



British Sub-Aqua Club

Branch Officers' Handbook

Preface

This web-based Branch Officers' Handbook replaced the printed version in 2000. It has the advantage of remaining current, and being free to members.

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This is a Level 2 document within BSAC Document Hierarchy as defined in the BSAC Headquarters Operations Manual. Where guidance is available elsewhere a link to the source is provided: this should help ensure the latest advice is always available.

Where a conflict between the Branch Officers' Handbook and the Instructor Manual or Safe Diving occurs the Instructor Manual or Safe Diving take precedence.

Please note the links provided to external sites are purely as an information source and BSAC does not endorse, approve, certify or control links to or information provided by other individuals, institutions or organisations available from this site, and does not guarantee the accuracy, completeness, efficacy, timeliness, or correct sequencing of information located at external Internet addresses.

To keep the Branch Officers' Handbook up-to-date, proposals to amend information should be sent to the contact listed for each section.

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Chapter 1 – History & Introduction

Section 1.1 A Brief History of the British Sub-Aqua Club

1.1.1. Formation

The British Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC) was formed on the 15th of October 1953 at an inaugural meeting in the Waldorf Hotel, London. The name of the Club “The British Sub-Aqua Club” was carefully laid down by a number of 'persons interested in underwater activities' whose aim was 'to promote underwater exploration, science and safety in these activities'. The Club's founder was Oscar Gugen, assisted by Peter Small, a keen diver who tragically died a few years later in the world's first dive to a depth of 1,000 feet and Trevor Hampton.

1.1.2. Aims and Objectives of BSAC

These are defined in the Articles of Association of the British sub Aqua Club 2011:

“to promote underwater sport, exploration, science and related studies, to promote safety in these activities and by co-operation with other organisations with related objects to provide the widest exchange of knowledge and experience therein, and by setting and maintaining the highest standards to sustain recognition as the governing body for all such amateur activity” [Article 90]

The BSAC's operations are devoted to the interests of all amateur divers, whether snorkellers or SCUBA (Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus) divers, in Great Britain and to its members overseas. The BSAC is responsible for establishing and monitoring recreational diving standards for these activities. It also actively and successfully campaigns, on its own and with other bodies, to preserve access and the freedom of the sea and to conserve the resources of the underwater world for divers of the future.

1.1.3. Branches

BSAC was initially planned as a diving club in London, but within days of its formation, other diving groups in the UK sought affiliation. Thus BSAC became a national entity with a series of Branches. The original group in London, which became London Branch No 1, is still active and loyal to BSAC.

1.1.4. Growth

The growth of the British Sub-Aqua Club has been impressive. At the time of its first Annual General Meeting on December 10th 1953, the Club had approximately 100 members. By January 1955, the membership had grown to over 1,100 and today it has in excess of 32,000 members in some 1,200 Branches worldwide. The BSAC is the largest single diving club in the world.

1.1.5. Financing

BSAC was previously supported by grants from the Sports Council in London, however these were withdrawn during the 1980s. Thereafter the membership subscriptions have provided the majority of the finance required to run the national organisation. The BSAC Mail Shop started up during the 1980's and has supplemented BSAC's income. Today, BSAC training system has been licensed in a number of countries providing valuable income. Combined with a variety of affiliation schemes (e.g. BSAC Credit Card - MBNA) Council have been able to develop new training materials without significantly increasing

subscriptions.

1.1.6. BSAC Headquarters

By the mid 1960's, a full time administration was established to provide an adequate service to BSAC's growing membership. Initially, this was provided by an Administration Manager working from his own home, but as the Club grew, so did the workload. During 1969 the Club opened its first national Headquarters in property provided by the Sports Council in London. To keep pace with its growth, the Club reorganised itself as a Company Limited by Guarantee in 1979.

The growth of BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) paralleled that of the Club and by the end of 1990, it moved into its own premises at Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, where the day-to-day administration of BSAC is undertaken.

1.1.7. BSAC International

The BSAC quickly became a significant force in the world of sport diving and by the end of 1954 it had been recognised in Britain as the governing body for the new sport of underwater swimming, covering SCUBA diving, snorkelling and underwater activities.

Following devolution governing body responsibilities for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland were awarded to Welsh Association of Sub-Aqua Clubs (WASAC), Scottish Sub-Aqua Club (SSAC) and Northern Ireland Federation of Sub Aqua Clubs (NIFSAC). BSAC retains governing body responsibilities for issues that affect the UK as a whole.

The BSAC was active internationally almost from the outset. During 1959 it became a founding member of the World Confederation of Underwater Activities, (Confédération Mondiale des Activités Subaquatiques - CMAS). UK Armed Forces Units and groups of members working overseas also formed Branches. Today, approximately 6 per cent of the membership is located in countries outside of the United Kingdom. Expansion abroad continued and in 1987 a wholly owned subsidiary, BSAC International, was formed to facilitate development overseas. Today, BSAC has licensed organisations in Japan, Thailand and Korea.

Through BSAC International, BSAC Centres and Resorts (Section 3.5.4) were established and supported.

1.1.8. Voluntary Efforts

The BSAC's achievements and its pre-eminent position in international sport diving are largely due to the tireless efforts of devoted individuals who have served it over the years without monetary reward: in particular, those who have provided and continue to provide leadership at regional and national level. The BSAC owes them a considerable debt of gratitude.

Similar thanks are also due to those who run BSAC Branches on a voluntary basis, and thereby serve the membership and the national body with equal enthusiasm.

1.1.9. Royal Patronage

No less a debt of gratitude is owed by BSAC to its Presidents. The first, HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, was not content to be a figurehead and therefore learnt to dive so that he could take a fuller part in BSAC's activities.

This Royal diving tradition has been carried on – by his son, HRH, The Prince of Wales,

who was BSAC President for 40 years and then his grandson, HRH, The Duke of Cambridge, who took over the BSAC Presidency helm in 2014.

Like his grandfather and father, HRH the Duke of Cambridge is a passionate BSAC diver and continues to build on their commitment to bring more young people and divers into the club and preserve and protect the marine environment, wildlife and our underwater heritage.

1.1.10. Notable Dates in the History of BSAC

A plotted history of BSAC from its formation to present times is available on the BSAC Website on the Key milestones in BSAC's history page. A more detailed history of BSAC is available in the book "BSAC: The Club 1953-2003" by Reg Valentine, available from the BSAC Mail Shop.

Section 1.2 BSAC Council

1.2.1. Structure

The BSAC is unusual in being both a national governing body, a status bestowed by the Sports Council in 1958, and a members' Club in itself. The management of BSAC's affairs is vested in an elected Council, answerable directly to the members and representing them both nationally and internationally. Yet within this strong national framework, all Branches have the freedom to run themselves as separate democratic units. Nevertheless, their elected officers and members are responsible to the national body (BSAC Council) for maintaining safety and standards within their Branch.

1.2.2. Role of BSAC Council

The BSAC Council is established in accordance the Aims and Objectives of BSAC (Section 1.1.2). Council consists of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and National Diving Officer (the Officers), and between nine and fifteen Council Members who are elected for a three-year term.

The BSAC Council is the representative body of the members, elected to ensure that the policy of the Club is always in the interests of the members. Council operates as a board of directors elected by its shareholders and responsible for implementing policy required by a company with an annual turnover in the order of £2 million. Elected Officers and Council Members are all volunteers, who devote much of their spare time to managing BSAC.

Officers and Council Members cannot be remunerated for their services. However, reasonable expenses such as: travel, subsistence and accommodation, are reimbursed.

Sub-committees:

Although the requirement for an analysis of policy can be initiated and discussed by Council, the detailed drafting of proposals may require a great deal of time and care and the actual formulation of BSAC policy cannot always take place in Council meetings. Sub-committees are often employed to investigate, prepare and report to Council on specific subjects. They usually include an Officer or Council Member, but may also include non-members of Council who have specific expertise. Reports submitted to Council can then be discussed and actions taken as required.

The majority of Council Sub-committees are usually fairly short lived, closing down once the business for which they were established has been completed. However, the largest Council Sub-committee, the National Diving Committee is more permanent in its nature (in

so far as it is re-established each year).

National Diving Committee:

The National Diving Officer is responsible for all the technical aspects of diving, safety and training. Because of the heavy workload and complexity of this office, the National Diving Officer heads a National Diving Committee. Its members are appointed at the sole discretion of the National Diving Officer. Each appointed member has expertise in a particular field of diving and is selected to advise and assist the National Diving Officer. The National Diving Committee is usually divided into a number of groups responsible, for example; diver training, coaching, instructor training, technical diving, specialists teams (Underwater heritage, incidence and environment) and communications to the various arms of BSAC. A steering sub-committee comprising leaders of each of the groups, the National Diving Officer and representatives from BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) may also be utilised by the National Diving Officer.

1.2.3. Election to BSAC Council

The BSAC is a direct membership club with every voting member having an equal right to represent the organisation on BSAC Council. An invitation for nominations to Council is published in the Club's official journal, 'BSAC SCUBA', in accordance with the Articles of Association, at the appropriate time. A list of those offering themselves for election is published in a subsequent issue of 'BSAC SCUBA' and ballot papers are sent to each voting member. The ballot is supervised and counted by the Electoral Reform Society, and the results announced at the Club's Annual General Meeting, when those elected take office.

Guidelines for those interested in seeking election to BSAC Council and copies of the BSAC Articles of Association are available on request from BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3).

The strength of BSAC lies in the fact that members of its Council, Sub-committees and Branches are drawn from a variety of backgrounds and professions. Thus, they bring their widely varied experience to bear to the ultimate benefit of BSAC as a whole.

The Importance of Voting in BSAC Elections:

It is lamentable that historically only a small percentage of members bother to vote in the national election of members to Council and associated ballots. It is important that all members use their voting rights to ensure that the wishes of the majority are heard and that the Council is made up of competent representatives who will serve membership well. As a convenient alternative to attending an AGM or EGM members can lodge a postal vote. The Electrical Reform Society oversees voting arrangements for the election of Council and any Resolutions put to the membership. In 2008 e-voting via the Internet was introduced and in 2011 the Electrical Reform Society made this option the default option for the first time.

Current BSAC Management

Information on the management of BSAC can be found at "BSAC People".

Section 1.3 BSAC Headquarters

1.3.1. Contacts – Communication with BSAC Headquarters

Headquarters Address:

BSAC

Telford's Quay
South Pier Road
Ellesmere Port
Cheshire
CH65 4FL
United Kingdom

Telephone: +44 (0) 151 350 6200
Fax: +44 (0) 151 350 6215

Email: info@bsac.com

BSAC Headquarters is the central communication hub for the whole membership, as a member, feel free to use it to answer any questions you may have – but please try to aim your call / communication to the correct department in the first place. Up to date detailed contact information is available on bsac.com under “HQ Contacts”.

Although any member may contact BSAC Headquarters for information the Branch Secretary or Branch Treasurer (Section 3.4.1) are the most likely to do so.

Where it is likely that an enquiry may have to be passed onto another person for action, such as a Council or National Diving Committee member not based at Headquarters, a written, faxed or emailed enquiry is preferred.

To comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, Headquarters Staff will only disclose member's information to those authorised to receive it, i.e. Branch Officers.

1.3.2. Keep Headquarters Informed of Branch Changes

Headquarters staff are expected to maintain a well-run, smoothly functioning organisation to serve Branches and membership, but this cannot happen efficiently without a two way flow of information. For example, failure or delay on the part of the Branch Treasurer / Membership Secretary to process and remit new or renewing member subscriptions, or to notify BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) of a member's change of address, can result in non-delivery or delayed delivery of the Club's magazine 'BSAC SCUBA' or Training Packs.

Please use the Branch Details Form to notify BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) of Branch Committee member changes following Branch AGMs or at any other time. If you think that BSAC Headquarters mailings are going astray or to the wrong people, check that BSAC Headquarters have the right contact details.

Please inform BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) when members change address, so we can ensure continuity of supply the Club's magazine 'BSAC SCUBA'. An alternative is for a member to update their personal details through bsac.com/login using the Change of Member Details Form.

1.3.3. The BSAC Website

The BSAC Website bsac.com contains:

- information about BSAC that is aimed at non-members.
- information for diving and snorkel members.
- discussion forums.
- travel and holiday information for members.
- Links to BSAC Travel Partners.

1.3.4. How to get the best service from Headquarters

Please feel free to ask for whatever help or advice you need. Your enquiry may have to be passed on to another member of staff, or to one of the many volunteers who serve BSAC in their leisure time. This may mean that you do not get an immediate answer – but you should get one within a few days at the most.

Please quote full name(s) and BSAC membership number(s) when making enquiries about membership, qualifications, Skill Development Courses or Instructor Training Scheme courses, or seeking Skill Development Course certificates. The membership number is the key to quick and easy access to Headquarters' membership Integra database. We can retrieve information from the Integra database by name and Branch only, but it takes longer. To comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 you may also be asked to provide proof that others are happy for their information to be disclosed.

1.3.5. BSAC Library

The BSAC has a reference library comprising books bequeathed to BSAC by Sir Robert Davis, for many years President of Seibe-Gorman, Ltd. The library has been added to by other donations and acquisitions, and contains records of BSAC Council Meetings, Club Magazines, Heinke Trophy entries, etc, going back to the formation of the Club. It also includes an archive of early films about sub-aqua diving.

