *PCG* – refers to the Philippine Coast Guard.
- e. *MARINA* – refers to the Maritime Industry Authority.
- f. *Accreditation* – a certification issued by the PCSSD recognizing the holder's compliance with the minimum standards required in the operation of a sports scuba diving establishment or as a diving professional.
- g. *Scuba* – refers to a self-contained underwater breathing apparatus.
- h. *Scuba Diving Establishment* – Any business establishment licensed by the LGU engaged in the conduct of sports scuba diving activities in the Philippines, whether or not for a fee.
- i. *Scuba Diving Tour Operator* – Any establishment licensed by the LGU engaged in the marketing, promotions and conduct of sports scuba diving activities and tours.
- j. *Dive Boat* – Any motor-run or sail boat used for scuba diving purposes duly registered with PCG and MARINA.
- k. *Live Aboard Dive Boat* – Any motor-run or sail operated boat with live-aboard facilities used for scuba diving purposes, duly registered with PCG and MARINA.
- l. *Dive Boat Operator* – Any establishment or person who operates a Dive Boat or Live Aboard Dive Boat to service sports scuba divers duly licensed by the LGU and registered with PCG and MARINA.
- m. *Dive Banca* – Any motor-run or sail operated banca with outriggers used for sports scuba diving and duly registered with the PCG and MARINA.
- n. *Dive Banca Operator* – Any establishment or person that operates a dive banca

licensed by the LGU and registered with the PCG and MARINA to service sports scuba divers.

- o. *Dive Resort/Diveshop*— Any establishment that offers food, accommodation and scuba diving facilities, among other recreational facilities, to the public for a fee.
- p. *Professional Scuba Dive Center* — Any establishment engaged in all of the following activities:
 - i. Direct importer and or wholesaler of major diving equipment.
 - ii. Renting out of scuba diving equipment
 - iii. Provides air-filling service
 - iv. Services and repairs scuba diving equipment
 - v. Conducts scuba diving courses
 - vi. Conducts dive tours
- q. *Scuba Dive Shop/Facility* — Any establishment engaged in any or more of the following activities:
 - i. Sale or retail of scuba diving equipment and accessories
 - ii. Renting out of scuba diving equipment
 - iii. Provides air-filing services
 - iv. Services and repairs scuba diving equipment
 - v. Conducts scuba diving courses
 - vi. Conducts dive tours
- r. *Professional Dive Instructor* — Any individual who is a holder of a valid certificate issued by any Philippine or internationally recognized certifying scuba diving organization possessing the required expertise to conduct instructional sport

scuba diving courses at the level stipulated in his/her credentials, whether or not for a fee.

- s. *Assistant Dive Instructor* — Any individual who is a holder of a valid certificate issued by any Philippine or internationally recognized certifying scuba diving organization possessing the required expertise to assist a professional dive instructor in the conduct of instructional sports scuba diving course at the level stipulated in his/her credentials, whether or not for a fee.
- t. *Dive Master* — An individual with a dive master certificate or higher certification who is in charge of the diving activities.
- u. *Professional Dive Master* — Any individual who is a holder of a valid certificate issued by any Philippine or internationally recognized certifying scuba diving organization possessing the required expertise in supervising sports scuba diving activities, whether or not for a fee.
- v. *Advanced Open Water Diver* — Any individual who has undergone advanced open water diver training by a government agency or by a PCSSD recognized international certifying/training agency consisting of at least 72 hours of theoretical and academic course and at least 10 consecutive ocean dives.
- w. *Training Dive* — A closely supervised dive conducted by a sports scuba diving instructor in a contractual relationship for the purpose of providing sports scuba diving skills in accordance with the standards of an international or a nationally recognized certifying/training agency.
- x. *Supervised Dive* — Any dive which involves a scuba diving establishment or a sports scuba diving professional and a

sports scuba diver or a group of sports scuba divers wherein a contractual relationship exist.

y. *Fun Dive* – Any dive where there is no contractual relationship between a sports scuba diver or a group of sports scuba divers and the diving establishment or a sports scuba diving professional.

z. *Dive Leader* – The leader of a dive buddy team or the diver in charge of a dive.

