



7. Open Water Scuba Diver

7.1 Introduction

This certification course is designed to give students the necessary skills to conduct open water dives in conditions similar to their training without the direct supervision of an instructor.

7.2 Qualifications of Graduates

Upon successful completion of this course, graduates may:

1. Conduct open water dives in conditions similar to their training
2. Enroll in the Advanced Adventure Diver program, individual SDI Specialties or the SDI Advanced Diver Development program

7.3 Who May Teach

An active SDI Open Water Scuba Diver Instructor

7.4 Student to Instructor Ratio

Academic

1. Unlimited, so long as adequate facility, supplies and time are provided to ensure comprehensive and complete training of subject matter.

Confined Water (swimming pool-like conditions)

1. A maximum of 8 students per instructor
2. Instructors have the option of adding 2 more students with the assistance of an active assistant instructor or divemaster
3. The total number of students an instructor may have in the water is 12 with the assistance of 2 active assistant instructors or divemasters

Open Water (ocean, lake, quarry, spring, river or estuary)

1. A maximum of 8 students per instructor are allowed; it is the instructor's discretion to reduce this number as conditions dictate
2. Instructors have the option of adding 2 more students with the assistance of an active assistant instructor or divemaster
3. The total number of students an instructor may have in the water is 12, with the assistance of 2 active assistant instructors or divemasters



7.5 Student Prerequisites

1. Minimum age 18; 10 through 17 with written parental consent
2. Students between the ages of 10 through 14 may obtain an SDI Junior Open Water Scuba Diver Certification if the following conditions are met: junior students are to train and dive under the direct supervision of a parent, guardian, or active dive professional
3. When an SDI Junior Open Water Diver reaches the age of 15, they may upgrade to an SDI Open Water Scuba Diver certification

7.6 Course Structure and Duration

Open Water Execution

1. Students must complete a minimum of 4 open water scuba dives, and remain underwater for minimum of 15 minutes on each dive, for a minimum of 80 minutes total
2. Training depth must be between 6 to 18 metres / 20 to 60 feet; the maximum depth may not exceed 18 metres / 60 feet
3. A maximum of 3 scuba dives per day, are allowed
4. All dives must be completed during daylight hours, or under conditions that simulate daylight conditions
5. Upon successful completion of the dives, the students must complete their logbooks and the instructor must sign off on the completed dives
6. Instructors are not allowed to carry any photo or video equipment while conducting the open water dives

Course Structure

1. SDI allows instructors to structure courses according to the number of students participating and their skill level

Duration

1. The suggested number of total course training hours is 20

7.7 Administrative Requirements

Administrative Tasks:

1. Collect the course fees from all the students
2. Ensure that the students have the required equipment
3. Communicate the schedule to the students
4. Have the students complete the:
 - a. *SDI Liability Release and Express Assumption of Risk* Form
 - b. *SDI Medical Statement* Form

Upon successful completion of the course the instructor must:

1. Issue the appropriate SDI certification by submitting the SDI Diver Registration form to SDI Headquarters or registering the students online through member's area of the SDI website



7.8 Required Equipment

Basic open water scuba equipment as described in section two of this manual. The following material is required:

1. *SDI Open Water Scuba Diver* Manual and associated SDI Knowledge Quest Book (or *SDI Open Water Diver* Online Training course)
2. *SDI Open Water Scuba Diver* Instructor Guide

The following material is available and recommended

1. SDI Log Book
2. *SDI Open Water Scuba Diver* Video or DVD
3. *SDI Open Water Scuba Diver* PowerPoint Presentation
4. SDI Confined Water / Open Water Teaching slates
5. SDI Skill Check-off slate

Instructors may use any additional text or materials that they feel help present these topics.

7.9 Required Subject Areas

The following topics must be covered during this course:

1. History of Diving
2. The Aquatic Environment
 - a. Vision
 - b. Light
 - c. Sound
 - d. Heat loss
 - e. Tides
 - f. Currents
 - g. Waves
 - h. Surge
3. Marine life injuries
4. Physics and Physiology
 - a. Buoyancy
 - b. Pressure
 - c. Boyle's Law
 - d. Air spaces
 - i. Lung over-expansion problems
 - ii. Equalization techniques
 - e. Breathing air under pressure
 - i. Decompression sickness
 1. Repetitive dives
 2. Safety stops



3. Emergency decompression
4. Omitted decompression
 - ii. Nitrogen narcosis
 - iii. Oxygen toxicity
 - iv. Carbon monoxide poisoning
 - v. Mixed gases
 - vi. Hyperventilation, shallow water blackout
5. Scuba Equipment
 - a. Mask, fins, and snorkel
 - b. Exposure protection
 - i. Wetsuits
 - ii. Dry suits
 - c. Buoyancy compensator device (BCD)
 - d. Regulator
 - i. Primary regulator
 - ii. Alternate air source
 - e. Cylinders
 - f. Weight systems
 - g. Underwater instruments
 - i. Submersible pressure gauge
 - ii. Dive computers
 - iii. Dive watch
 - iv. Depth gauges
 - v. Compass
 - h. Accessories
 - i. Dive flag
 - ii. Rescue signal
 - iii. Knife
 - iv. Dive lights
 - v. Equipment bag
 - vi. Logbook
 - vii. Slate
6. Planning Your Dive
 - a. Diver fitness and overexertion
 - b. Orientation to new or local diving environments
 - c. Boat diving procedures
 - d. Buddy system
 - e. First aid
7. Underwater Navigation
 - a. Compass