The BSAC Library is located at BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) and is available for research / review by any member, subject to prior appointment with the Chief Executive at BSAC Headquarters.

Section 1.4 The Coaching Scheme

1.4.1. Structure and Objectives

The Coaching Scheme aims to provide support to Branches through a Regional Team of experienced Qualified Instructors, who can be called upon to provide advice on any aspect of Branch organisation and diver training. To facilitate such a scheme, BSAC has divided the country up into a series of Regions. Each Region consists of a number of contiguous Counties, and within each Region, a Regional Coach heads and directs the activities of a team of Area Coaches and others, such as the Regional Skill Development Course Organiser.

It is the Area Coaches who provide most of the Coaching services to Branches in their immediate locality. This allows a greater number of Branches to receive help from the Scheme. The ratio of Branches per Coach varies across the regions. Branches may have contact with the Regional teams in a variety of ways, while attending SDCs, Regional Workshops and Regional Conferences for example. Branches may also request a Branch visit from the Regional Teams if they feel this would be appropriate. Branches experiencing difficulties or requiring additional help can expect to be visited more frequently and they are invited to contact their Area or Regional Coaches to notify them of their needs. Contact details are available from BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) and the BSAC Website page "Coaching Scheme Contacts".

All members of Regional Coaching Teams are volunteers, who serve BSAC membership in their leisure time and for the love of the sport. They receive no salary, just reimbursement of expenses they incur in the course of their duties. Because they also have family and career commitments, they may not be able to respond immediately to your requests for help. Please bear this in mind and make due allowances.

For administrative purposes each region is a Special Branch of BSAC comprising the Regional Coach and three others.

1.4.2. Services Provided

The services offered by the Coaching Scheme are varied, but can be summarised as follows:

Coaching:

Skill Development Courses (Section 4.2.8): One aim of the Coaching Scheme is to assist Branches to run and support their ability to arrange their own Skill Development Courses, especially those required for Advanced Diver training. The Coaching Scheme additionally runs Regional Skill Development Courses to meet demand and particularly where specialist equipment is required, such as an Automatic Electronic Defibrillator.

Instructor training (Section 3.4.3): The Coaching Scheme can assist with the development of Qualified Instructors within the Branch, with advice and practical assistance in preparing for BSAC Instructor Exams. Once qualified as a Qualified Instructor, Branch members can be further developed to teach on Skill Development Courses. Skill Development Course Instructor workshops are arranged from time to time within the Region to help update Instructors with the latest innovations and information.

Diver training (Section 4.2): Whilst the main aim of the Coaching Scheme is to help Branches become self-sufficient, the Coaching Scheme can be called upon to help ease the load with normal day to day diver training and can organise Regional Diver Training Courses for all qualification levels.

Communication:

Branch visits: The main method of communicating with Branches is the Branch Visit, made by the Area Coach on either a Club Night, or perhaps at a dive meeting. The aim of the visit is to identify the needs of the Branch and what assistance the Coaching Scheme can provide in achieving them. The Coaching Scheme attempts to visit every Branch during the course of the year and thereafter as often as is necessary to fulfil the needs of the Branch. If you have not had a visit or feel you need further help then please request one.

Information: Regular contact with Area Coaches means that Branches can be kept up to date with current developments within the Region and BSAC. Area Coaches can also advise how to complete the documentation for Skill Development Courses and other BSAC paperwork.

e-Newsletters/regional websites: All Regions make regular use of Newsletters and maintain websites to keep members informed of activities and events within the Region as well as general BSAC information.

E-mail: BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) and Coaching Teams are keen to develop E-mail contacts with all Branches. Coaches will be pleased to be given E-mail contact details. To comply with current legislation individuals are required to positively opt-in to

each list to receive information.

Advice:

Training and diving advice: Area Coaches are all experienced BSAC Instructors and have access to a wealth of information regarding training and diving – and to local dive sites if relevant. They are able to provide advice on all aspects of BSAC Diver and Instructor Training and can call on further technical advice from both the Regional Coach and Diving Resources at BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3).

Branch Management: The BSAC Branch Officers' Handbook (this document) is the key reference publication for this topic, but Area Coaches can provide further practical advice. Additional help is also available from BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3).

Grant advice: Area Coaches can act as sources of information for the preparation of Grant Applications and should be able to advise on other Branches in the Region who have made successful Grant Applications.

Arbitration: Where Branches are experiencing difficulties in resolving conflict within the Branch, members of the Regional Coaching Team are available to act either as advisors or as an impartial chairman of any meetings set up to resolve the situation. See also BSAC Policy on member discipline (Section 2.1.5). Branches often cannot organise all elements of the Advanced Diver Grade, the Coaching Scheme can provide qualified Instructors to enable training to this level.

Branches do not have to pay for Coaching services provided at Branch pool or dry meetings. Newly formed Branches are given priority in areas such as coaching and training. Branches may use the services of the Regional and Area Coaches as often as they wish.

Your Regional or Area Coach will contact you from time to time for information relating to changes to your Branch Committee. This information assists BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) distribute information to Branch Officers.

1.4.3. Overseas Regional Coaches

Overseas Regional Coaches are appointed to serve in those parts of the world where there are concentrations of BSAC Branches. Where appropriate, they too are assisted by teams of Area Coaches who look after small local groupings of Branches. Overseas Regional Coaches also act as co-ordinators for National Instructors visiting from the UK to conduct Instructor Training Courses and Examinations. Contact details are also available from BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) and the BSAC Website page "Coaching Scheme Contacts".

Section 1.5 Membership Insurance

1.5.1. Public Liability Insurance

BSAC Members, who are UK Domicile, are provided with public liability insurance cover when undertaking sport diving activities and any other BSAC related activity.

Cover is negotiated annually; see the "BSAC members' 3rd Party Insurance" page (which is set out in a Question and Answer style) on BSAC members' Website for details of current cover.

1.5.2. Policy Documents: Proof of Cover

A 'Summary of BSAC Membership Public Liability Insurance' and an annual 'Verification of Insurance' document are both freely available from BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3.1). The latter is issued to all Branches early in the year, following renewal of the policy for the year. The 'master' policy document, due to its length and complexity, is not routinely distributed, but copies can be made available by arrangement with BSAC Headquarters.

1.5.3. Conditions of Insurance

To ensure that the cover provided by BSAC Membership Liability Insurance is effective at all times it is essential that the policy conditions be strictly observed. Insurers would be within their rights to refuse to deal with any claim if a breach of policy conditions has occurred. In view of this and the effect it may have on each member, you should note that the most important policy conditions applicable to the Liability Policy are as follows:

- The insured is required to exercise reasonable care to prevent injury, loss or damage.
- Written notice must be given to the Insurers immediately the insured has any knowledge of any injury, loss or damage covered by the policy.
- The insured is prohibited, without the consent of the Insurers, from negotiating or making any admission of liability, offer or payment in connection with any injury, loss or damage claim. The Underwriters are entitled to take over and conduct, in the name of the insured, the defence or settlement of any claim.

These conditions are extremely important, yet they are often overlooked by the insured.

So far as BSAC is concerned the present system of incident reporting (Section 4.12.3), if correctly applied, should satisfy the requirements as detailed above. However, the conduct of members (at various levels of responsibility) after an incident has occurred needs to be carefully monitored to ensure that a breach does not arise out of the inadvertent actions of 'self-appointed experts'.

The Insurers appreciate that BSAC's incident recording system is generally efficient. However, it is dependent on the voluntary co-operation of members. It is therefore, important to note that as a member of BSAC every individual, in whatever capacity, is deemed to be 'the insured' and as such has an obligation to fulfil and adhere to the conditions of the Liability Insurance Policy.

Bearing this point in mind and to ensure that the interests of all concerned are not jeopardised in any way, it is strongly recommended that the reporting procedure as described in Section 4.12.3 "Incident / Accident Reporting" is followed by BSAC and its members.

1.5.4. Boat Insurance

Please refer to BSAC's guidance on insurance requirements for boats on the Boat Insurance web page.

1.5.5. Claims History

Fortunately, there have been few significant claims made on BSAC's Membership Liability Policy in all the years that it has been provided, by various insurers, as part of the membership package. One fatality, caused by the negligent behaviour of a member could result in a settlement running into millions of pounds.

It should be understood that BSAC Membership Liability Policy, past and present, not only pays damages to injured parties where appropriate, but also meets the legal costs incurred in seeking damages or defending against them. These can often be as much as or more than the sums paid out as damages and if incurred, are met even if the outcome is that no damages are awarded.

1.5.5. Other Insurance

Diving equipment, boats, compressors, etc. are not covered under BSAC Membership Liability Insurance and require separate insurance (Section 3.6.4).

Section 1.6 Trophies and Awards

1.6.1. Awareness of BSAC Trophies & Awards

Since it was formed in 1953, BSAC has acquired a number of awards and trophies covering the whole spectrum of amateur diving activities. Awards are also available from the British Sub Aqua Jubilee Trust. Branches and individuals with a good chance of winning are often not considered because BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) is not informed. An award often fails because an application / nomination for an award is not received in time or no submission is made because of lack of awareness, for more information see Admin Information A6 "Trophies and Awards" on the BSAC website.

Responsibility for Chapter: Chairman

Updates and amendments to this Chapter should be directed to chairman@bsac.com

Chapter 2 – BSAC Policies

Section 2.1 Membership Related

2.1.1. Children and Vulnerable Adults

As the UK Governing Body for underwater sports, BSAC has a duty to take reasonable precautions to ensure the safety and well-being of members. Therefore, individuals convicted of serious crimes may not be members of BSAC or its affiliates.

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland):

BSAC Buddy Guard has been issued to provide guidance to all members, Branch officers, BSAC Centres, Parents and others on the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

It is BSAC policy that individuals on the Barred List may not be members of BSAC or its affiliates.

To this end BSAC has acquired certification status for Clubmark, a National standard for sporting organisations to provide a safe and encouraging environment in which all members and guests may participate without fear of harm.

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007:

In Scotland individuals must be members of the Protection of Vulnerable Group scheme if they are involved in teaching SCUBA and / or Snorkelling to Children and / or Adults at Risk. In addition individuals, living in Scotland, whom moderate electronic social media provided wholly or mainly for Children must be members of the scheme.

Please refer to the guidance available on bsac.com page for BSAC Buddy Guard.

How does this affect my Branch?

From 1st January 2008, your Branch may be required to obtain the Clubmark standard to be able to utilise facilities owned by Local Authorities, i.e. a swimming pool or lecture room.

How does this affect me as a Branch Officer?

As a member of the managing body of the Branch you will be personally liable for ensuring the Branch complies with the Clubmark standard. The Branch cannot be prosecuted (unless it is also a Company), but the Officers can.

How does this affect me as a BSAC member?

If you fail to follow the policy adopted by your Branch(s) then you may be held accountable for your actions or inaction by:

- The Branch Committee.
- The BSAC.
- The Courts.

2.1.3. Health & Safety

As a group, members of a Branch have a 'Duty of Care' to protect each other from harm. It is an indisputable fact that diving – a sport carried out in an alien environment – carries

with it a risk to life. Recreational diving, within a members club, is not covered by the Health & Safety at Work legislation. The Health & Safety Executive have agreed that they are happy to trust the UK agencies to take appropriate steps to ensure the sport is conducted safely without their need to intervene.

Committees, Branch Officers and others organising events – be they diving, social or other – shall carry out a Risk Assessment covering not only the participants, but the public as well.

How does this affect my Branch?

Branch diving activities will be safer if Risk Assessments are carried out and acted on as a matter of course.

How does this affect me as a Branch Officer?

If there is an incident or accident you could be held personally liable for allowing the activity to take place.

Risk Assessments could be used in your defence if Branch members carried on with an activity you had not approved following your assessment.

How does this affect me as a BSAC member?

You will know that the safety of Branch events has been carefully considered and that activities are organised so as to reduce the risks to an acceptable level.

2.1.4. Copyright

The BSAC reserves its Rights under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act, 1988 for all of its published material. All rights are reserved and no part of any publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Copyright owner.

Information on www.bsac.com:

- The Public domain area – The information in this area may be freely reproduced 'as is' from the site. All material reproduced shall carry an acknowledgement indicating Copyright ownership.
- The members only area – The information in this area may only be reproduced by current members of BSAC. As such access to this site may be restricted to members only. All material reproduced shall carry an acknowledgement indicating Copyright ownership.

How does this affect my Branch?

BSAC Publications used by a Branch should state the copyright ownership. Copies may be made of BSAC Publications only with the express permission of the Copyright owner.

How does this affect me as a Branch Officer?

If you as a Branch Officer approve or condone the copying of BSAC Copyright material,

without the express permission of the Copyright owner, you could be held accountable as an accomplice.

How does this affect me as a BSAC member?

Copying BSAC Copyright material could leave you liable for compensation action.

2.1.5. Media Contact

All media enquiries about BSAC and its activities including wider information relating to diving generally which may impact on BSAC must be directed to or handled in the first instance by BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) or designated individuals.

How does this affect my Branch?

It shall be for Branch Committees to decide how they wish to conduct their Public Relations. However, they will have to be clear where the line is drawn between BSAC and their Branch. As a rule, social activities being conducted in the local area (unrelated to activities at other local Branches – i.e. the annual dinner dance) will be the Branch's responsibility. Everything else shall be referred in the first instance to BSAC Headquarters for advice or guidance.