CHAPTER II

APPLICATION AND REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ISSUANCE OF ACCREDITATION

SECTION 1. Who May Apply

- a. Any individual who is a Filipino citizen, or foreign national with a valid proof of permanent residency issued by the Bureau of Immigration and a valid work permit issued by the Department of Labor and Employment, and possessing the required permit or license issued by other concerned authorities, desiring to teach, train or conduct activities related to sports scuba diving, whether or not for a fee.
- b. Any establishment organized under Philippine laws and duly registered with concerned government agencies/authorities engaged in sports scuba diving activities, whether or not for a fee.

SEC. 2. Branch or Extension Office

- a. Prior to the establishment and operation of any branch or extension office by any PCSSD accredited scuba diving establishment, the branch or extension office shall likewise secure accreditation with PCSSD.

SEC. 3. Requirements for Accreditation

a. DIVE BOAT OPERATOR

- i. Philippine Coast Guard permit
- ii. MARINA Registration Certificate
- iii. Business license and permit issued by the LGU and other concerned government authorities
- iv. Certificate of ownership of vessel
- v. Bureau of Domestic Trade, SEC registration, Articles of Incorporation and by-laws for vessels owned by juridical entity, if applicable
- vi. List of employees with their respective positions, citizenship and home address
- vii. List of safety equipment
- viii. Compliance with the PCSSD Scuba Diving Safety Standards

b. DIVE BANCA OPERATOR

- i. Philippine Coast Guard permit
- ii. MARINA Registration Certificate
- iii. Business license and permit issued by the LGU and other concerned government authorities
- iv. Certificate of ownership of vessel
- v. Bureau of Domestic Trade registration, SEC. registration, Articles of Incorporation and By-laws for vessels owned by a juridical entity, if applicable
- vi. List of employees with their respective positions, citizenship and home address
- vii. Compliance with PCSSD scuba diving safety standards

c. PROFESSIONAL SCUBA DIVE CENTER

- i.* Pertinent Registration Certificate (SEC Registration or Bureau of Domestic Trade Registration of Business Name);
- ii.* List of employees with their respective positions, citizenship and home address. (must have at least one dive master and one dive instructor)
- iii.* Compliance with PCSSD Scuba Diving Safety Standards.
- iv.* Appropriate business license and permit issued by the LGU and other concerned authorities.

d. SCUBA DIVE SHOP/FACILITY

- i.* Pertinent registration certificate (Sec Registration or Bureau of Domestic Trade Registration of Business Name);
- ii.* List of employees with their respective positions, citizenship and home address. (must have at least one dive master and one dive instructor)
- iii.* Compliance with Minimum Standards for Diving Operations and Standard Diving Procedure under Chapter III and Chapter VIII of these guidelines.
- iv.* Business license and permit issued by the LGU and other concerned authorities.

e. PROFESSIONAL DIVE INSTRUCTOR/ASSISTANT DIVE INSTRUCTOR/DIVE MASTER

- i.* Copy of the individual's Philippine or international certificate of expertise or credentials.

- ii.* Appropriate visa issued by the Bureau of Immigration and work permit issued by DOLE for foreign nationals

- iii.* Compliance with PCSSD Scuba Diving Standards.

f. ADVANCED OPEN WATER DIVER

- i.* Copy of proof of training issued by the concerned government agency or by a PCSSD recognized international certifying agency
- ii.* Appropriate visa issued by the Bureau of Immigration and Work Permit issued by DOLE for foreign nationals

- iii.* Compliance with PCSSD Scuba Diving Standards

SEC. 4. Fees

- a.* Accreditation Fees shall be charged annually with the following schedule:

- i.* Professional Dive Center/Shop/Facility – Php 2,000.00
- ii.* Branch/Extension Office –Php 500.00
- iii.* Professional Dive Instructor – Php 1,000.00
- iv.* Assistant Dive Instructor/Dive Master – Php 750.00
- v.* Advanced Open Water Diver – Php 750.00
(One time charge for government personnel)

SEC. 5. Inspection of Establishment

- a. Within a reasonable period after submission of documentary requirements and the payment of the required fees, a physical inspection of the facility, equipment and premises of the applicant shall be conducted by the PCSSD or its duly designated representatives for the purpose of determining whether the applicant meets the minimum standards set by PCSSD.

