

Competence Assessment of Experienced Surface Supplied Divers (Revision of IMCA D 06/00)

As outlined in Diving Division Information Note D 20/99, IMCA has been involved in developing arrangements for the assessment of certain divers with broad diving experience but who lack written qualifications. Currently the only two organisations that have submitted programmes for this type of assessment and been accepted by IMCA are the National Hyperbaric Centre (NHC) and Interdive Services UK. Individuals who successfully complete the assessment programme receive a numbered certificate bearing the photograph of the individual – the certificate indicates IMCA Recognition.

Although IMCA sees a role for itself in the assessment of experienced but unqualified divers, it does not propose to become involved in the approval of basic diver training. IMCA believes that this type of approval should remain with government bodies and approved agencies (e.g. ACDE). IMCA will continue, where possible, to recognise only diver training certificates issued through that route (as listed in the IMCA International Code of Practice for Offshore Diving).

The competence assessment of divers is not to be considered as an alternative to formal initial training and qualification of divers. Such an assessment is only appropriate to divers who have many years experience, but who are from countries where there is no, or was no, recognised national diving qualification scheme.

The Diving Division Management Committee have agreed that the following criteria need to be met:

- ◆ The individuals put forward for assessment need IMCA member company sponsorship;
- ◆ The assessment should be open only to nationals of states where there is, or was, no recognised National diver qualification scheme;
- ◆ Competence assessment of divers should cover Surface Supplied divers only;
- ◆ The diver should have the bulk of his experience documented by logbooks or similar;
- ◆ As a minimum, a diver should have worked at least four years offshore as a diver, with at least 150 offshore dives, including:
 - at least 25 below 30 msw;
 - at least 10 surface O₂ dives;
 - at least 10 in-water decompressions with an open water stop.

IMCA proposes to develop an assessment protocol for use by organisations who have been recognised by IMCA. It will be based on the following criteria:

- ◆ Evidence of diving experience based on the above minimum requirement;
- ◆ A pre-assessment procedure, based on documented evidence;
- ◆ A formal assessment procedure covering both theoretical and practical assessment;
- ◆ The equipment to be used during assessment must comply with IMCA guidelines;
- ◆ Competence skills will be assessed against a set IMCA protocol (based on the UK HSE competencies for offshore surface supplied divers);
- ◆ Assessments are carried out by IMCA approved assessors.

Records are kept of the assessment of the diver and a copy of the certificate sent to IMCA.