How does this affect me as a Branch Officer?

- Chairman – You do not have specific Public Relations responsibilities. However, as the figurehead of the Branch you are likely to be involved in local events like fundraising. Where there is likely to be a BSAC interest at national level then you are expected to contact BSAC Headquarters for advice or guidance.
- Secretary – Your post is considered the formal contact point for communication to and from the Branch therefore Public Relations responsibility falls to you. You are likely to be the post box for queries with information flowing both in and out through your office. Other Branch members (and the Committee) are likely to come to you for advice on Public Relations issues. To help you in this duty BSAC Headquarters staff are available to offer you advice or guidance.
- Treasurer – With the exception of membership queries and grant applications this position is unlikely to be heavily involved in Public Relations.
- Branch Diving Officer – On behalf of the National Diving Officer this position is responsible for all diving activities. When things go wrong or there is an incident the press will want a story. Before speaking to them it is recommended you contact BSAC Headquarters for advice or guidance

How does this affect me as a BSAC member?

You should be aware that the media like diving-related stories as they are unusual and the Public considers our sport dangerous. Before speaking to any member of the media please contact either your Branch Secretary or BSAC Headquarters for advice.

2.1.6. Discipline

Should a member commit any act, alleged to have been done or omitted, which in the opinion of Council constitutes a breach of such member's obligations or is calculated to be prejudicial to the interests of BSAC or its members collectively, action shall be initiated in accordance with "BSAC Volunteers – Procedure for change of status" or in extreme cases

Article 40 of the Articles of Association.

Section 2.2 Diving Related

2.2.1. Instruction by Instructors

It is BSAC's way that all training (i.e. the acquisition of new skills) is carried out by Qualified Instructors (Section 4.1.2). Instructors must be familiar, and comply, with BSAC Buddy Gaurd (Section 2.1.2).

Branches without a Qualified Instructor are not allowed to train members for BSAC diving qualifications (Section 4.1.1). If help is needed to develop and get members qualified as Qualified Instructors, you should contact in the first instance your Regional Coach or BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3).

How does this affect my Branch?

A Branch that undertakes diver training will require as a minimum one Qualified Instructor, usually the Branch Diving Officer (Section 3.4.1), who will be responsible for all training conducted in the Branch.

How does this affect me as a Branch Officer?

Branch Diving Officer – You have a duty to ensure all training is conducted by Qualified Instructors. Further specific guidance on diving issues is contained under the Management of Diving (Chapter 4).

How does this affect me as a BSAC member?

Qualified Instructors shall be the only ones to teach you new skills. Further guidance regarding the building of experience is contained in the Management of Diving (Chapter 4).

2.2.2. Safe Diving

Please refer to the Divers Code of Conduct as detailed within the "Safe Diving" booklet issued to all members and available on the BSAC Website or from BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3).

2.2.3. Respect our Wrecks

BSAC will comply fully with Statutory Instrument 2002 No. 1761 "The Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 (Designation of Vessels and Controlled Sites) Order 2002". Full BSAC policy guidance can be found on the BSAC Website by following this link http://www.bsac.com/core/core_picker/download.asp?id=10204 or from BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3).

2.2.4. Environmental

Extracted from the Club's "Articles of Association", Article 90:

"In addition BSAC supports a policy of conservation for all water resources".

Interpreted by Council as:

"To make a significant, sustained and positive impact to the freshwater and marine environment, using the skills and enthusiasm of our membership, influencing as a collective body, and setting examples for others to follow."

In June 2006, BSAC response to the Marine Bill consultation document of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs contained the following:

“Our desire as an organisation is to see that the current state of our seas, and in particular its biodiversity and cultural heritage, is preserved for future generations.”

In Nov 2009, Marine and Coastal Access Bill received Royal Assent and became the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

How does this affect my Branch?

When undertaking diving activities a Branch should be seen to be supporting this policy.

How does this affect me as a Branch Officer?

You have a responsibility to your Branch and the wider diving community to ensure your Branch’s activities actively support this policy.

How does this affect me as a BSAC member?

Following the Diver’s Code in Safe Diving should prevent you coming into conflict with this policy.

Responsibility for Chapter: Chief Executive

Updates and amendments to this Chapter should be directed to maryt@bsac.com

Chapter 3 – Running a Branch

Section 3.1 Branch Formation

3.1.1. BSAC Branch Type & Application

There are three types of Branch Formation Pack covering:

- Ordinary, Special or University Branches
- Snorkelling Branches
- Youth Branches.

While much material is common to all types of Branch, it is important to have the right one. There are five types of Branch:

- Ordinary,
- Special,
- Snorkelling,
- Youth,
- General.

BSAC Ordinary, Special, or Snorkel Branch:

In the first instance, those wishing to form a new BSAC Ordinary, Special (i.e. University) or Snorkelling Branch should apply to the membership department at BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3), to request a Branch Formation Pack. It tells you all you need to know and how you should proceed.

There are minimum requirements that need to be met in order to have a new Ordinary, Special or Snorkel Branch established. These are set out below:

- There must be at least 8 persons who intend to apply for Full Diving (Snorkelling) Membership (Section 3.5.6) of the new Branch, including existing members who may be transferring from another Branch (Section 3.5.9).
- If the new Branch intends to offer any diver training, there shall be a Qualified Instructor among the 8 founder members.
- A recommendation will be requested from BSAC Regional Coach (contact details for your Regional Coach can be obtained by contacting the membership department at BSAC Headquarters or from BSAC's Website at bsac.com).
- An inaugural General Meeting should be held at which the decision to apply for Branch status is taken. At this meeting a set of Bye-Laws (Section 3.2.1) shall be approved. Minutes of the meeting shall be taken; a copy of them must be submitted with your application to establish a Branch.
- The application forms provided in the Branch Formation Pack are to be completed and returned to the membership department at BSAC Headquarters.

The BSAC Regional Coach will be able to give useful advice on a range of relevant matters, in particular:

- How to find / book swimming pool time for training sessions.
- How to publicise your plans to set up a new Branch.
- How you might generate interest in your locality to find more prospective members.
- How to arrange an inaugural General Meeting of all interested parties.

Making your application.

After the inaugural General Meeting assistance in completing the various forms from the Branch Formation Pack.

BSAC Ordinary Branches shall be open to any member of the public providing they meet the conditions under Fitness to Dive (Section 3.5.8), Age Limits (Section 3.5.7) and the Branch Committee accepts an individual's application (Section 3.5.1).

BSAC Special Branches may have restrictions on who can join.

BSAC Youth Branch:

BSAC Youth Branches cater for young people, between six (6) and eighteen (18) years for snorkel diving and between twelve (12) and eighteen (18) years for SCUBA diving, at educational establishments (schools or colleges) or in Branches of national youth associations and shall be managed by a Teacher / Leader approved and appointed by the 'parent body' school / youth club. It is not a truly democratic club so Bye-Laws (Section 3.2.1) are not required. The Leader should apply to the membership department at BSAC Headquarters for a BSAC Youth Branch Formation Pack.

The procedures for forming a BSAC Youth Branch are identical to those for forming a BSAC Ordinary, Special, or Snorkel Branch:. However, there are some limitations that need to be considered in setting up a BSAC Youth Branch:

- BSAC Youth Branches shall meet the conditions required of BSAC Ordinary, Special, or Snorkel Branch:. However, the first requirement shall be amended so that there must be at least six (6) members who intend to apply for membership of BSAC Youth Branch.
- BSAC Youth Branches shall only be set up in educational establishments (schools or colleges) or in Branches of national youth associations.
- The application to form a BSAC Youth Branch shall be countersigned by the Headmaster / Bursar / Student Union Officer / Youth Leader from the 'parent body' before it is submitted to BSAC Headquarters.
- Full time students and young members of national youth association can take advantage of Junior Diving or Student Diving membership (at their much-reduced subscription rates).
- The upper age limit for BSAC Youth Branch membership shall be eighteen (18) years. An exception shall apply to adults who take on leadership, instructional and supervisory roles. These members shall hold BSAC Full Diving Membership.
- Children aged six (6) and over may enrol into a BSAC Youth Branch as Snorkelling Members and gain snorkelling qualifications.

BSAC Centre Branch (a Special Branch):

A proprietary type of BSAC Branch attached to a commercially operated diving Centre recognised by BSAC. Membership is open to Centre staff and to clients training or trained at the BSAC Centre.

BSAC Direct (General Branch):

This is a Branch administered by BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3).

BSAC Direct offers a means of maintaining BSAC membership without joining a Branch, however, members may undertake training through a BSAC Centre, the Coaching Scheme or a Branch (willing to train them without having to join the Branch).

3.1.2. Headquarters Processing: Branch Formation

When the membership department at BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) receives an application to establish a new Branch, it copies both the application and the Regional Coaches letter of recommendation to the Honorary Secretary for consideration by Council (Articles of Association of the British Sub-Aqua Club: Article 7.C.). This normally takes a week to ten days. The membership department shall then confirm the formation of the new Branch; allocate a Branch number; and send a 'New Branch Pack' to the Branch Secretary. This contains all the materials needed to enrol members and process their membership. It does not include any training support materials or Student Training Packs. The new Branch should order such materials via the BSAC Mail Shop at BSAC Headquarters as and when they are needed.

Section 3.2 Bye-Laws (Constitution)

3.2.1. 'Model' Branch Bye-Laws

When Branches are formed the inaugural General Meeting of the proposed Branch would have approved a set of Bye-Laws. However, over the years these often get amended at subsequent General Meetings (Annual General Meeting - AGM or Extraordinary General Meeting - EGM); or even lost as the Officers of the Branch change. A copy of the 'model' Branch Bye-Laws can be obtained by contacting the membership department at BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3). A check can be done with your current Bye-Laws to ensure there is no conflict with BSAC guidelines or current legislation.

3.2.2. Amendment

No set of Bye-Laws will or could be applicable for all types of Branch; the same Branch will find, over time, that its Bye-Laws no longer provide the guidance the Branch requires. Therefore, a process to update or amend Branch Bye-Laws is required. This procedure should be contained within the Bye-Laws themselves.

However, if it is not the following might be of help:

- Define and write down what you want the Bye-Laws to contain
- Get the agreement, in writing, of at least two (2) other voting members of the Branch to your amendment
- Ask your Committee to call a General Meeting of the membership of your Branch (how to do this should be contained in the Branch Bye-Laws)
- Explain to the General Meeting the reasons for your proposal. The Chairman of the meeting should allow discussion, there may be modifications suggested to your original proposal, but eventually a vote will be taken on accepting your proposal or a modified version of it
- If approved then the Branch Bye-Laws should be amended to reflect the decision of the members.
- Within one month of approval a copy the Branch Bye-Laws shall be sent to

BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) to go in the Branch's file.

3.2.3. Documentation required by BSAC Headquarters

Following the Branch AGM the following documents are to be copied to BSAC Headquarters:

- Branch Bye-Laws,
- Minutes of the AGM,
- Copy of the Branch's accounts.

3.2.4. Diving Qualifications & Diver Activities

Diver Activities:

It is worth remembering that BSAC Branches exist to provide opportunities for members to partake in recreational diving. If Branch members undertake any diving activity where they or their Branch receive any form of payment (with the exception of reasonable expenses), either monetary or 'benefit in kind', "Could instruction in a Branch be considered commercial?" (Section 3.4.3) should be consulted for guidance.

Branch Committees need to be aware that doing the 'odd job' could mean the Branch becomes a "Diving Contractor" and would have legal obligations under the Diving at Work Regulations 1997, which would be expensive to comply with. Additionally the HM Revenue & Customs might want to collect Taxes due from running a commercial operation.

Diver Qualifications:

Branch Bye-Laws (Section 3.2.1) shall not contain rules or guidance on the training, testing or the award of BSAC diving qualifications (Section 4.4.4). The National Diving Committee e-Bulletin Number 48, January 2007 states that the lead instructor (see Branch Diving Officer in Section 3.4.1) of the facility (Branch or Centre) that completed the training shall sign the qualification page in a member's Qualification Record Book.

Section 3.3 Marketing the Branch

3.3.1. Branch Marketing Pack

Having formed a Branch you need to let others know you exist or you're an established Branch, but membership numbers are not as high as you want. The BSAC Branch Marketing Pack, available from BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3.1) or downloadable from the BSAC Web site, will assist you to both advertise your existence and aid the recruitment of new members.

Section 3.4 Committees

3.4.1. The Branch Committee

A Branch Committee manages the affairs of a BSAC Branch as defined in the BSAC Rules. The composition of the Branch Committee shall be specified in the Branch's Bye-Laws (Section 3.2). As a body, the Branch Committee has a 'Duty of Care' to ensure all activities are conducted as safely as possible. One way of achieving this is to ensure Risk Assessments (Section 3.4.3) are carried out for all activities.

A short description of the 'Model' Committee is given here. The 'Model' Branch Committee consists of 4 Officers and 4 general committee members.

Chairperson:

Of the four Officers of a Branch, that of the Chairperson involves wide ranging duties, which are sometimes hard to define.

Leader and figurehead: The Chairperson plays an important role as leader and figurehead in the organisation and in the conduct of Branch affairs, in Branch meetings and in all matters relating to the Branch's public image. He/she should set and maintain a course that achieves the declared objectives of BSAC and of the Branch, as defined in its Bye-Laws (Section 3.2.1).

