

Vale Royal Sub-Aqua Club



Affiliated to BS-AC, Branch 1238

VALE ROYAL SUB-AQUA CLUB BRANCH RULES & GUIDELINES 2022

The Branch Rules & Guidelines apply to all members irrespective of membership status or grade.

Branch Rules & Guidelines

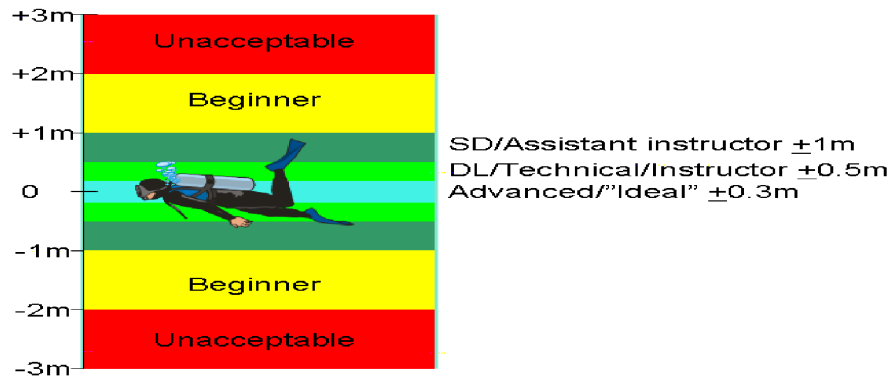
Young People & Vulnerable Adults:

- All communication to members below the age of 18 must include one or more of the young person's parents/guardians/carers and must be copied to another member of the committee.
- All members must be aware of their responsibilities to protect young and vulnerable members (see separate guidance) and must report any inappropriate behaviour to the Welfare Officer or the DO at their earliest opportunity.
- All members must treat other members and visitors equally. Further guidance is available in the membership pack or on request from the Welfare Officer.

Divers & Diving:

- The following equipment is to be used for your own and others' safety:
 - All divers must carry an alternative air source
 - A pony if worn will not be considered as a suitable AAS for your buddy (as these are mainly worn for your own back up)
 - An octopus will be used as your AAS with a brightly coloured hose (preferably yellow) which MUST go OVER your shoulder with the second stage placed on a quick release in the centre of the torso.
 - The hose should be long enough to be comfortable and safe for you and your buddy to use.
 - The preference for the AAS is to have the hose over the left shoulder, but if worn over the right the second stage MUST be end purge and be long enough to swim alongside your buddy,
 - Twinset, Sidemount, Semi closed and closed circuit divers MUST have their AAS and method of deployment approved by the DO
 - Members are only to dive on branch dives using equipment & equipment configurations that they have been formally trained to use by the appropriate diver training agency.
 - All divers must wear a Day-Glo hood when diving in the Ocean.
 - All divers must carry a flag or a Delayed SMB on every dive.
 - If using a delayed SMB as a primary identification device, either a fluorescent day-glow flag or another delayed SMB must be carried
 - SMB's must be used unless advised not to be by the Diving Officer, Dive Manager or Coxswain.
 - You must carry a delayed SMB where the use of a standard SMB is not appropriate.
 - Buddy pairs at all times, solo diving is expressly forbidden (unless diving as a roped diver with a fully kitted surface standby diver – even then only with the express permission of the D.O.).
 - One computer per diver. If only one diver of a buddy pair has use of a dive computer, the other diver MUST use BSAC 88 tables and the buddy pair monitor the decompression for the dive based on the worst case scenario. I.e. the dive computer MUST NOT be used by both divers even if the dive profile is the same.
- Smart Fin personal beacons must be worn on all open water dives (boat or shore diving).
- All divers should not use yellow or bi-coloured DSMB's.
- Yellow DSMB's are only to be used in "out of gas situations".
- All divers are required to demonstrate that they meet the BSAC Buoyancy Standards when requested by the DO and in particular when the depth of water exceeds 20m at the planned dive site. Failure to meet the BSAC standard may result in the restriction of your diving.

The standards are as follows:



- They must also inform the Dive Manager of their equipment change & dive plan prior to diving.
- All divers must complete the appropriate sections of the branch dive log both prior and after a dive. E-mailed dive reports are not an acceptable alternative.

Diving Equipment:

- It is recommended that the following is the minimum equipment necessary for open circuit diving with minimal deco. If in doubt of the appropriate configuration for a dive ask the DO.

Depth	Minimum Equipment Configuration
<20m	Single 10/12ltr Cylinder
20m – 35m	Single 10/12ltr Cylinder + 3ltr Pony
35m – 50m	Twin 10/12ltr cylinders

- Divers switching cylinder size during the course of a day's diving should be alert to the need to adjust their weighting accordingly.

Deco Diving (>10min):

- Decompression should not take place without the prior approval of the DO or the Dive Manager and should then only take place with the full knowledge of the Dive Manager and boat coxswain if boat diving. If deco inadvertently takes place then this must be reported to the Dive Manager at the earliest opportunity this must then be reported to the DO.
- Only 1 deco dive per day is permitted.
- Deco divers must carry an emergency DSMB coloured yellow and they must inform the boat coxswain / shore cover of the action to be taken on this being released.

