



PCSSD MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2021-001

INTERIM GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATIONS FOR ACCREDITATION



WHEREAS, pursuant to Republic Act No. 9593 or the *Tourism Act of 2009*, the Philippine Commission on Sports Scuba Diving (PCSSD) is mandated to provide the standard basic dive rules to all levels or kinds of divers, regulate scuba sports and technical diving in the country, and ensure the safety of the sport through the formulation of policies;

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of Letter of Instruction No. 745 creating the PCSSD, the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of 2003 were promulgated to govern the accreditation of sports and scuba diving establishments in the Philippines;

WHEREAS, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Disease (IATF-EID) issued Resolution No. 78 allowing Dive Establishments in specific areas under General Community Quarantine (GCQ) and Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ) to accept guests travelling for purposes of recreational diving, arriving from areas with a community quarantine classification of GCQ or lower;

WHEREAS, the PCSSD issued Administrative Order No. 2020-001 or the *Guidelines on the Operations of Dive Establishments Under a Community Quarantine*, permitting only PCSSD accredited Dive Establishments to operate and accommodate guests for Recreational Diving purposes under GCQ and MGCQ;

WHEREAS, to facilitate the processing of accreditation applications notwithstanding travel and transaction restrictions as a consequence of the imposition of Community Quarantine, there is a need to issue interim guidelines for applications for PCSSD Accreditation;

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the foregoing, and pursuant to PCSSD Resolution No. 2021-002 adopted on 11th February 2021, these Interim Guidelines for Applications for Accreditation are hereby issued:

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Short Title. This Circular shall be known as the “*Interim PCSSD Accreditation Guidelines.*”

Section 2. Definition of Terms. For purposes of these Guidelines, the term:

- (a) “Accident Management Plan” refers to a document containing the detailed strategy or procedure to be observed in case of a dive accident, which shall include, but is not limited to, decompression sickness and potential COVID-19 infection of any guest or staff, and the corresponding transporting, reporting, and disinfection protocols.
- (b) “Accommodation Establishments” shall refer to establishments operating primarily for accommodation purposes including, but not limited to, hotels, resorts, apartment hotels, mabuhay accommodation establishments (e.g. tourist inns, motels, pension houses, bed and breakfast, and vacation homes) and homestays.
- (c) “Accreditation” refers to a certification issued by the PCSSD to Dive Individuals, Dive Establishments, or Liveaboard Dive Boats that officially recognizes them as having complied with PCSSD Rules and Regulations and minimum public health standards.

- (d) “Community Quarantine” refers to the restriction of movement within, into, or out of the area of quarantine individuals, large groups of people, or communities, designed to reduce likelihood of transmission of an infectious disease among persons in and to persons outside the affected areas. *(IATF-EID Omnibus Guidelines)*
- (e) “Department of Tourism (DOT) Accreditation” shall refer to the Certification issued by the DOT to a tourism enterprise that officially recognizes it as having complied with the minimum standards for the operation of tourism facilities and services.
- (f) “Dive Center” refers to any establishment engaged in all of the following activities:
1. Importation and/or wholesale of major diving equipment;
 2. Renting out of scuba diving equipment;
 3. Provision of air-filling service;
 4. Service and repair of scuba diving equipment;
 5. Conduct of scuba diving courses; and
 6. Conduct of dive tours.
- (g) “Dive Establishments” refer to facilities involved in SCUBA diving, such as, but not limited to, Dive Centers, Dive Shop/Facility, or any business establishment licensed by the Local Government Unit (LGU) engaged in the conduct of sports scuba diving activities in the Philippines, whether or not for a fee.
- (h) “Dive Individual” refers to any individual who is a holder of a valid certification card issued by any Philippine or internationally recognized certifying scuba diving organization. Dive Individuals may be classified as:
1. “Declared Dive Individual” which refers to an employed or freelance dive professional declared by the Dive Establishment or Liveaboard Dive Boat upon its application for PCSSD accreditation to avail the benefits as a PCSSD Accredited Dive Individual.
 2. “Voluntary Dive Individual” which refers to a non-professional or professional diver who voluntarily applies for a PCSSD Accreditation, and may or may not be affiliated with any Dive Establishment and Liveaboard Dive Boat.
- (i) “Dive Shop/Facility” refers to any establishment engaged in any or more of the following:
1. Sale or retail of scuba diving equipment and accessories;
 2. Renting out of scuba diving equipment;
 3. Provision of air-filling service;
 4. Service and repair of scuba diving equipment;
 5. Conduct of scuba diving courses; and
 6. Conduct of dive tours.
- (j) “Liveaboard Dive Boat” refers to any motor-run or sail operated boat with live-aboard facilities used for scuba diving purposes, duly registered with Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA).
- (k) “Minimum Public Health Standards” refers to guidelines set by the Department of Health (DOH) under Administrative Order No. 2020-0015, as well as sector-relevant guidelines issued by national government agencies authorized by the IATF, to aid all sectors in all settings to implement non- pharmaceutical interventions (NPI), which refer to public health measures that do not involve vaccines, medications, or other pharmaceutical interventions, which individuals and communities can carry out in order to reduce transmission rates, contact rates, and the duration of infectiousness of individuals in the population to mitigate COVID-19. *(IATF-EID Omnibus Guidelines)*