The Chairperson should ideally be an experienced member of the Branch, unbiased and with good management skills; liked and respected by all members. They should be approachable and may well have to arbitrate in disagreements at Committee level, or between individuals or groups of members. They should avoid taking sides and to this end should ensure that the Branch conducts all its affairs in accordance with the Branch Bye-Laws.

Chairing Branch meetings: As the name implies, their formal role is to chair Branch Committee meetings. At such meetings their authority takes precedence over all others who may be present at the meeting. They are responsible, with almost unlimited discretion, for the conduct of the meetings through which the business of the Branch is transacted.

In respect of any matter of procedure their decision is final and they are well advised to ensure that some degree of formality is observed, however small and friendly the meeting. All comments and questions should be directed through the Chair but in a small meeting the Chairperson may use a degree of latitude, however, at any large or formal meeting the need for control is essential.

As usual with this position, the Branch Chairperson has their own vote, which would normally be used as a casting vote in the event of a tied ballot at Committee and Branch meetings, if the Branch Bye-Laws so state.

Secretary:

The Branch Secretary is responsible for ensuring an efficient level of communication between Branch Committee and membership; and between the Branch and BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3.1), as such:

The Branch Secretary is often the person to whom BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3.1) sends information relating to important changes at national level. Such communications may be for the specific attention of other Branch Officers.

It is the responsibility of the Secretary to ensure that the contents of any mail received is distributed to the relevant Branch Officers or Branch members and / or brought to the attention of the Committee at its next meeting.

They have responsibility for organising, in consultation with the Chairperson, Committee Meetings and the Branch's General Meetings, taking minutes (Section 3.4.4) at these meetings and for publishing and circulating them to appropriate members.

Following an Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting, any personnel changes to the Committee should be notified to the membership department at BSAC

Headquarters (Section 1.3) on a Branch Details Form (available from the membership department or off the BSAC Website).

Many Branches make it the Branch Secretary's responsibility to order stationery and goods from Headquarters. While such orders have to be prepared and submitted by an Officer of the Branch, it is likely that the Treasurer will want to approve the expenditure and may have to be party to the decision, issuing a cheque and placing of the order.

Treasurer:

Clearly, a Branch Treasurer should have some experience of financial accounting. A Branch will derive the income it needs for its operations from the Branch portion of the total subscription. These funds are used for the day to day running of the Branch, for such regular expenses as pool and meeting room hire and in particular for the acquisition of those major assets which are essential to an active diving club - training equipment, boats and engines, diving gas compressor, etc. The Branch Treasurer plays an important role in predicting income and expenditure, and budgeting for such major purchases - and for their upkeep and eventual replacement.

As a guide the Branch Treasurer would be responsible for:

- The sound financial management of the Branch.
- Acting as the Membership Secretary i.e. taking receipt of both Branch and Headquarters subscriptions and dealing with monthly membership returns to the membership department at BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3). In large Branches, the Branch Treasurer may delegate this function to a dedicated Membership Secretary. Information for Membership Secretaries is published monthly on BSAC Website as BSAC Talk.
- Planning and monitoring Branch income and expenditure and preparing the Branch's annual budget.
- Providing advice on all matters of expenditure and the Branch's financial position on a regular basis to the Branch Committee.
- Preparing an "Income & Expenditure Sheet" and a "Balance Sheet" for presentation and approval at the Branch's AGM. A 'Model' "Income & Expenditure Sheet" and a "Balance Sheet" can be found at Annex A.
- Ensuring the Branch's equipment is adequately insured.

Branch Diving Officer:

The Branch Diving Officer is the National Diving Officer's representative at Branch level, as defined in Article 83.D of the Articles of Association.

The Branch Diving Officer is the default Branch Welfare Officer unless there is a dedicated Branch Welfare Officer on the Branch Committee, see Sub-section: Branch Welfare Officer.

If appropriately qualified, the Branch Diving Officer will be the lead instructor of a Branch; and will be thus empowered to award (Section 4.4.4) Ocean Diver, Sports Diver, Dive Leader and Advanced Diver qualifications to members within their own Branch. Much of the Branch Diving Officer's responsibilities are contained in the Management of Diving (Chapter 4), an overview of the role can be found here.

The Branch Diving Officer, with reference to Safe Diving, will authorise all diving activities of Branch members (Section 4.6.2 Authorised Dives).

A Branch Diving Officer should hold at least the qualification of BSAC Advanced Diver and ideally be a BSAC Qualified Instructor (minimum Open Water Instructor). If not, they should nominate a Qualified Instructor (minimum Open Water Instructor) to be lead instructor of the Branch. The nominated individual will then award diving qualifications in accordance with current guidance, see award a diving qualification (Section 4.4.4).

The Branch Diving Officer's attributes:

- The person nominated for the post of Branch Diving Officer should be chosen carefully,
- They should be a volunteer rather than be pressed into taking the job, enthusiasm and a desire to do things thoroughly being of great importance.
- They should have a sound practical and theoretical knowledge of diving and in order to successfully impart their knowledge and ability to others must have zest for the task, patience, sympathy and understanding.

Club Welfare Officer:

Any BSAC Branch with members under the age of 18 years must adopt the BSAC Buddy Guard. A Club Welfare Officer must be appointed to oversee the Safeguarding of children and vulnerable Adults (Section 2.1).

The Branch Welfare Officer is responsible for ensuring the Branch complies with Statute and BSAC guidance in relation to discrimination and protection of those at risk. Further information is available from the BSAC's Chief Executive Officer or the BSAC Website.

Branches that hire Council facilities (swimming pools or lecture rooms) may require to meet the Clubmark standard, from 1st January 2008. For the latest guidance please refer to the information on BSAC Website.

General Committee Members:

The Branch Bye-Laws will define the number of ordinary members on the Branch Committee, who will be elected at the Branch AGM. If Officers wish, ordinary members can be given specific areas of responsibility or particular short term tasks on which they report to the Committee.

Examples are:

- Membership Secretary – to the Treasurer
- Social Officer – to the Secretary
- Training Officer – to the Branch Diving Officer.

3.4.2. Committees: Legal Responsibilities

It is the Branch Committee's responsibility to ensure all individuals (for example; Instructors, Expedition Leaders and Dive Managers) delegated or assigned roles within the Branch are aware of their legal responsibilities.

'Duty of Care':

In the United Kingdom, as in other countries that share its cultural traditions, the law imposes upon everyone a duty not to cause damage or injury to their fellow man by negligent conduct. In other words, if someone is hurt as a direct consequence in whole or in part by our carelessness, we may be required to pay compensation for the injury.

Carelessness, or negligence, can occur both in acting and in failing to act. For example, the driver of a vehicle might be held liable by a court for damages (the loss suffered by someone as a consequence of negligent conduct) if the judge were to find that an accident had been caused by negligent action on the driver's part, such as reckless driving, or by negligent failure to act, such as not having brakes repaired which were known to be defective.

Snorkelling and SCUBA diving, like driving a car, are activities which are potentially dangerous if not conducted with due care. The general principles of liability at law for negligent conduct are therefore particularly applicable to these activities. For example, a diver might claim that he suffered lung damage because his diving buddy's failure or refusal to share diving gas with him. Or a drowned diver's next of kin might claim that the death resulted as a consequence of the Dive Manager's failure to take proper precautions for the dive: or perhaps even as a result of allowing the dive to take place in dangerous conditions. Similarly, someone might sue an Instructor or Diving Officer for permitting a medically disqualified person to dive or for an injury carelessly caused during pool training.

In each of these examples, the claim would be based on the principle that undertaking responsibility for the safety of another person involves the acceptance of a duty to exercise care towards that person, and accordingly to avoid causing harm through negligent behaviour. Obviously, the greater the responsibility, the greater the duty. This is a matter of particular concern to those who have the responsibility for training divers i.e., Diving Officers and Instructors, because proper training is, after all, the basis of safety.

Avoiding a charge of negligence:

There is, however, no need for any Branch Officer or member to be unduly alarmed about the possibility of being dragged into a Court of Law in the event of an accident. In the first place, if the individual does the job properly, accidents are unlikely to happen. If they do occur, they are not likely to be so serious. Secondly, the injured party can only recover damages if they can show a direct cause-and-effect relationship between specific and identifiable behaviour of the person they think is responsible, and their own injuries.

It should be reassuring to know that BSAC provides its members, whom are UK domicile, with Third Party / Public Liability insurance precisely for the purpose of protecting the Club and its members against the financial consequences of any liability for negligence being established, see Membership Insurance (Section 1.5).

BSAC Members who are not UK domicile are recommended to acquire their own Third Party / Public Liability insurance.

However, it is important to remember that it is essential to notify the Club of any incident that occurs (Incident Reporting (Section 4.12)). Failure to comply with the system of reporting could jeopardise the Underwriters' position and consequently that of the Club and its members. These details are passed to our Underwriters to ensure that they are fully enabled to defend and/or investigate any resultant claim which may arise. All legal and investigation costs are met by the policy of insurance, in addition to any settlement payments awarded in a Civil Court, thereby removing the financial burden from the Club and its members.

Given that the Club receives a substantial number of incident reports, the risk of a claim being made does exist, and even though our insurance coverage provides protection, the

prospect of having to try and defend one's conduct in a Court of Law is certainly not attractive. It is therefore clearly in the interest of every member to protect themselves by doing everything reasonably possible to forestall a claim of negligence. To this end, five basic rules - which might be called the Golden Rules of Claim Avoidance - have been formulated which, if followed, will make it very unlikely that any member will find themselves charged with liability for an accident or, if so charged, will enable them to demonstrate that they have no such liability.

Training must not be commenced until trainees have first confirmed their fitness both to undergo training and diving by submitting a completed Self-Declaration Medical Form and as a result, certifying their fitness to dive (Section 3.5.8).

Active members should not be allowed to dive unless they have a current Self-Declaration Medical Form to dive in accordance with BSAC rules and recommendations.

The training programme and diving procedures used must be consistent with the recommendations of BSAC, instruction and leadership must be given by people who are qualified (Section 4.2.6) and sufficiently experienced to do so. The recommended way of ensuring evidence is available is by conducting a Risk Assessment for each activity. Open water diving activities must be conducted safely and with the ability / experience of the least experienced member foremost in mind, and in accordance with the rules and recommendations of BSAC. The recommended way of ensuring evidence is available is by conducting a Risk Assessment for each activity.

Adequate records of training, diving, and all related activities should be kept, see Management of Diving (Chapter 4).

3.4.3. Risk Assessments

In this world of increasing litigation Committees, Branch Officers and individuals need to be able to provide evidence that activities they have sanctioned or are running will be conducted with the minimum of risk to participants, bystanders and the public.

With this in mind BSAC recommend that all activities, diving and social, are to be assessed for relevant risks. Whether an activity should proceed shall depend on the judgement of the individual carrying out the risk assessment(s).

Please refer to the Risk Assessment Section on BSAC Website, which contains the current guidance and forms.

Diving and the Health & Safety Executive:

There is much confusion within the diving world as to the role of the Health & Safety Executive in relation to the instruction of recreational diving. Instructors working within a BSAC Centre or business teaching recreational diving skills are 'commercial divers' and come under the Diving at Work Regulations 1997, which the Health & Safety Executive enforce. Instructors within a members club teaching recreational diving skills to other club members do not (currently) come under the Diving at Work Regulations 1997.

Could instruction in a Branch be considered commercial?

The growing practice of diving instructors claiming expenses, either directly from their students or from Branch funds, has raised the question of whether these instructors are diving commercially and therefore come under the Diving at Work Regulations 1997. The definition of a diver under the Regulations is:

“a person at work who dives”

The following definition of “work” is derived from the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974:

“working under a contract of employment, or otherwise working for ‘gain or reward’”

If a Branch were to pay an instructor in excess of their expenses to teach students to dive, the instructor would be diving for “gain or reward” and the Diving at Work Regulations 1997 would apply. The Courts could view the Branch either as the employer of the diving instructor, in which case the Branch would be the “Diving Contractor”, or as the “Client” of a self-employed diving instructor, in which case the instructor would be the Diving Contractor. In either case, both the Branch and the instructor would have legal obligations under the Regulations, which would be difficult and expensive to comply with.

However, if the only payment to instructors was the reimbursement of expenses incurred by them through instructing, the instructors would not be diving for “gain or reward”, they would therefore not be “at work” and the Diving at Work Regulations 1997 would not apply.

Note: “*Gain or reward*” is not limited to payment in money, but may include other non-monetary benefits. To avoid coming within the scope of the Diving at Work Regulations 1997, the value of any money, goods or services paid to divers must not exceed the demonstrable expenses incurred by them.

3.4.4. Meetings

Frequency of Meetings:

The Branch Secretary should convene Committee meetings at set regular intervals. The Committee must decide how frequently it meets - monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly. It is very helpful to Committee Members if meetings are held at set times, e.g. 7.30pm on the first Monday of every other month, at the Branch clubhouse. In this way, it is possible to plan dates of Committee meetings for the year ahead.

A few days before the meeting, the Secretary should circulate an Agenda, together with copies of accounts, reports or documents that are to be tabled and discussed. This gives Committee Members more time to consider and research subjects, to plan their responses and generally to attend the meeting in a state of readiness. Much time can be wasted at Committee meetings if members have to read and consider lengthy reports.