SEC. 6. Issuance of Certificate of Accreditation

- a. Upon satisfactorily complying with the requirements of the PCSSD, the establishment shall be issued a certificate of accreditation within thirty (30) working days after inspection. Likewise, accreditation certificates for individuals shall be issued within five (5) working days after complying with all the requirements and payment of the fees.

SEC. 7. Validity of Accreditation

- a. The certificate of accreditation issued under these Rules shall be valid for one (1) year from date of issuance thereof.

SEC. 8. Display of Accreditation Certificate

- a. The accredited establishment shall display in a conspicuous place within its premises its PCSSD Accreditation Certificate as well as permit/license issued by other government authorities.

SEC. 9. Accreditation Cards

- a. Professional dive instructors, assistant dive instructors, dive masters, and advanced open water divers shall be issued accreditation cards by the PCSSD. These

cards should be carried by the holders at all time.

SEC. 10. Renewal of Accreditation

- a. Application for renewal of accreditation shall be filed on or before its expiration and shall be signed by the individual concerned or by the establishment's authorized representative.

CHAPTER III**MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR DIVING OPERATIONS****SECTION 1. Requirements for Certification of Diver Training****Prerequisite for Diving in the Philippines**

- a. Individuals who wish to dive with the use of scuba shall proof of diver training certification by providing any of the following:

- i. Diver's Certification Card (C-Card)

- ii. Diving Log Book

- iii. Certificate of Advanced Open Water Diver Training issued by a government agency or by a PCSSD recognized international certifying agency

- iv. Valid PCSSD Accreditation ID/ Certificate

- b. Individuals who wish to dive without any of the above proof shall be permitted to dive only after they have undergone and passed an evaluation dive conducted by an instruction and has demonstrated proficiency in the following skills:

- i. Pre-dive scuba equipment assembly

- ii. Mask removal and clearing

iii. Regulator recovery and clearing**iv Air sharing****v. Buoyancy control through "hovering"****SEC. 2. General Guidelines in the Supervision of Dives**

- a. All non-training dives conducted by an accredited dive establishment are considered supervised dives if they are under the direct control of the establishment's Dive Master.
- b. All divers wishing to dive from any accredited dive establishment are required to log-in with the establishment's dive master and to strictly observe the rules and regulations of said establishment.
- c. All accredited dive establishment shall strictly observe rules and regulations on safety diving in the conduct of their business.

SEC. 3. Orientation Dive

- a. Accredited dive establishment are required to take all dive tours (single or multiple divers) on their first dive an orientation dive in a quiet, shallow and safe area to familiarize the diver/s with the dive site, dive master as well as the emergency procedures.

SEC. 4. Training Dive

- a. The accredited dive instructor should log his training dives with the establishment's duty Dive Master prior to diving activities.
- b. The accredited dive instructor in-charge should conduct his/her training dive in accordance with the standards and procedures prescribed by his/her agency's manual.

SEC. 5. Fun Dive

- a. Fun dives are undertaken at the sole risk and responsibility of the persons undertaking such an activity.

SEC. 6. Fun Dives from Dive Boat/Dive Banca

- a. Accredited Dive Boat/Dive Banca Operators shall be responsible for the safe conduct of dives from their boat. If an operator finds that the diver/s who contracted his boat is acting in a dangerous manner, the operator has the right to terminate the dive and return the group to shore.

CHAPTER IV**MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR BREATHING AIR COMPRESOR****SECTION 1. Breathing Air Compressor**

- a. A compressor running time logbook must be kept at all compressor stations.
- b. All breathing air compressor must use proper air filtration system as specified in the manufacturer's operating manual.
- c. Compressor' air filter elements must be replaced periodically as specified in the manufacturer's operating manual.
- d. Compressor lubricating oil must be changed periodically as specified in the manufacturer's operating manual.
- e. The compressor's Air Purity Output should be checked annually by the PCSSD the result of which should not exceed the air purity maximum standard listed below:

Carbon Dioxide	- 500 PPM
Carbon Monoxide	- 20 PPM
Oil	- 5 mg./m3

- f. High Pressure Relief Valves must be checked for proper setting every six (6) months or as the need arises by a qualified technician.