Breathing gases:

- The use of anything other than normal breathing air has to have the express prior permission of the Dive Manager and each cylinder must be analysed prior to the dive.

Buddy Pairing:

- Dive Managers will not pair inexperienced divers together without express approval of the DO. An experienced diver is defined as qualified to Sports diver, with 20 British Sea dives since qualification.
- In case of divers from the same family or partnership then both must have qualified as above before they would be allowed to dive together in UK waters.
- A branch Diving Grades Matrix is maintained that specifies which grades of diver can dive with which other grades of diver. This supersedes the BSAC advice and must be followed unless agreed with the DO in advance. The matrix can be found in the Expedition Pack or can be provided on request by the DO.

Safe Diving:

- Members are to dive according to the BSAC safe diving guidelines and if the DO does not declare a planned dive as meeting the safe diving guidelines then diving must not take place. A copy of the guidelines is maintained by the DO. This applies to both branch and non-branch diving – NOTE: there is no concept in BSAC of private diving.
- Continuing to dive without the DO's agreement that the dive is safe or diving with an inappropriate grade buddy without the DO's express permission may result in the member's right to dive with the branch being suspended by the DO on a temporary basis whilst the situation is investigated. On completion of any investigation further action may be taken by the Committee and may include termination of their Branch Membership. Further details of this policy can be provided by a Committee Member on request.
- All non-branch diving must be discussed in advance with the DO to ensure it complies with BSAC's Safe Diving Guidelines.

Medical:

- Self-Certifying divers must certify on the date of renewal of membership.
- Non self-certifying divers must present their current medical certificate on renewal. They will be medically suspended from diving when it expires and will have to present the new certificate to resume diving activities.
- It is recommended that non self-certifying divers provide 2 sealed envelopes enclosing information for use by the emergency services. Self-certifying divers with a non-declarable medical condition, allergies, and/or taking prescription drugs are recommended to provide 2 sealed envelopes prior to diving to the Dive Manager.
- One Medical envelope is to be maintained in the branch expedition pack whilst the other must be retained in a secure folder with the branch pool pack at the Lifestyle Centre
- The Dive manager must inform the rescue services of the existence of a medical envelope and it must be handed to the appropriate rescue services personnel and must not be opened by any member unless there is a delay in receiving medical support or on request of the emergency services.

Leading a branch expedition (Dive Manager):

- Dive Managers must have a Dive Planning & Marshalling Qualification or must be supervised by an Advanced Diver.
- Dive Managers should do their best to ensure that all expedition equipment (boats, trailers, instruments, O2, Safe Finds, life jackets etc.) is taken to the dive site, in full working order. Any equipment malfunctions, breakage's etc. should be reported by the Dive Manager to the Equipment Officer, using the Boat / Equipment Fault form, at the earliest opportunity. This includes Shore Dives or Snorkel Expeditions. The Equipment Checklist for Boat diving is available in the Expedition Pack.
- An Advanced Diver must be on a dive site to act as, or support, the Dive Manager whenever any branch diving activity is taking place, except by pre-arranged authorisation by the Diving Officer.
- At least one member of the diving team on-site should have a BSAC recognised First Aid Qualification.
- The Dive Manager is to ensure that visiting divers conform to the VRSAC Visiting Divers Policy a copy of which is held in the Expedition Pack.
- Dive Managers will follow the branch Diving Grades Matrix when pairing divers, other pairings may only occur with the express approval of the DO.
- All new sites to the branch should have prepared in advance a Dive Guide for the location which must include a risk assessment for the location. This risk assessment should be updated as necessary after a visit to a dive location.
- Dive guides should be sent to all members attending a dive site.
- Restrictions regarding experience; skill; ability and equipment requirements for any dive site new to the branch or to the Dive Manager must be discussed with the DO before diving takes place.
- The Dive Manager must provide a pre-diving briefing to all dive members attending a dive site and this briefing should include a risk assessment.
- The Dive Manager must ensure all Instructors fully brief students (STEPS / SEEDS) on the activities to be undertaken
- The Dive Manager must inform the DO of any incident that takes place during a diving expedition as soon as it is practical and certainly no later than on the completion of a day's diving.
- When shore diving (in appropriate locations – not Dive Centres) the Dive Manager must inform the Coastguard by telephone or VHF before and after diving operations take place.
- The Dive Manager is responsible for ensuring that Dive Logs are completed both prior to and after each dive and that they are submitted to the DO on completion of an expedition as soon as it is practically possible. Email notification of dives is not an acceptable alternative.

- The Dive Manager must ensure that only exercises/drills are carried out that are within the DTP for that members training grade and that they are directly supervised/managed by the appropriate grade of Instructor as defined by BSAC.
- The branch expedition pack must be taken to all dive sites.