The Agenda:

The Agenda lists the business to be dealt with at the meeting and will be compiled by the Secretary in conjunction with the Chairperson. Other Committee Members can submit items for inclusion on the agenda, provided they give a reasonable period of notice.

It is customary for a Committee meeting agenda to follow a set pattern; a typical example can be seen at Annex B.

Minimum Attendance at Committee Meetings – A Quorum:

Branch Bye-Laws shall specify that there must be a minimum number of Committee Members present - a quorum - for the meeting to be valid and to proceed. If a quorum is not reached, the meeting must be cancelled. Once a quorum has been established and the meeting begun, the departure of members from the meeting will not cause a quorum to

be lost.

Voting Procedures:

A unanimous decision is far better than a very close vote. If full agreement cannot be reached, then the Committee may vote on the matter. Voting is usually by a simple show of hands but a secret ballot may be employed in matters of discretion or confidentiality. In the event that one person holds more than one office on the Committee, they still have only one vote, not one vote per job. Normally the Chairperson - whose role should be totally impartial - does not vote. However, the Chairperson does have a casting vote in the event of a tie, in order to conclude the business.

Declared Interests:

Where a Committee Member has a personal or direct interest in a matter to be raised at Committee, that member should do the honourable thing and not take part in discussions or voting. In extreme or confidential cases, it might be appropriate for the member to withdraw from the meeting while the matter is discussed and voted upon.

Conduct of Meetings:

The Chairperson is in charge and should control the meeting. Only one person at a time should address the meeting and the Chairperson should see that the speaker is not interrupted and that all members who wish to speak on any particular matter are given an equal chance to do so. Members should address their remarks 'through the Chair' and must abide by the Chairperson's directions and rulings. The Chairperson should endeavour to be impartial and give all members the chance to air their views before decisions are reached and before voting takes place.

The Chairperson should ensure that members keep to the subject and do not go off at tangents or onto other non-related matters. It is also important that the duration of the meeting is controlled, therefore it may be necessary to limit the time people have to present their point and to cut discussions short if they go on for too long.

Should the elected Chairperson be absent from the meeting, the Vice-Chairperson (if an elected position) should stand in and will have the same powers and authority as the Chairperson, for the duration of the meeting. If neither are present, the remaining members - if a quorum - shall elect an Acting Chairperson. An Acting Chairperson also has the same authority as the elected Chairperson, but again only for the duration of the meeting.

Minutes of Meetings:

The Branch Secretary should take accurate Minutes of the Committee's discussions and note points, which have to be acted upon or put on the agenda for the next meeting. Once accepted as a true and accurate record, the Chairperson should sign Minutes of the previous meeting before they are stored in the Minute Book, which the Secretary is responsible for keeping.

Every effort should be made to type up the Minutes of meetings soon afterwards and circulate copies to Committee Members so they can be reminded of actions that they are to take before the next meeting.

While Minutes of Committee meetings may be regarded as confidential to the Committee, some Branches choose to publish them in the interests of keeping all members fully informed of Committee decisions. Alternatively, a Branch might choose to publish an

edited report of Committee activity for the Branch notice board or Newsletter.

Minutes of Branch Committee meetings are important documents and a source of information about the Branch. Care should be taken to ensure that the Minutes Book(s) are passed on from one Secretary to the next, and safely archived for long term storage.

Confidentiality:

From time to time, confidential matters may come before the Committee and all Committee Members should be briefed not to disclose the contents of such business to members at large. It is the duty of the Chairperson to announce such matters to members directly involved and to other Branch members.

If the Committee, through its individual members, speaks with a divided voice, it will have an adverse effect and undermine the position of the Chairperson as spokesperson for the Branch. Committee Members are jointly responsible and must accept the majority decisions reached in Committee, however much they may personally disagree with them. They are entitled to take steps to have the decision changed, so long as these are in compliance with Branch Bye-Laws. Of course, any Committee Member who disagrees strongly with a majority decision has the option of resigning from the Committee - but they are then no longer in a position to have the decision changed.

3.4.5. Succession

The Need for Delegation:

Few Branch Officers can perform all their duties efficiently without help. With the approval of the Branch Committee, as many duties as thought fit may be delegated to suitable and willing members, provided that they are qualified to undertake them. Not only does this lighten the Officer's burden, it also prepares other members for more senior duties within the Branch. Since those delegated to do particular tasks are answerable to the Officer who has delegated to them, there is no need for the member delegated to do a particular job or task to report directly to the Committee or become a Committee Member, unless the Committee chooses so.

Delegation Develops Successors:

No Branch Officer - or other Committee Member - should jealously guard his position on a lofty pedestal by holding back those anxious to accept responsibility. They should instead give their pedestal a wider and more stable base by delegation! Delegation also trains the next generation of office holders. But what is meant by delegation? What does it involve?

In any endeavour, someone has to be in charge and has to establish aims / objectives which are to be achieved. In a diving club, the Branch Diving Officer is responsible for setting aims / objectives which relate to diving, and diver training. Through his own leadership, the Diving Officer applies the human and material resources available within the Branch in the most effective way to achieve them.

A leader achieves objectives by personally working towards them and by their own example, demonstrates and enthuses others with the same ideals and objectives. By using other people help to achieve the objectives they show good leadership and delegation skills. Major objectives such as running an active Branch, are more than a one-man show. The leader who does try to do everything could soon become disheartened and weighed down by the magnitude of it all. Delegation becomes essential. Getting others involved does not weaken a leader's position: delegation does not mean abdication. The person who delegates retains ultimate authority and responsibility,

How to Delegate:

For effective delegation, the leader should get their team together at an informal meeting to:

- Define the objective and tasks to be performed so that everyone knows what is to be achieved through their combined efforts.
- Delegate different aspects or duties to people or groups they think will be able to achieve them. Introduce variety: don't give the same task to the same person every time.
- Set time deadlines or limits. Set expenditure budgets if necessary. Set other relevant limits. Arrange for progress reports and reporting procedures.
- Let them get on with it – but check up from time to time that they are making progress. Trust them, expect accountability. If they have problems, your initial briefing should have told them to report back or seek additional help if necessary.
- As the task is completed, praise success and express thanks. Rebuke failures that are due to idleness or apathy - but do this privately. If failures are outside the control of the person delegated, then praise for their efforts is due, but try also to trace and rectify the problem. Was it the result of misunderstanding or a bad briefing by the leader?

Delegation also Teaches:

Delegation is a teaching process in its own right - especially for those seeking higher qualifications. For such trainees, delegate regularly but vary the tasks among them. Emphasise the benefits that will result from their involvement, such as organisational and leadership skills. Soon they will be able to do the job without supervision. They will have learned, and aspects of the ultimate objective will have been achieved.

Getting other people involved through delegation makes them part of the project. It is educational, saves time, and makes things easier for the generally hard-pressed Branch Diving Officer or Instructor. It also prepares others for positions of authority and responsibility in the future.

Dive Managing (Section 4.8) is also a leadership role, and the Dive Manager will want to delegate various tasks such as dive leading, boat handling, equipment monitoring, records, safety and so on. There are numerous opportunities for delegation, all of which are chances to educate those working towards higher qualification.

Take care to monitor members delegated to carry out tasks which could bring them in to some form of personality conflict with members of the Branch. Many a promising candidate has let a swollen sense of importance spoil his usefulness to the Branch.

Delegation within a Branch:

Various Branch Officers may wish to delegate some of their duties. The extent of delegation will depend on two factors - size of the Branch, and available talent.

Because of his wide-ranging responsibilities, the Branch Diving Officer is the person most likely to delegate tasks. The extent of delegation by a Branch Diving Officer is illustrated in the role of a Training Officer (Section 3.4.6). Other appointments that might be delegated by other Branch Officers would include Membership Secretary (assists the Treasurer) and Social Secretary (assists the Chairman or Secretary).

3.4.6. Sub-committees

There are times when the full Committee is not necessary or specialist knowledge or skills are required for a particular project, in these circumstances it may be more appropriate to delegate by setting up a Sub-committee.

Some general guidelines worth considering:

- Put in writing how long it should be in existence for and what its objective is, i.e. why are you forming it.
- Define the number of people who will sit on it and who is the Chairperson of the Sub-committee.
- State what powers it has, i.e. how much money can be spent without getting additional authority from the Branch Committee.
- How will reports be made to the Branch Committee on progress.
- Keep numbers as low as possible, ideally no more than 4.

The following Sub-committees are only examples; the specific composition for individual Branches may be detailed in the Branch Bye-Laws or specified by the Branch Committee.

Diving:

By far the most common Sub-committee is the Branch Diving Committee set up to assist the Branch Diving Officer (Section 3.4.1). The Branch Diving Officer should chair this Sub-committee and report matters of interest back to the Branch Committee.

Members might include:

A Training Officer – At Branch level, the authority to conduct diver training has been delegated (Section 3.2.3) solely to the Branch Diving Officer (Section 3.4.1). The Branch Diving Officer has sole discretion to do the job or appoint one or more Training Officers. Neither a Branch Committee nor the membership shall elect the Training Officer(s). This avoids a situation where the Branch is in conflict with the National Diving Officer's delegation to the Branch Diving Officer.

Termination of a Training Officer's appointment rests solely with the Branch Diving Officer.

Note: It would be prudent for a Branch Diving Officer to discuss their Training Officer appointment / termination decision with the Branch Committee prior to any announcement.

The Branch Diving Officer shall specify the duties of their Training Officer(s), which may cover:

- Arranging a uniform system and standard of training in the classroom, pool and open water. The BSAC Diver Training Programme shall be the basis for a Branch training system.
- Holding stocks of training support materials for lesson use: issue them for lessons and recover them afterwards.
- Selecting a suitably qualified team of instructors / assistants to implement the system, to assist them with lesson preparation, provide instructional materials, monitor lesson quality and provide instructor development.
- Arranging to bring students and instructors together at the right place, at the right time, and with the right equipment for training.
- Assigning members of the Branch Instructor team to teach individual lessons.
- Liaising with the Branch Equipment Officer (Section 3.4.6) with regard to equipment needs for lessons.
- Arranging for lesson reports from instructors, and for the collection of dues levied for use of equipment by students.
- Supervising the training to see that all is going well, and to monitor the performance of the instructors.
- Arranging the testing of students when their instructors consider them ready for assessment: advise the Branch Diving Officer when members have completed training and recommend the award of qualifications if relevant. Only when a Qualified Instructor is satisfied that a member has reached the required standard for a diving qualification may it be granted by the lead instructor of the Branch.
- Ensuring that correct records are kept of training given and tests passed by each student, and seeing that each member's Qualification Record Book (Section 4.4.1) is signed by a Qualified Instructor, in accordance with the BSAC Instructor Manual.
- Any other duties relevant to Branch training as required by the Branch Diving Officer.

The Equipment Officer - Appointed by agreement between the Branch Diving Officer and the Branch Committee, but not necessary a member of the Branch Committee. As part of their wide-ranging brief, the Branch Diving Officer is ultimately responsible for all matters concerning Branch diving and related equipment. Typically, this will include diving equipment used for instructional purposes; boats and their equipment; diving gas compressor; working equipment used on dives; instructional aids, etc. It is usual for Branch Diving Officers to delegate this responsibility to an Equipment Officer, who should ideally be someone with mechanical knowledge and skills. In these mechanised days, it is not very difficult to find such a person in every Branch.

The Equipment Officer is someone who will inevitably spend Branch money in carrying out their duties. The Equipment Officer should therefore have a budget with prearranged spending limits, and a cash float if considered necessary. The Equipment Officer should be allowed to delegate within the Branch, especially to those who are qualified to repair and service equipment. The Equipment Officer should also have the authority to arrange repairs and maintenance through specialists - approved service engineers, cylinder test houses, etc – without having to seek Branch Committee approval on every occasion.

Responsibilities may involve:

- Advising the Branch Committee through the Branch Diving Committee (if there is one) on matters concerning the purchase and insurance of Branch equipment.
- Providing for safe and secure storage of equipment.
- Arranging for equipment allocation and for its return to store; and in some cases if it is Branch policy, to be responsible for its transportation to/from the place of use.
- Maintenance of all equipment and the keeping of relevant records.
- If the Branch has its own diving gas compressor, the Equipment Officer will be responsible for drawing up a 'Duty Compressor Operator' rota.

Expedition Leader – Appointed by agreement between the Branch Diving Officer and the Branch Committee, not necessarily a member of the Branch Committee, who would manage a Branch diving expedition. Dependant on the wishes of the Branch Diving Officer duties can range from a single expedition to a complete diving programme for the Branch.

Responsibilities may involve:

- Choosing a series of suitable dive sites which will provide both experienced members and trainees with the sort of dive they want, or need, for a particular qualification: booking dive boats where appropriate.
- Choosing the best dates and times for such a programme of dives.
- Selecting appropriately qualified individuals to serve as Dive Managers and in conjunction with the Training Officer, to select those who require experience as Deputy Dive Managers and dive leaders.
- Providing help and advice to Dive Managers as they plan and conduct dives.
- Ensuring that Dive Reports are correctly prepared and submitted.
- Arranging Branch diving holidays, at home or abroad, as appropriate.
- Liaising with Regional Expeditions Diving Scheme Co-ordinator (Section 3.5.3).
- Ensuring Risk Assessments are carried out.