CHAPTER V

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SCUBA AND CASCADE CYLINDERS AND AIR STATION

SECTION 1. Hydrostatic Testing of Scuba and Cascade Cylinders

- a. The frequency of hydrostatic test pressure for scuba diving tanks and cascade cylinders shall be every five (5) years in accordance with the manufacturer's specification.
- b. In the case however of heavily used tanks, the hydrostatic test shall be every three (3) years.
- c. All scuba tanks shall undergo annual visual inspection by qualified technician or personnel of PCSSD.
- d. Compressed air loaded in a tank should not exceed the limits set by the manufacturer and/or the result of hydrostatic test.
- e. No person other than the authorized compressor operator and his assistant shall be allowed inside the compressor room.
- f. A blast fragmentation deflector or any similar device should be installed in air-filling stations to ensure the safety of the compressor room
- g. Tank valves and its components should be removed and inspected every six (6) months for proper servicing.

CHAPTER VI

MINIMUM STANDARD REQUIREMENTS FOR DIVE EQUIPMENT

SECTION 1. Buoyancy Control Devices (BCD)/ Tank Back Packs (TBP)

- a. All BCD and TBS should have a positive locking device to hold the tank securely.
- b. All BCD and TBS should have quick release devices.
- c. BCD should be equipped with power or oral inflator mechanism prescribed for scuba diving.

SEC. 2. Weight System for Buoyancy Control

- a. All weight system for buoyancy control should have a quick release device.

SEC. 3. Scuba Regulators

- a. All regulators should have sufficient ports that can accommodate connections for a submersible pressure gauge, an alternate air source, and a power inflator.
- b. All regulators should undergo annual safety check or overhaul by a qualified technician. Regulatory hoses should be examined for dents, cracks and/or pinholes.

CHAPTER VII

STANDARD EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

SECTION 1. Emergency Equipment for Accredited Dive Establishments

- a. All accredited dive establishments should be equipped with the following:

- i. Divers first Aid Kit
- ii. Medical Oxygen-filled tank
- iii. Oxygen Resuscitator (Ambo Bag)
- iv. Spine Board
- v. Effective Sea-Shore Communication Equipment
- vi. Current U.S. Navy Air Diving Tables
- vii. Skin and Scuba Diving Manual
- viii. Diver Recall System
- ix. Diver Medical Evacuation Plan
- x. Copy of the "Lifesaving and Water Safety Manual" (Red Cross)
- xi. Copy of "First Aid and Personnel Safety Manual" (Red Cross)

SEC. 2. Emergency Equipment for Accredited Dive Boats

- a. Accredited dive boats for organized dives must have the following standard equipment in addition to the requirements listed in Section 1 above:

- i. Fire extinguishers
- ii. Ring float with training line
- iii. Flashlights
- iv. Drinking water
- v. Divers ladder or similar device

Sec. 3. Emergency Equipment for Accredited Dive Bancas

- a. Accredited dive bancas should at all times be equipped with the following:

- i. Fire extinguisher
- ii. Ring float with trailing line
- iii. Flashlights
- iv. Drinking water
- v. Divers ladder or similar device
- vi. Paddles
- vii. Effective two-way communication system

- viii. Anchor rope or chain with sufficient length with a quick release
- ix. Personal floatation devices for the crew and passengers
- x. Diver recall system
- xi. Diver Emergency Medical Evacuation Plan

CHAPTER VIII

STANDARD DIVING PROCEDURES

SECTION 1. Buddy System

- a. The buddy system is a mandatory for all dives.

SEC. 2. Buoyancy Control Device

- a. The use of buoyancy control device is required for all dives.

SEC. 3. Alternate Air Source and Diving Instruments

- a. The use of an alternate air source, depth gauge, pressure gauge and dive watch, or its equivalent is mandatory.

SEC. 4. Dive Log for Accredited and Diving Establishments

- a. The Dive Master of an accredited diving establishments should enter in his Master Log the following data for every dive made:

- i. Name of divers/buddies
- ii. Destination
- iii. Sign-out/Sign-in
- iv. Weather, surface and underwater conditions
- v. Actual dive profile

SEC. 5. Supervision of Diving Activities

- a. All diving activities in an accredited establishments shall be under the direct supervisions of the establishment's Dive Master

SEC. 6. Maximum Depth Limit

- a. The maximum sports scuba diving depth shall be limited to 130 feet or 40 meters. For this purpose, all dives should be confined to the depth and time required by the U.S. Navy Air Decompression Tables or its equivalent.