In the Pool:

- Entry to the pool area and/or water is only permitted when a branch Pool Marshall is present.
- No diving or over arm swimming is to be undertaken without the Pool Marshalls approval.
- All instructors must inform the Pool Marshall of activities to be undertaken.
- All possible means will be made to ensure that a pool is available for training for 1 hour every week except during public holidays. Times and durations may vary due to factors outside of VRSAC control. Priority of use is for training associated with the DTP or Try Dives. Other activities will be accommodated, space permitting.
- The DO/TO or the Pool Marshall will be responsible for allocating Pool space to activities.
- A bi-annual review of the Pool Risk assessment must be undertaken by the Committee.
- All members should be aware of the Pool Risk Assessment & the Pool Emergency Action Instructions.
- No exercises/drills other than those included within the DTP are to take place in the pool without the DO's approval.

Pool Marshall

- All Pool Marshals are required to be qualified Sports Divers or above.
- All pool marshals must make themselves familiar with the Pool Safety Officers Guidelines as provided by BSAC.
- All Pool Marshalls must have read the Branch Pool Risk Assessment & the Pool Emergency Action Instructions and should recommend changes as necessary.
- Pool Marshalls should make themselves aware of any activities being undertaken within the pool

On the Boat:

- All divers should familiarise themselves with the boats' safety equipment and its operation.
- Use of a boat by a single person is not permitted unless accompanied by another boat or previously agreed by the DO.
- It is recommended that a member of the boat team holds a BSAC recognised first aid qualification.
- At least one member of the boat crew must have a valid VHF operator's license.
- The appointed Diver Coxswain is in sole charge of the boat, its crew and any divers/passengers and must be obeyed at all times even if the Dive Manager or their Assistant is in the boat.

Diver Coxswain / Boat Handler

- The person in charge of the boat must be a qualified Diver Coxswain and they should be aided by a boat handler. If diving is to take place then one of these must be a Sports Diver or above qualified in the use of O2 administration for divers.
- The boats Coxswain should before leaving shore ensure that all necessary safety & medical equipment necessary for the journey/operations is on board, and in good condition / is working and stowed appropriately for the conditions expected. NO boat is to operate without a working VHF set unless working in close proximity to another branch boat.
- Boat to boat VHF stations must be agreed by the boat coxswains before leaving shore.
- Before any diving takes place from a branch boat the appropriate Coastguard station must be informed by VHF and must be informed when diving is completed.
- The boats Coxswain is responsible for determining if the weather/sea conditions are suitable to put to sea and to carry out diving operations. Diving should not take place in conditions of winds over Force 4 where waves are likely to be 0.5m or higher or in squally/foggy conditions where visibility may fall to less than 1 mile or if conditions are expected to deteriorate to this level while diving is taking place.
- Lifejackets or buoyancy aids are to be worn by the Cox and Lookout whilst handling the branch boats
- The boat coxswain must report any incidents / damage to the boat to the Dive Manager at their first practical opportunity and no later than their arrival back at the launch site.
- The boat coxswain is responsible for managing any incident associated with diving from their boat or with their boat unless they chose to delegate this responsibility to someone equal or better qualified to manage the particular incident.
- It is the responsibility of the Dive Coxswain to ensure that they and their boat handler are capable of assisting divers to get ready and to recover them and to manage any emergency that may take place. If they are in any doubt then they must inform the Dive Manager.
- The Diver Coxswain must attach the 'kill' switch to themselves whilst the engines are running

- If Deco diving is taking place the boat coxswain must ensure they have the means to provide emergency gas to the divers. As a minimum this must be 1x12ltr full cylinder per deco diver.

Instructors

- All part or fully qualified instructors must be aware of the limitations of their instructor qualifications and must not undertake any instruction outside of the permitted skills or to apply them to individuals inappropriately due to grade, skill or experience. They must also be aware of the appropriate level of supervision required and ensure that these are met before training takes place. Only those variations expressly authorised by the DO may take place. A table of skills & supervision levels is maintained by the DO.
- Training drills must conform to the requirements of the DTP and can only be varied by express permission of the DO.

Safety

- Any member at a dive site / pool / training facility who identifies a potential hazard / safety issue must report this to their Instructor / Dive Manager / Pool Marshall as soon as possible providing they have not been notified of the hazard/issue in the Dive Managers / Instructors briefing.
- It is the responsibility of the Instructor / Dive Manager / Pool Marshall to take immediate action to reduce / remove the hazard or advise on the necessary actions to mitigate the risk. The Pool Marshall / Dive Manager must report the potential hazard / issue at the earliest opportunity to the DO.
- Any reported hazard / safety issue or incident that occurs must be logged on a branch incident report and submitted to the DO.

Incidents & Accidents

- All members should be aware that in the case of a diving or dive boat related accident or incident that the appropriate incident report is be completed and submitted to the Diving Officer as soon as possible.

Diving Officers Signature

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Diving Officer Name: Steve Hopper

Date: 1st January 2022