Expedition:

This Sub-committee would have responsibility for organising the management of major expeditions. There is no requirement for the Branch Diving Officer to be a member, the Expedition Leader (Section 3.4.6) would logically Chair this Sub-committee on behalf of the Branch Diving Officer.

This Sub-committee would look at such things as:

- Dive site / location.
- Transportation.
- Accommodation.
- Getting access rights.
- Organising food / meals.
- Liaison with other Branches / bodies.
- Ensuring equipment needs are catered for.
- Ensuring Risk Assessments are carried out.

Social:

This Sub-committee would have responsibility for organising social events. To organise, say, a bowls night it is unlikely to require a Sub-committee, but a Sub-committee could

better manage a series of social gatherings or a special dinner. This Sub-committee could also manage fundraising activities.

Section 3.5 Membership

3.5.1. Joining BSAC

Membership of BSAC is open to all, irrespective of colour, race or creed, however, individuals convicted of serious crimes may not be members of BSAC or its affiliates, see Adults and Children at Risk (Section 2.1.1).

Special and Youth Branches (Section 3.1.1), by their nature or affiliation to other bodies, may be obliged to restrict membership. Branch Treasurers and Membership Secretaries should know the nature of their own Branch and if any such restrictions apply.

Applications to join and rejoin BSAC are to be considered in accordance with Branch Bye-Laws (Section 3.2.1).

3.5.2. Benefits Provided by Branches

New members will normally join through a local Branch and this will be their first contact with BSAC.

Most Branches will provide:

- Diver training, as a snorkeler or SCUBA diver, leading to BSAC's internationally recognised diving qualifications.
- Qualified Instructors, dive leaders and dive organisers.
- A friendly social environment for training, diving and recreation.
- Fellow divers / buddies to dive with.
- Equipment, boats, compressors etc. for training and diving.
- Regular Branch meetings, training courses, open water dives and diving holidays with friends.

Membership of a particular Branch is dependant on the Type of Branch (Section 3.1.1) it is.

For those members whom do not live near a Branch or cannot attend their local Branch, 'BSAC Direct' is available as a holding Branch managed by BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) staff.

3.5.3. Benefits Provided by BSAC

Once a new or renewing member has joined / rejoined a Branch:

Their application form will be forwarded to the membership department at BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3), this will result in the following / continuing benefits:

- A 'Welcome to BSAC' pack (new members only).
- 12 monthly copies of 'BSAC SCUBA' magazine, the journal of BSAC.
- Third Party Liability Insurance, cover starts when an application form is fully completed by the applicant and Branch not when the application reaches BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3).
- Access to all other BSAC member services.

Activities Provided by BSAC at Regional and National Level:

- Regional Skill Development Courses – see Skill Development Courses on BSAC Website or contact BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3).
- Instructor Training – see Instructor Training on BSAC Website or contact BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3).
- Diving Expeditions (Section 4.10).
- Conferences - BSAC runs a Diving Officers' Conference (Technical Conference), the Annual General Meeting and the Branch Officers' Conference. Regional Conferences are sometimes arranged by Regional Coaches, who may also organise Regional Meetings to keep members and Branches informed.

Publications:

The BSAC produces an outstanding and highly acclaimed range of publications for its members, including amongst others:

- The 'Go! Diving UK' DVD that shows what diving is like around the UK coast – Its free from BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3).
- Training Packs, containing a Qualification Record Book and Student Study Guide.
- A series of diving manuals: The Diving Manual, Dive Leading, Safety & Rescue for Divers, Seamanship: a guide for divers, Teaching SCUBA Diving and Snorkelling for All.
- The BSAC Instructor Manual and a comprehensive range of training support publications such as the series of Instructor Prompt Cards and certificates.
- The Ocean Explorer Instructor Handbook and Snorkel Training support materials.
- "Safe Diving" booklet, an alphabetical guide to BSAC's recommendations for the safe conduct of diving. Regularly updated by the National Diving Committee.
- As a result of BSAC initiatives, decompression tables specifically formulated for recreational divers have been developed for use by members of BSAC. The BSAC '88 Decompression Tables levels 1-4 were developed to give members the benefit of the latest knowledge and developments in decompression practice and theory. These tables are supplemented by the 'BSAC Nitrox Decompression Tables' to cover diving with three Nitrox gas mixes of 27%, 32% and 36% oxygen content and the 'BSAC Ox-Stop Decompression Tables' enabling for accelerated decompression (available early 2010). These are all available from the BSAC Mail Shop.
- The Club's 'Annual Diving Incident Report' summarises and categorises all reported incidents. Many lessons can be learned from it.
- BSAC's 'Safety First' Programme helps divers to prepare for a return to the sport after a lay-off or at the start of a new diving season.

The Coaching Scheme:

The BSAC Coaching Scheme is available to Branches and members alike. It provides: Assistance and advice with the formation of new Branches, all aspects of diver training, instruction in specialised skills, the grading of divers, publicity, promotion and any other Branch problems.

Skill Development Courses in a wide range of subjects: Practical Rescue Management, Boat Handling, Search and Recovery, Chartwork and Navigation, First Aid, Oxygen Administration, Advanced Nitrox Diving, Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and many

more (see Skill Development Courses on BSAC Website or contact BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3)).

Local BSAC Instructors who look after members' interests by serving on Committees of regional organisations and by maintaining contacts with other Branches and BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3).

Instructor Training Scheme (ITS):

If you wish to learn how to become a diving or snorkelling instructor or to develop your instructional skills, the Instructor Training Scheme will:

- Show you how and what to teach at any level of BSAC system.
- Enable you to qualify as a BSAC Assistant Instructor by attending an Instructor Foundation Course (IFC).
- Offer a range of other courses to allow progression towards higher instructional qualifications.
- Arrange assessments for Snorkel Instructor, Theory and Practical Instructors, Open Water Instructor, Advanced Instructor and National Instructor.
- Arrange Instructor Trainer Development Course where suitably qualified instructors are trained to staff Instructor Training Scheme events.

Information:

Information of interest to the membership is disseminated by BSAC in various ways: E-mail lists for Instructors, Branch Diving Officers, Secretaries, etc are used to distribute information quickly via the Internet. To comply with current legislation individuals are required to positively opt-in to each list to receive information:

- 'BSAC SCUBA' keeps you up to date with developments and changes in BSAC policy, new activities, diving holidays and diving equipment on a monthly basis. Although not owned or controlled by BSAC, 'BSAC SCUBA' serves as BSAC's journal and accordingly is a vital communication link with its membership.
- Distributions from BSAC Headquarters, including the membership bulletin BSAC Talk, NDC e-bulletin, Regional Coaching Bulletins and other mailings serve to keep members and Branches up to date with a whole range of topics.
- The annual Diving Officers Conference and Club Annual General Meeting, provide delegates with the benefit of presentations by experts on matters which are of current interest to divers in all fields of diving and BSAC activity.
- Staff at BSAC Headquarters are available during business hours to deal with administrative and technical queries concerning membership and all aspects of diving and diver training.
- The BSAC Website (Section 1.3.3).

Miscellaneous Services:

- An affinity VISA credit card is available to members from MBNA.
- Affinity schemes for travel and personal equipment insurance are available to members through the agencies that handle BSAC's membership liability insurance.
- There are a number of high-street travel companies accredited as Preferred Travel Partners (see the on-line BSAC Travel Club) offering member discounts on holidays. The discount may be greater than the annual cost of BSAC membership.
- Children and adults can learn to snorkel dive with BSAC Snorkelling and Youth Branches, or as junior members of ordinary and special Branches. There is a special Snorkel Diver training programme along with badges and certificates, with the 'Snorkelling for All' manual as the reference book.

Indirect Benefits – Representation:

The BSAC represents the interests of its members and the common interests of all of the country's sports divers and snorkelers. With a membership over 35,000 and an established Headquarters with a fulltime staff, BSAC has the ability to exercise significant influence at international, national and local government level.

The following are some examples of BSAC activities, influence and achievements: BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) and / or Regional Coaches maintain close links with Sport UK (Sports Council) at national and regional level: with the Central Council of Physical Recreation; with RoSPA, BSI, SUT, EUF and other similar bodies. These links maintain BSAC's position as the UK Governing body for the sport.

BSAC representatives have played an important role in formulating the European Union standards for breathing apparatus in order to make it acceptable to the sport diving industry; and in the creation of a representative sports diving federation within the European Union.

Strictly interpreted and applied, the original Diving at Work Regulations would have been very much against the interests of those who use sport diving techniques while engaged in scientific studies, archaeology and instruction in diving schools. BSAC's intervention and involvement with the Health & Safety Executive resulted in a series of exemptions from the Regulations and the introduction of certain concessions to divers active in these fields. Subsequent negotiations have now led to revised Diving at Work Regulations and an Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) for the commercial instructor of recreational divers. This allows BSAC qualified instructors to work professionally in BSAC Centres without further certification. Liaison with the Health & Safety Executive continues on a range of issues.

Intervention by BSAC rallied the opposition necessary to modify the Protection of Military Remains Bill 1985. In its original form this Parliamentary Bill would effectively have prevented British divers from diving in UK waters on the wreckage of any vessel or aircraft which had the slightest connection with the armed forces of any country and from diving in international waters on any such British wreckage. The final legislation, the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986, adopted all of the amendments which were proposed by BSAC.

BSAC is actively engaged in negotiations with The Environment Agency in an effort to ensure that statutory Marine Nature Reserves (MNR) created pursuant to the provisions of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 do not discriminate against divers. The BSAC supports conservation measures which are applied equally to everyone affected by an

MNR but opposes Bye-Laws which discriminate in any way against divers.

Recreational demands for water usage have placed increasing pressure on access points and some local bodies and communities have accordingly sought to deny or restrict diver access. In such situations, BSAC endeavours to produce mutually satisfactory arrangements that will ensure access in a manner acceptable to local interests.

Representation has resulted in modification or withdrawal of Bye-Laws proposed by Sea Fishery Committees which would have discriminated against divers.

3.5.4. BSAC Centres and Resorts

The BSAC has an a well established and growing system for authorising suitable independent commercial ventures to train divers using BSAC training programmes and grant BSAC diving qualifications. These are known as BSAC Centres. Many BSAC Centres have a BSAC Special Branch associated with them. These are full Branches of BSAC and accordingly offer to their members all of the direct benefits of BSAC membership described previously, including higher qualifications.

There are other independent commercial ventures, which do not provide BSAC training, but are associated to BSAC and are fully aware of our diving qualifications. These are known as BSAC Resorts.

Further information on BSAC Centres and Resorts is available on BSAC Website at <http://www.bsac.com/page.asp?section=939§ionTitle=BSAC+Training+Centres>.

3.5.5. Other Benefits

Liaison and exchange of information beneficial to members takes place between BSAC and the diving equipment trade, the diving industry, and Government Ministries and Departments whose activities affect recreational diving.

The BSAC supports the activities of bodies such as the Marine Conservation Society, the British Society of Underwater Photographers, and the Nautical Archaeology Society, all of which enable members to enjoy specialised diving interests and to usefully employ their underwater skills.

Scientific Bursaries and other grants are available from the British Sub Aqua Jubilee Trust for scientific projects and expeditions involving diving.

3.5.6. Classes of Membership

Article 35 defines BSAC classes of membership; it is for the Branch Secretary and the individual member to decide which of the following classes is applicable:

Member Classes:

- Full Diving Membership – for which any person of fourteen (14) years or over shall be eligible but without prejudice to the right of Individual Branches to set a higher age limit, but see Age Limits (Section 3.5.7).
- Associate Membership - for which any person shall be eligible but which shall not entitle such a member to take part in snorkelling or any other activity involving their use of a breathing set. In effect, this is non-diving membership.
- Honorary Life Membership – shall be conferred solely by Council and for which any person shall be eligible.
- Corporate Body Membership – which shall be conferred solely by Council and

for which National Bodies or organisations with appropriate objects shall be eligible.

- Junior Diving Membership – any person between the ages of twelve (12) to seventeen (17) years inclusive shall be eligible.
- Student Diving Membership – any person over the age of eighteen (18) and in full-time education.
- Junior Snorkelling Membership – any person between the ages of six (6) to seventeen (17) years inclusive shall be eligible, but shall not entitle such a member to take part in any activity involving use of SCUBA equipment.

A Branch with a member who has been awarded Honorary Life Membership would not be liable for that member's BSAC subscription.

Where a Branch has within its Bye-Laws a provision to grant "Branch Honorary Membership" (of any class), it shall be the Branch's responsibility to ensure the member's BSAC membership class subscription is paid, when it becomes due.

Dual Membership:

It is not unusual for very active divers to be members of more than one Branch. Their parent Branch shall be responsible for the collection of their BSAC membership subscription. The parent Branch is identifiable from the prefix letter 'A' printed at the beginning of the membership number on a BSAC membership receipt. Other Branches a member belongs to are identifiable by the prefix 'B', 'C', etc on their respective BSAC membership receipts and will collect the Branch subscription only.