- (l) "New Normal" refers to the emerging behaviors, situations, and minimum public health standards that will be institutionalized in common or routine practices and remain even after the pandemic while the disease is not totally eradicated through means such as widespread immunization. (*IATF-EID Omnibus Guidelines*)
- (m) "PCSSD ID" refers to an identification card issued by the PCSSD to all accredited Dive Individuals.
- (n) "Physical Inspection" refers to the ocular inspection of the premises of a Dive Establishment or Liveaboard Dive Boat conducted by the PCSSD inspection team who are physically present on site.
- (o) "Provisional Accreditation" refers to a certification issued by the PCSSD to a Dive Establishment or Liveaboard Dive Boat that has satisfactorily applied for and fulfilled all documentary requirements for accreditation, has undergone virtual inspection and has been deemed accredited by the PCSSD.
- (p) "Recreational Diving" or sports diving refers to diving conducted for enjoyment or leisure, and conducted using SCUBA equipment.
- (q) "Regular Accreditation" refers to a certification issued by the PCSSD to a Dive Establishment or Liveaboard Dive Boat that satisfactorily applied for and fulfilled all documentary requirements for accreditation, has undergone physical inspection and has been deemed accredited by the PCSSD.
- (r) "Virtual Inspection" refers to the ocular inspection of the premises of a Dive Establishment or Liveaboard Dive Boat conducted remotely by the PCSSD inspection team with the aid of a video conferencing online platform.

Section 3. Coverage. This Circular shall cover all new and renewal applications of Dive Establishments, Liveaboard Dive Boats, and Dive Individuals in the Philippines in areas under GCQ, MGCQ or where a Community Quarantine is no longer in place.

II. REQUIREMENTS FOR PCSSD ACCREDITATION

Section 4. Requirements for New Applications of Dive Establishments and Liveaboard Dive Boats. Dive Establishments and Liveaboard Dive Boats applying for a PCSSD Accreditation shall submit the following documentary requirements:

Dive Establishments and Liveaboard Dive Boats in Accommodation Establishments with DOT Accreditation	Dive Establishments and Liveaboard Dive Boats <u>NOT</u> in Accommodation Establishments with DOT Accreditation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Data Privacy Consent Form (For Corporations, attach a Secretary's Certificate or Special Power of Attorney as an additional supporting document); b. Accident Management Plan or Emergency Plan; c. High Resolution E-copy of Dive Shop's Logo; d. Valid Certification Cards of Declared Dive Individuals or Employed and Freelance Dive Professionals; e. PCSSD Accomplished Self-Assessment Form (SAF); f. DOT Accreditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Data Privacy Consent Form (For Corporations, attach a Secretary Certificate or Special Power of Attorney as an additional supporting document); b. Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Certificate or Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Certificate of Registration; c. Accident Management Plan or Emergency Plan; d. Valid Mayor's or Business Permit; e. High Resolution E-copy of Dive Shop's Logo; f. Valid Certification Cards of Declared Dive Individuals or Employed and Freelance Dive Professionals; g. PCSSD Accomplished Self-Assessment Form (SAF).