SEC. 7. Dive Flags and Signs

- a. All accredited dive establishments should prominently display in the dive site a Dive Flag (red with white diagonal line and/or a blue and white flag "alpha flag") whenever a diving activity is being conducted. A highly visible marker buoy should be used for shore dives.

SEC. 8. Diving Service Banca

- a. All service boat personnel should be properly trained on dive boat handling procedures.
- b. The minimum crew complement for a scuba diving service boat shall be two (2) persons.
- c. Motorized dive service boats should have the Dive Flag painted on two sides of its bow, running lights, oars, as well as 100 feet of anchor line.

SEC. 9. Observance of Diving Safety Procedures by Accredited Establishments

- a. It shall be the duty of an accredited diving establishments to ensure that compliance with these diving safety procedures are strictly observed.

CHAPTER IX**SCUBA DIVING ACCIDENTS****SECTION 1. Scuba Diving Accident Management**

In case of accidents, the following procedures should be followed:

- a. The dive leader should immediately initiate the proper rescue measures and administer the necessary first aid;
- b. The victim should be brought immediately to the nearest available source of emergency assistance.
- c. The dive leader, or his equivalent or other qualified person must accompany the victim to the nearest hospital or Recompression Chamber and should bring with him the victim's emergency information card.

SEC. 2. Reporting Dive Related Accidents to the PCSSD

- a. All dive related accidents should be reported immediately by the accredited dive establishments or by the dive leader to the local authorities and to the PCSSD for appropriate action.
- b. As may be warranted, the PCSSD may conduct a fact finding investigation to aid the commission in coming up with safe diving procedures.

CHAPTER X**RECOMPRESSION CHAMBER FACILITIES****SECTION 1. Fees for the use of the PCSSD Recompression Chamber Facilities**

- a. PCSSD operates and maintains Recompression Chamber facilities in Cebu, and in Metro Manila for the use of divers, military, and the public for a fee. The rules and regulations for the use of these facilities and the fees shall be contained in a separate schedule to be promulgated by the PCSSD.

SEC. 2. Use of the PCSSD Recompression Chambers by PCSSD Accredited Establishments

- a. PCSSD accredited individuals and establishments shall be granted special discount for the use of the PCSSD Recompression Chambers.

CHAPTER XI

PERSONNEL STANDARDS

SECTION 1. Employment of Dive Master by Accredited Establishments

- a. An accredited dive establishments should have at least one (1) certified Dive Master accredited with PCSSD who shall be available at all times during the conduct of its diving activities.

SEC. 2. Refresher Course for Accredited Dive Masters

- a. All accredited dive masters should undergo refresher courses on first aid and diver rescue every two years and an annual CPR Training in any authorized training center.

CHAPTER XII

CANCELLATION OR NON-RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION

SECTION 1. Grounds for Cancellation or Non-Renewal of Accreditation

- a. Any of the following acts or omissions shall be sufficient ground for the cancellation or non-renewal of accreditation:

- i. Making any false declaration or statements or making use of any such declaration or statement or any document containing the same or committing fraud or any act of misrepresentation for the purpose of obtaining the grant of accreditation;
- ii. Failure to maintain the standards and requirements for accreditation as prescribed in these rules;
- iii. Violation of or non-compliance with any of the provisions of these rules, promulgated orders, decisions and circulars issued by the PCSSD and other concerned government agencies;
- iv. Degradation of the environment due to destructive practices, improper waste disposal and causing harm to the floral and fauna;
- v. Desecration and/or vandalism of underwater relics;
- vi. Any other act or omission that works against the interest of the sports scuba diving industry.

CHAPTER XIII

SEPARABILITY CLAUSE

- SECTION 1. The provisions of these Rules are hereby declared separable and in the event that any of such provisions is declared invalid, the validity of all other provisions shall not be affected hereby.

CHAPTER XIV

REPEALING CLAUSE

SECTION 1. All existing rules and other issuances of the PCSSD relative to the operation of sports scuba diving establishments which are inconsistent with the provisions of these Rules are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

CHAPTER XV

EFFECTIVITY

SECTION 1. These rules shall take effect immediately after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved and promulgated this 10th day of April, 2003, Manila, Philippines.

(Sgd.) SECRETARY RICHARD J. GORDON
Chairman

*Philippine Commission on the Promotion
and Development of Sports Scuba Diving*