3.5.7. Age Limits

The minimum age for SCUBA membership of BSAC is twelve (12) years. However, since persons twelve (12) to seventeen (17) inclusive are legally minors, the law will hold an adult responsible for their safety and their actions. In normal circumstances, this would be the parent or guardian, but where the child has been entrusted to the care of another adult, that person takes on some of the parent's responsibilities. Please refer to BSAC's Clubmark Policy on the protection of the groups as Risk. Members of a Branch may not wish to take on this responsibility except for their own children. Some Branches accept persons twelve (12) to seventeen (17) inclusive only if a parent / guardian is also a full member. Any Branch wishing to set a higher minimum age limit than twelve (12) shall include the requirement within the Branch Bye-Laws.

The Minimum age for snorkel membership of BSAC is six (6) years.

Except for Junior Diving, Junior Snorkelling and Student Diving Membership, there is no upper age limit for BSAC membership. An individual's fitness to dive becomes the governing factor, as members grow older.

3.5.8. Fitness to Dive

Diving with any form of underwater breathing apparatus - and even breath-holding snorkel diving - exposes the body to effects of pressure not encountered in normal life. Certain medical conditions and histories may be incompatible with safe diving. For this reason, Article 87,D states that members may not take part in SCUBA or open water activity without a completed Medical examination (currently a United Kingdom Sport Diver Medical Committee Self-Declaration Medical Form). A Self-Declaration Medical Form is valid for one year.

When is a Self-Declaration Medical Form to be completed?

- A Self-Declaration Medical Form is required for any person applying to join BSAC as a Full Diving / Abated / Junior Diving or Student Member.
- A Self-Declaration Medical Form is required for any member applying to transfer to Full Diving / Abated / Junior Diving or Student Membership from any other class of membership.
- Any person applying to join as a Snorkelling Member must complete a Self-Declaration Medical Form.
- A medical examination is not required for any person applying to join BSAC as an Associate Member, nor for any person(s) offered Honorary Membership or Corporate Body Membership of BSAC.
- A new Self-Declaration Medical Form is required at each annual renewal.
- A new Self-Declaration Medical Form is required when a medical condition arises or changes.

For members under the age of eighteen (18) the appropriate Self-Declaration Medical Form must be countersigned by a parent / guardian.

Training Without a Completed Self-Declaration Medical Form:

Branches shall be required to get prospective members to complete a Self-Declaration Medical Form before joining BSAC or Branch. Once they have a completed Self-Declaration Medical Form, they can be enrolled: if not, no time, effort or money is wasted.

Branches shall not conduct training (except Try-Dive sessions) with people who are not enrolled members of BSAC – Articles 7.(3) and 87.D.

“Fitness To Dive” after Diving Related Illness:

Any member who suffers a decompression-related illness (DCI, Burst Lung, etc.) must be declared fit by a Medical Referee. BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) can provide contact details of Medical Referees.

Medical Conditions:

Please refer to the Medical Section on BSAC Website for the current information on medical conditions and diving.

Access to BSAC Branch Services:

The BSAC expects its Branches to be inclusive in offering every activity, snorkel, SCUBA, social and fundraising. This is a primary consideration of Sport UK and each home country's Sport funding body; Sport England and local authorities when considering sports clubs for grant funding.

On occasion, members may be injured or acquire an impairment such as restricted mobility. When impairment prevents a member from demonstrating one or more of the basic diving skills (as taught in Ocean and Sports Diver), then an assessment of the support needed for safe diving is to be made. This assessment is made exclusively by the member and the Branch Diving Officer, though the inclusion of a carer may sometimes be helpful. The resulting support level and any condition applied to the member's diving qualification is to be entered in the member's Qualification Record Book using overlays available from BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3).

The system of support levels and conditional qualifications is explained more fully in a

guidance note available from BSAC Headquarters. Branch Diving Officers using the note for the first time are encouraged to seek further help from the National Diving Committee's Accessibility Officer accessibility@bsac.com. The same system applies to new members and to members under training. Our guiding principle is to highlight achievement and seek to mitigate difficulty. Disadvantaged people of all descriptions are masters at generating coping strategies and can usually teach established divers a great deal about risk assessment, forward planning and lateral thinking. [Does this role still exist?].

Besides breaking the law, we deny ourselves great benefit when we (even subconsciously) restrict membership to "people like us".

3.5.9. Visiting or Transferring Member

Visiting Members:

Joining BSAC entails membership of a National Club, not just of a particular Branch. It frequently happens that members of different Branches come together on expeditions and courses or as a result of travelling for business or recreation. All members are free to visit other Branches and to take part in their activities, so long as it is practical and the Branch is prepared to accept them.

Transferring Members:

People move between jobs quite often these days and it is not uncommon for members to transfer from one Branch to another. Procedures for accepting a transferring member are much the same as for new and renewing members (Section 3.5.1). Additionally, the Membership Secretary should be advised so that renewal of membership when due and payment of a Branch Subscription portion, can be arranged.

Accepting their Qualifications:

Before allowing a visitor or transferring member to take part in diving activities, Branch Diving Officers may wish to satisfy themselves of the visitors diving ability. Both Qualification Record Book and Diving Log Books should be inspected to determine the level of qualification and recent diving experience. Attention should also be paid to evidence of current fitness to dive (Section 3.5.8) and BSAC membership.

Completed BSAC qualifications should be accepted without question. However, if the Branch Diving Officer then finds that the diving abilities and standards of the visitor / recently-transferred member are below standard, the facts can be discreetly discussed with the member and remedial training given until an appropriate standard is reached. While this is going on, the member's diving activities can be restricted.

Those with incomplete training for a BSAC diving qualification should be integrated into the Branch training programme for the next level, and it becomes the Branch's responsibility to complete that training.

BSAC members transferring from an overseas Branch to the UK, or vice-versa, should realise that diving conditions can be quite different, perhaps requiring the use of unfamiliar equipment and techniques. A short period of retraining and familiarisation with the local conditions may be necessary before they participate fully.

Prospective BSAC members who are already trained divers can have their qualifications recognised by BSAC. Please refer to Diving Qualifications Issued by Other Agencies (Section 4.4.10).

Why are they Changing Branches?

Branch Diving Officers should be aware that a member may be transferring from one Branch to another because they have been excluded from their previous Branch. Such instances are not unknown and obviously a Branch is unlikely to want to take on someone who was found to be disruptive or who has failed to dive safely and in accordance with BSAC recommendations. Ask why they are transferring, especially if from another local Branch.

The reason may be genuine. However, due to data protection legislation, information from their previous Branch may only be used to consider membership applications if notification of this purpose is communicated to the prospective member (who must have the opportunity of declining use of their information in this way). Additionally their old Branch will need to comply with the purposes notified to its members (i.e. what data can be transferred to another Branch and why).

Accepting Qualifications Issued by BSAC Centres:

As mentioned in Diving Qualifications (Section 3.2.3) the lead instructor of a BSAC Centre may award BSAC diver qualifications. BSAC Centres will grant BSAC mini-membership to clients who undertake the Ocean Diver course. A mini-membership pack is issued as part of their Ocean Diver Student pack. All clients become members of BSAC for a free 3-month period – one time offering. Many who initially train at a BSAC Centre later seek a Branch to join in order to continue with the sport.

These clients receive the same student pack as Branch members training for Ocean Diver and so have a Qualification Record Book the same as Branch members. The page showing the Ocean Diver qualification will show the centre name where this award was gained. Application forms for the Ocean Diver qualification card are contained in the Ocean Diver Student pack. BSAC Centre trained 'Ocean Divers' are members of BSAC for three months only – one time offering. They have been trained by BSAC Qualified Instructors using a programme that is identical in content as the Branch Ocean Diver programme. They should not be expected to repeat what they learnt at the Centre. On joining a Branch and on complying with all conditions for full membership, if they wish to advance their qualifications they should obtain the appropriate Training Pack.

People who originally joined via a BSAC Special Branch linked to a BSAC Centre should be treated as a transferring member.

3.5.10. Procedures for Disciplining Members

Human Rights Act 1998:

Please refer to Schedule 1, 'The Articles' of the Act ([click here](#)) for full explanation of member's Rights under this Act.

Follow Branch Bye-Laws:

From time to time, Branch Committees have the unenviable task of disciplining members. It is important that disciplinary measures are taken strictly in accordance with those clauses of the Branch Bye-Laws, which relate to the matter. Failure to follow the Bye-Laws could undermine the Committee's position, make the matter drag on and thereby create further problems.

Members may have to be disciplined if they are considered and found guilty of persistent or serious breaches of Branch or the Articles of Association. At the first signs of unacceptable behaviour, the appropriate Branch Officer (Chairperson, if the behaviour

does not relate to diving; Branch Diving Officer if it does) should take the member(s) to one side for a 'quiet word' – to explain why the behaviour is unacceptable, how it should be corrected and a warning as to what may happen if it is not. Branch Diving Officers should acquaint themselves of BSAC policy "BSAC Volunteers – Procedure for change of status", available from BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3).

If this does not work, the member(s) involved should be called before the Branch Committee to explain their actions, or to present their side of the argument. The Committee will then decide what action should be taken. That action might be suspension from Branch activities, or denial of use of Branch equipment (compressor, boats, etc.) for a period.

Exclusion from the Branch should be a 'last resort' sanction in the event of persistent or very serious breach of behaviour or safe practices. The decision to exclude a member is more serious and should be the unanimous opinion of the Branch Committee, not just of one Branch Officer. Note: that Branch Bye-Laws may give the member the right of appeal to the full membership at a General Meeting: this right should not be denied.

If a member is excluded, details of the member and the reasons for dismissal should be forwarded as soon as possible to BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3). It may also be appropriate to notify neighbouring Branches if you feel that the excluded member may try to transfer membership and create the same problems elsewhere. However, Branch Committees must ensure this is covered in their Data Protection Act 1998 notice to the membership or they could be liable for prosecution under the Act.

Branch Committees are reminded that a condition of membership of BSAC is that the individual must be a member of a Branch. Therefore, exclusion should not be taken lightly. If a Branch believes the actions of the member are of such severity that the member should be excluded from membership of BSAC as well as the Branch, then full details should be forwarded to BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) for the matter to be placed before Council. Council then has to follow procedures as set down in the Articles of Association of BSAC.

Put it in Writing:

It is a wise safeguard against future action or mishap that anything relating to a disciplinary measure, or a warning to members who may be considering actions or dives which are unwise / unsafe, is given to the individuals involved as a written statement / letter. Such letters should be sent by recorded delivery so you have a record that they were received. Copies should be kept in Branch records.

Exclusion by Declining Membership Renewal:

The processes for disciplining members described above apply during the currency of a member's Branch membership. Should BSAC and Branch membership of someone who is undergoing disciplinary action be close to its expiry date, the Branch has the option of declining to accept their membership renewal (Section 3.5.1).

3.5.11. Data Protection Act 1998

In October 2001 the full requirements to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 came into force for 'Non profit-making organisations', i.e. sports clubs. Statutory Instrument 2000 No. 188, "The Data Protection (Notification and Notification Fees) Regulations 2000" gives sports clubs not operating for profit, an exemption from lodging a 'Notification' with the Information Commissioner on the purposes they are using personal data for.

However, sports clubs still have to comply with the Eight Data Principles.

What Data Is Covered?

In a nutshell any information that can identify a 'living' individual, held by the Branch.

It covers data classes like (this list is not exclusive):

- Name
- Address
- Telephone Number
- Date of Birth
- Gender
- Partner / Spouse information
- Pictures / images
- Educational / Training records
- Diving history
- Discipline / dispute case information / notes
- Marital status

What is not Covered?

The Data Protection Act 1998 specifically excludes personal data held by individuals for 'Domestic purposes', taken from the Act:

"for the purposes of that individual's personal, family or household affairs (including recreational purposes)".

In essence, if Branch members have acquired a list of diving buddies and the information came from the individuals themselves you're OK. However, if the Branch distributed or supplied the list, it is covered by the Act.

What should a Branch do?

The following guidance is only that, it is up to Branch Committee Members to satisfy themselves that the Branch's procedures do not contravene the Data Protection Act 1998.

Guidance:

- Identify all the different purposes and the types of 'data classes' (above) used for processing personal, including 'sensitive', data within the Branch.
- Identify where (and by whom) all this information is being held, (do not forget duplicate copies and backups).
- Identify who has access (or should not have access) to the information both within the Branch and outside it, (please remember to include the Internet, if applicable).
- Identify and establish security measures to ensure the information is not lost, stolen, copied, deliberately altered or deleted, accidentally altered or deleted, or made available to people or companies which do not need to have access.
- Write down in general terms the purposes identified above. For example, a purpose could be: 'Branch administration' and would cover such things as membership and notice of meetings, but not the Newsletter.
- Issue a copy for your list of purposes (a Notification) to all members of the Branch. For each purpose there shall be the data classes used and who / where the information will / may be sent. It is up to the individual to inform you which

- purpose(s) they do not want their personal data being processed for.
- For 'sensitive' personal data you are required to get their specific consent. The only way to do this is to get their signature accepting the processing of their information.
 - Set up a procedure to ensure out-of-date data is cleansed on a regular basis. The 5th Data Principle requires data to be held only as long as the purpose requires, therefore when a member leaves the Branch their data should be deleted / destroyed. If the Branch wants to keep records for historical purposes - who were the founder members etc - it needs to be included as a purpose in its own right with the relevant data classes listed.
 - It is good practice to set up a procedure where members are notified when they first join or renew membership of the Branch, if they don't accept the terms they do not join.