Section 5. Requirements for Applications for Renewal of Dive Establishments and Liveboard Dive Boats. Dive Establishments and Liveboard Dive Boats renewing their PCSSD Accreditation shall submit the following documentary requirements:

Dive Establishments and Liveboard Dive Boats in Accommodation Establishments with DOT Accreditation	Dive Establishments and Liveboard Dive Boats <u>NOT</u> in Accommodation Establishments with DOT Accreditation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Data Privacy Consent Form (For Corporations, attach a Secretary Certificate or Special Power of Attorney as supporting documents); b. DOT Accreditation; and c. Valid Certification Cards of the Employed and Freelance Dive Professionals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Data Privacy Consent Form (For Corporations, attach a Secretary Certificate or Special Power of Attorney as supporting documents); b. Valid Mayor's or Business Permit; c. DTI Certificate/ SEC Certificate; and d. Valid Certification Cards of the Employed and Freelance Dive Professionals.

Section 6. Requirements for New and Renewal Application of Dive Individuals. Declared and Voluntary Dive Individuals applying for PCSSD Accreditation shall submit the following documentary requirements:

- a. Accomplished Online Application Form;
- b. Data Privacy Consent Form;
- c. High Resolution ID Picture;
- d. Valid Certification Cards;

Only valid Certification Card is required for renewal applicants.

Section 7. Additional Requirements in Case of Foreign Dive Individuals, Employees or Owners. In addition to the documentary requirements under the foregoing sections, foreign employees or owners of Dive Establishments and Liveboard Dive Boats, and Foreign Dive Individuals shall also submit the following documentary requirements:

- a. Alien Certificate of Registration (ACR);
- b. Alien Employment Permit (AEP);
- c. Working Visa; and
- d. If applicable:
 - i. Special Resident Retiree's Visa (SRRV) or Special Investor's Resident Visa (SIRV); or
 - ii. Special Working Permit (SWP) from the Bureau of Immigration.

These documents shall not be required if previously submitted documents remain valid during the renewal period.

Section 8. Grace Period for Expired Certification Cards. These rules shall apply for Dive Establishments and Liveboard Dive Boats with Declared Dive Individuals holding expired certification cards:

- a. Dive Establishments and Liveboard Dive Boats that are applying for the 2021 PCSSD accreditation with Declared Dive Individuals holding expired certification cards dated prior to 2020, shall be given a period of one (1) month starting from the date of submission of the online application form to comply with the renewal of their certification cards with their certifying agencies. Failure to comply shall result in the denial of the accreditation;
- b. Dive Establishments and Liveboard Dive Boats with Declared Dive Individuals holding expired certification cards dated 2020, and Dive Individuals holding expired certification

cards dated 2020 that are applying for the PCSSD accreditation for the year 2021, shall be allowed to proceed with the accreditation.

- c. Request for removal of employees in the submitted Application Form Declared in the Managerial/ Supervisory Employees, Rank and File Employees, all In-House Dive Instructor and Dive Master Employees, and all Freelance Dive Professionals that have been verified by the Accreditation Officers shall not be granted.

Section 9. Physical and Virtual Inspection of Premises. The Dive Establishment or Liveaboard Dive Boat shall likewise allow the physical inspection of its premises to ensure that it complies with PCSSD Rules and Regulations and Minimum Public Health Standards. If physical inspection is impracticable, Virtual Inspection of premises shall be conducted, in which case, the following requirements shall apply:

	Applicants in Accommodation Establishments with DOT Accreditation	Applicants NOT in Accommodation Establishments with DOT Accreditation
New application	Shall submit recorded videos and photos of the dive facilities and equipment taken before the scheduled date of submission.	Shall submit recorded videos and photos of the dive facilities and equipment taken before the scheduled Virtual Inspection.
Application for renewal	Exempted from the Virtual Inspection and submission of videos and photos of the dive facilities and equipment.	Shall submit recorded videos and photos of the dive facilities and equipment taken before the scheduled date of submission. ¹

Section 10. Alternative for Air Quality Testing. In lieu of the conduct of air quality testing for SCUBA tanks for new and renewal applications, Dive Establishments or Liveaboard Dive Boats shall submit the scanned copy of the logbook record for the change of oil filter.