- b. Natural

7.10 Required Skill Performance and Graduation Requirements

Students are required to successfully complete the following skills:

1. Swimming evaluation (**Must be completed prior to any scuba skill being taught**)
 - a. Distance swim of 200 metres non-stop using any stroke without the use of mask, snorkel or any swimming aids, **or** 300 metres non-stop using mask, snorkel, and fins
 - b. Survival swim / float of 10 minutes

Note: If an exposure suit is worn for any of the above skills, the wearer must be neutrally buoyant at the surface.
2. Scuba skills
 - a. Scuba system assembly and disassembly
 - b. Weight system adjustment with proper weighting
 - c. Removal and replacement of weight system on the surface
 - d. Removal and replacement of weight system at depth
3. Pre-dive check of self and buddy
4. Partial mask clear at depth
5. Full mask clear at depth
6. Breathing and swimming underwater without a mask
7. Buoyancy compensator device (BCD) use:
 - a. Inflation and deflation (oral/power) at the surface
 - b. Inflation and deflation (oral/power) at depth
 - c. Removal and replacement at surface
 - d. Removal and replacement at depth
8. Buoyancy Control
 - a. Hovering
 - b. Controlled ascents
 - c. Controlled descents
9. Regulator use
 - a. Breathing, clearing, and recovery at the surface
 - b. Breathing, clearing, and recovery at depth
10. Underwater swimming; proper use of fins
11. Entries and exits
 - a. Controlled seated entry
 - b. Giant stride entry
 - c. Shallow water exit
 - d. Deep water exit
12. Snorkel use
 - a. Adjustment
 - b. Clearing; blast method



- c. Regulator snorkel exchange at the surface
- d. Surface snorkel swim in full equipment
- 13. Computer use
 - a. Reading and understanding data
 - b. Understanding functions of computer
- 14. Use of gauges
- 15. Underwater communications
- 16. Rescue techniques
 - a. Tired diver tows
 - b. Cramp relief
- 17. Out-of-air emergencies
 - a. Controlled swimming ascent
 - b. Alternate air source use; air sharing with a buddy while making a controlled ascent
- 18. Underwater Navigation

In order to complete this course, students must:

1. Demonstrate mature and sound judgment concerning dive planning and execution
2. Satisfactorily complete the *SDI Open Water Scuba Diver* Knowledge Quest or equivalent SDI electronic / online learning exam. Instructors may use additional exams that can be found on the *SDI Open Water Scuba Diver* Instructor Resource CD
3. Complete all open water requirements safely and efficiently

7.11 Open Water Global Referral Procedures

SDI Instructor to any Active SDI Instructor Procedure:

1. A SDI Instructor sends a student that has completed the academic and confined water portion of the SDI Open Water Scuba Diver course to a second SDI Instructor to complete the open water requirements with a *Global Referral Form*.
2. Once the student has completed the open water requirements, the SDI Open Water Scuba Diver Instructor signs off that the skills listed on the back of the referral form have been completed.
3. The student takes the signed form back to the original SDI Confined Water Instructor to have their card issued.
4. The SDI Open Water Scuba Diver Instructor completes the SDI Student Registration Form with the names of both instructors and sends it to SDI Headquarters to have the certification card issued with both instructor names on the card. The SDI Instructor may also use the online registration system, or in-store card printing system if available.

SDI Instructor to any Active Instructor Procedure:

1. A SDI Open Water Scuba Diver Instructor sends a student that has completed the academic and confined water portion of the open water course to any other active instructor from any dive training agency to complete the open water requirements with *Global Referral Form*.
2. The open water instructor signs off that the skills listed on the back of the referral form have been completed.



3. The student takes the signed form back to the original SDI Confined Water Instructor to have their card issued.
4. The SDI Confined Water instructor completes the SDI student registration form with the names of both instructors and sends it to SDI Headquarters to have the certification card issued with both instructor names on the card.
5. The SDI Instructor may also use the online registration system, or in-store card printing system if available.

Any Instructor to an Active SDI Instructor Procedure:

1. The SDI Instructor must teach the student how a personal dive computer works and have them wear a personal dive computer during the open water dives.
2. The SDI Instructor **MUST** make sure the student completes all the skills required in the SDI Open Water Scuba Diver standards; a short list is found on the back of the *Global Referral* Form.
3. Upon successful completion of the skills, the SDI Open Water Scuba Diver Instructor completes and sends the SDI Student Registration form to SDI Headquarters to process the certification card where both the confined and open water instructor name will appear on the card.
4. The SDI Instructor may also use the online registration system, or in-store card printing system if available.
5. SDI also requires the SDI Open Water Scuba Diver Instructor to make a copy of the referral letter that accompanied the student and file it with the student training record.
6. **SDI recommends that if a student** comes with a *Universal Referral* Form, they not only issue a SDI certification card but also sign the *Universal Referral* Form and give it back to the student so they may go back to their original instructor.