

IMCA Minimum Criteria for Surface Supplied Diver Training

Offshore surface supply

Divers undertaking an offshore diver training programme must undertake dives in a range of depths to the maximum depth of the qualification. Upon completion of the programme they must be competent to operate safely as a diver in an offshore environment. It is also expected that during training divers will undertake a variety of simple work tasks. The primary focus throughout the training programme, however, should be to ensure that the candidate can operate safely in a number of roles within a dive team including; tender, diver, standby diver and deck crew. In addition, they must be competent to undertake routine diving related rigging, both on the surface and underwater, by the end of their training.

As a minimum, any recognised programme that leads to an IMCA recognised offshore diver qualification must include the following theoretical and practical training:

a. Surface supplied diving equipment (SSDE)

- ◆ Theoretical instruction to ensure an understanding of the essential physics, physiology, practices and technology to be able to operate and dive safely in an offshore environment;
- ◆ Dives in a range of depths both as a diver and standby diver to a maximum depth of 50 metres and from a range of dive stations. The training must include operations from both a cage (dive stage) and wet bell;
- ◆ Decompression dives utilising both in-water and surface decompression techniques;
- ◆ Safe preparation, operation and simple maintenance of a twin-lock decompression chamber;
- ◆ Safe operation and maintenance of equipment used to support offshore diving operations;
- ◆ Operate effectively as part of a diving crew on the surface during routine and emergency situations;
- ◆ Perform simple underwater tasks during diving operations. These tasks should include; rigging, survey and the use of simple power tools;
- ◆ As a minimum, complete first aid training to a recognised standard.

b. Self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (commercial SCUBA)

The minimum equipment configuration for commercial SCUBA is as follows: full-face mask, bail-out cylinder, switching block, lifeline and voice communications.

The following theoretical and practical training:

- ◆ Whilst working as part of a dive team, undertake familiarisation training in the use of commercial SCUBA including, pre-and post-dive procedures;
- ◆ Develop a solid understanding of the application, including practical experience, so that candidates understand the limits of SCUBA as a working technique in a range of depths to a maximum of 30 metres;
- ◆ Actions in the event of an underwater emergency when using SCUBA;
- ◆ An understanding of the limitations of SCUBA when used as a bailout on SSDE.

The minimum number of SCUBA dives required by IMCA to fulfil the training requirements is **14**. Upon completion of the training, even if they do not receive a formal SCUBA qualification, students need to be able to demonstrate **competency** in the range of skills to support these training objectives. Additionally, it is accepted that some skills taught during the SCUBA phase of an SSDE programme may also be relevant during surface supply training.

It is for the diver training establishment to develop a programme that ensures that students gain mastery in all the required skills.

IMCA's view still remains that SCUBA has inherent limitations and is not a suitable technique for offshore diving operations (see [IMCA D 033](#) – *Limitations in the use of SCUBA offshore*).

Further details are available in the European Diving Technology Committee (EDTC) publication *Inshore and offshore diving industry personnel competence standards*.