Section 11. Templates and Submission. All new and renewal online application forms to be filled-out can be accessed through www.divephilippines.com.ph and the documentary requirements, recorded videos, and captured photos shall be submitted via email to accreditation@divephilippines.com.ph.

III. ISSUANCE AND VALIDITY OF PCSSD ACCREDITATION

Section 12. Regular Accreditation. A Certificate of Regular Accreditation shall be issued to a Dive Establishment or a Liveaboard Dive Boat that:

- a. is found to be compliant with Minimum Public Health Standards, PCSSD Health and Safety Guidelines Governing the Operations of Dive Establishments in the New Normal, and PCSSD Rules and Regulations;
- b. has submitted complete documentary requirements; and
- c. has undergone Physical Inspection of its premises.

The Certificate of Regular Accreditation shall be valid for one (1) year and shall be renewable thereafter unless sooner revoked for cause.

Section 13. Provisional Accreditation. A Certificate of Provisional Accreditation shall be issued to a Dive Establishment or a Liveaboard Dive Boat that:

¹ This provision shall govern new applications of Applicants not in Accommodation Establishments with DOT Accreditation but incapable of accessing the internet.

- a. Is found to be compliant with Minimum Public Health Standards, PCSSD Health and Safety Guidelines Governing the Operations of Dive Establishments in the New Normal, and PCSSD Rules and Regulations;
- b. Has submitted complete documentary requirements; and
- c. has undergone Virtual Inspection of its premises.

The Certificate of Provisional Accreditation shall be valid for six (6) months and shall be renewable thereafter unless sooner revoked for cause.

Section 14. Accreditation of Dive Individuals. Declared Dive Individuals with complete requirements affiliated to a Dive Establishment or Liveaboard Dive Boat with Provisional Certificate of Accreditation shall be granted the PCSSD ID which shall be valid for six (6) months. If they are affiliated to a Dive Establishment or Liveaboard Dive Boat with Regular Certificate of Accreditation, they shall be accredited and granted the PCSSD ID valid for one (1) year.

Voluntary Dive Individuals with complete requirements shall be accredited and granted the PCSSD ID valid for one (1) year.

Section 15. Waiver of Accreditation Fees. Accreditation fees, whether for new application or renewal, shall be waived until further notice.

IV. OTHER GUIDELINES

Section 16. Compliance with Other Relevant Issuances. Dive Establishments, Live Aboard Dive Boats, and Dive Individuals shall comply with PCSSD Memorandum Circular No. 2020-001 or the *Health and Safety Guidelines Governing the Operations of Dive Establishments in the New Normal* and other relevant issuances and guidelines from the PCSSD, DOT, DOH, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and other sector-relevant agencies, relating to Minimum Public Health Standards.

Section 17. Penalties. Any violation of these Guidelines may subject the Dive Establishment, the Liveaboard Dive Boat, or the Dive Individual to the appropriate fines and penalties including the revocation of PCSSD accreditation, in accordance with the relevant laws, rules, and regulations.

Section 18. Separability Clause. If any portion or provision of this Circular is declared null and void or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected shall continue to be in force and effect.

Section 19. Effectivity. These Guidelines shall take effect upon publication in a newspaper of general circulation or the Official Gazette and its filing with the University of the Philippines – Office of the National Administrative Register (UP-ONAR) and shall remain effective until otherwise superseded, amended, or repealed accordingly.

31 March 2021




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 Chairperson, PCSSD 