Branches linked to non-diving organisations:

Branches, which are affiliated to other non-diving organisations like Universities or Scouts, may be required to observe their parent body's Data Protection guidance, in addition to the advice given above.

Section 3.6 Branch Finances

3.6.1. Overview

Diving is an equipment intensive sport. It is normal for trained members in a Branch to be expected to provide all their own personal diving equipment, but a Branch which offers training to new members should have a number of complete SCUBA sets (cylinder, regulator with an Alternate Source and Buoyancy Compensator) and weightbelts; and perhaps projection equipment and screen for classroom lessons.

Most active diving Branches will want at least one boat and engine for open water dives and other support materials such as navigational aids and perhaps a compressor. All these assets have to be acquired and paid for from Branch subscriptions and the results of fund-raising activities.

The Branch will have other regular running costs: pool or classroom / venue hire, stationery, stamps, equipment maintenance, etc. Most of the regular outgoings can be predicted. Major assets can be purchased once funds have accumulated or when it is clear that income will be sufficient to service any loan taken out for their purchase.

3.6.2. Bank / Saving Accounts

A Branch will need a Current Account (a non-personal account may incur bank charges) and some form of Deposit or Savings Account. Members will usually remit membership fees by cheque and these include money for the Branch as well as for the membership department at BSAC Headquarters. At the end of each month when Branch membership returns are prepared for submission, a single Branch cheque should be drawn to pay BSAC all the subscriptions due at that month end. Branch cheques can also be used to pay other outgoings such as pool hire, insurance premiums, charter boat fees, purchases, etc.

Signatories:

It is a wise safeguard if arrangements are made with a Bank or Building Society for Branch cheques to require two signatures rather than one and to have three or four Branch Officers as 'authorised signatories'. Arrange for any two of these to sign Branch cheques when required. If you specify only two people to sign, one is sure not to be available when

you need a cheque in a hurry.

Some banking institutes issue Cash Point / Debit / Credit Cards with their accounts. With one of these cards an individual can access the Branch's funds bypassing the normal controls. It is prudent to confirm with the bank at least annually, that no Cards have been issued against any of the Branch's accounts.

Running the Current Account:

Keep only enough in the current account to stay 'in the black' and to avoid bank charges. Keep the rest of the money on deposit so it is earning the best interest rate you can find. You can always transfer from deposit to current account when you have to meet a big bill. If you are using a Building Society rather than a bank then the Society will give you a cheque if asked.

A Word of Warning:

Do not be tempted to put Branch money in the accounts of named individuals to get higher interest rates. Firstly, the Branch loses control and secondly, the individuals could find they have a Tax problem as the HM Revenue & Customs will take the interest as being their own and it must be disclosed on their tax return.

3.6.3. Income

A Branch derives its income from Branch subscriptions, levied for use of Branch equipment i.e. boat dives, compressed diving gas, and from fund-raising. The former two should be fairly predictable; the latter less so and influenced by many social and economic factors. It is therefore sensible to use subscription income as the prime funding for regular outgoings and fund-raising schemes for the purchase of major assets. As it builds up, surplus subscription income can always be spent on assets. Subscriptions may be received monthly through the year or all at once in one month (if the Branch has a common renewal date) either way budgetary control is essential.

For example, if everyone pays their subscription in January, strict control is necessary to avoid running out of money towards the end of the year. You may be earning interest on the money you banked at the end of January, but remember that the money has to last all year!

BSAC Membership Subscription:

Branch Treasurers or Membership Secretaries collect BSAC membership subscription from members and submit it to BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) on a monthly basis. While BSAC endeavours to maintain the level of subscription payable, from time to time it has to be raised even if just to keep up with inflation. Since the subscription to the national body is subject to variation, the current rates are freely available on request from the membership department at BSAC Headquarters or on BSAC Website.

BSAC Direct Debit:

A member may wish to pay their BSAC membership subscription direct to BSAC by Direct Debit. Further information is available at <http://www.bsac.org/page/16/bsac-direct.htm>.

Additionally, Branch Membership Secretaries need to be aware that under Direct Debit regulations BSAC Headquarters are required to send to the member information about monies to be taken from their bank account. The normal renewal information for those paying by Direct Debit will still be sent to Branch Membership Secretaries.

Branch Subscription:

On formation of the Branch and annually thereafter, the Committee (Section 3.4.1) should determine what level of Branch subscription it is to apply and when any change in subscription comes into force. Members should be given adequate notice of subscription changes. The decision making process is likely to be led by the Branch Treasurer (Section 3.4.1) who will be responsible for budgeting the Branch's income and expenditure year by year. The Committee should approve and adopt the budget plan, and any change in subscription that it entails. The Branch Annual General Meeting is the most opportune time for the Treasurer to report the details to the membership.

While it may appear sensible to keep the Branch subscription as low as possible, if the Branch is to provide the equipment necessary for thorough training and adventurous diving, the subscription level must be realistic.

Charging for boat trips, gas fills from the Branch compressor, pool admissions, etc. brings in useful income, but introduces problems of making sure that money collected is remitted to the Treasurer and banked. It may be easier not to make such charges but to build them into the Branch subscription - in other words, make everything free within a higher subscription. Remember these charges only really cover running costs.

New members undergoing basic training put Branch diving equipment - and instructors! – to heavy use. By way of compensation, it is worth considering an additional 'new member training levy' to fund the provision and upkeep of training equipment.

New member training levy – to prevent being classed as commercial the training levy should only cover the additional resources a new member under training will utilise, for example: cost of breathing gas used (5 sheltered water sessions plus 5 open water), say, 8 cylinders at £5.00 a fill gives £40.00. Remember this levy could not be charged to trainees who supplied their own equipment.

Branch Direct Debit:

BSAC has introduced the capability for members to pay their Branch subscription by Direct Debit, via BSAC Headquarters, however, Branches need to be 'signed-up' to the programme before a member may pay their Branch subscription by this method. Branch Membership Secretaries need to be aware that under Direct Debit regulations BSAC Headquarters are required to send to the member information about monies to be taken from their bank account.

Diving Activities:

Income will usually be generated by diving expeditions (trips) either with the Branches own boat(s) or from the charter of a commercial dive boat.

There is no 'Golden Rule' on fixing a Branch's boat fees, below are some options:

- Take the total costs (running and standing) and split them among those taking part. This includes depreciation on assets like boats plus insurance, storage, maintenance and repair costs.
- Take the running costs only and split them among those taking part. This option only covers items like fuel used, towing and launching fees. The standing costs are covered by Branch funds i.e. the members' Branch subscription.
- Have all costs covered by the Branch's subscription.

Hiring a commercial dive charter can also be financed in a number of ways:

- The Branch pays all charges and then recovers the costs from those members going on the trip. The Branch takes the risk that if the trip is cancelled it will have to pay any charges due.
- The Branch pays all charges, but recovery of the costs comes from 80 per cent of the trip's capacity (10 out of a trip taking 12). The extra income can be set against future charges payable when a charter is cancelled.
- The expedition organiser collects the charter fee from the members going and pays the charter direct. Those going would have to accept to pay any cancellation charges that become due. At no time do charter monies go through the Branch's accounts.

Fundraising & Social Activities:

Monies produced from these activities can help bolster Branch funds. It must be borne in mind that any monies raised from non-members (i.e. the public) could make the Branch liable for Tax on the proceeds.

Other Income:

Branches may have a clubhouse or other property that is hired out to organisations or individuals. These would be considered commercial activities, for Tax purposes the Branch would have to keep and maintain commercial accounts to satisfy the HM Revenue & Customs. There will be Health & Safety and Trading Standards regulations to observe, it is recommended that specialist business advice be sort.

3.6.4. Expenditure

Expenditure means any money flowing out of the Branch's accounts. A Branch Treasurer (Section 3.4.1) needs to keep a close eye on how much money is going out to ensure there is sufficient in the Branch's accounts to cover it.

Authority:

The authority to pay for the services or goods the Branch uses rests with the Branch Committee. Any delegation of their authority should be recorded in the Minutes (Section 3.4.4) of Committee meetings.

Delegation can cover such things as:

- Who can sign cheques; and how many signatories are required.
- How much can be spent in any one transaction.
- The total amount, over a number of transactions, can be spent on a specific topic.
- Over what time frame must the transaction be concluded by.

BSAC Subscriptions:

As stated in BSAC membership subscriptions (Section 3.6.3), monies will be paid monthly for BSAC membership subscriptions from Branch funds.

BSAC Mail Shop Orders:

There are benefits to the Branch ordering items for members from BSAC Mail Shop, bulk orders will cost less per item of dispatch. New member's training packs, manuals, instructional aids, etc can all be ordered through the Branch.

Please do NOT submit BSAC Mail Shop orders with Membership Returns, or vice-versa, as this may cause a delay in processing your order / membership returns. Separate letters and cheques speed up both Membership and BSAC Mail Shop order processing.

Diving Activities:

The payment for diving related items:

- Assets i.e. boats,
- diving equipment,
- VHF Licence,
- charter boat hire,
- travel & accommodation on diving expeditions,
- training aids,
- etc.

Facilities Hire:

Payment to provide:

- Pool hire,
- lecture rooms,
- open water facilities,
- etc.

Fundraising & Social Activities:

Payment to provide:

- room / hall hire,
- entertainment,
- transport,
- meal deposits,
- etc.

Insurance:

It is a sensible safeguard to insure Branch assets / equipment against loss. Branch Committees are advised to have:

- Equipment insurance: Diving equipment owned by the Branch should be insured as a minimum against loss / theft.
- Boat insurance: For Third Party / Public Liability risks, in line with Article 87.(E), and obviously such a valuable asset should be insured against loss and damage. A marine / boat insurance policy should provide this cover as well as protection against loss, theft, and damage. The marine policy should also cover members while they are being trained to use the boat.
- Compressor insurance: While damage or injury caused by improper or negligent use of a Branch compressor is covered by the Membership Liability Policy, damage or injury caused by mechanical failure of the compressor is not. Separate 'engineering policies' are available to cover compressors against mechanical failure, and Branches are advised to seek such cover.
- Loan repayment insurance: If the Branch has taken out loans to fund the purchase of equipment or assets. Without this cover all Branch Committee Members are equally liable to repay any loan, even if taken out by a previous

Committee.

- Premises Insurance: It makes sense to insure any premises owned or rented by the Branch. Advice should be sought from a reliable insurance broker.

Expenses:

Branch members are not expected to spend their own money supporting Branch activities, for example, paying the deposits of the annual dinner dance or a charter boat; these would be paid by the Branch that would then recover the costs from those members attending or participating in the activity. There are times when it is easier or more convenient for members to pay for these items then claim the money back from Branch funds. As a guide BSAC's Expenses Policy can be found at <http://www.bsac.org/page/682/expenses-policy.htm>.

3.6.5. Assets

Acquisition of assets should match the growth and needs of the Branch. For example, if the Branch has a regular commitment to training, it must have training equipment. It cannot train without it and if the money is spent on say, a deposit on a new boat and engine, you could find that you do not attract new members because they cannot be trained and without their subscriptions, you cannot service the boat purchase loan. If the money had been spent on training equipment, it could have resulted in an increase in membership and hence the funds - albeit a little later - for the boat. It all takes careful planning!

Provision for Maintenance and Replacement of Assets:

The wise Branch will have a regular savings plan so that when major assets, such as the boat or engine finally expires or needs an unexpected repair, the funds are there. If they are not, then it's back to shore diving! These are the sort of funds to have in a deposit or savings account where they will earn interest. If you had the good fortune to buy your first Branch boat with a Lottery Sports Fund or Foundation for Sport and the Arts grant, you will be expected to show how you propose to fund its eventual replacement. You are most unlikely to be eligible for a further grant for replacement purposes.

Branch Premises:

If you have your own clubhouse, you will want to know that Local Authorities are permitted to give discretionary rate relief to sports clubs. However, Local Authorities are becoming less sympathetic and the amount varies from Authority to Authority. This may be up to 100% for clubs, which are not conducted or established for profit. The Local Government Finance Act, 1988, Section 47 applies. Branch Treasurers are advised to seek further advice from their local authority Rating Department.

If your Branch is considering registering as a charity advice should be sought from BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3).

Storage / Safekeeping:

Having worked hard, fundraising or filling in a Lottery Sports Fund application, you will not want your assets (boat, training equipment, etc) lost or stolen.

There are some simple precautions that can be adopted:

- Mark each item with the Branch name or an identifying symbol.
- Record serial numbers in an asset register.
- Take photographs of equipment to prove you once had it.
- Purchase and use anti-theft devices.
- Ensure all items are accounted for at the end of each activity.
- Ensure all items are returned to their correct storage location at the end of each activity.
- Make it a condition that members sign equipment out / in.

3.6.6. Liabilities

A Liability is the accounting term given to payments that haven't been made, but there is a legal obligation to pay.

Examples could comprise:

- The cost of a confirmed charter, before the charter date.
- A member's subscriptions fees if they've paid more than one month in advance.
- Utility service(s) the Branch might use.

3.6.7. Hiring out Equipment

Branch assets sitting in a cupboard or standing on a driveway are not very productive, it is possible to help finance their replacement by allowing Branch members to hire Branch equipment. The knack is striking a balance between ensuring you meet maintenance and replacement costs whilst providing a service to members.

The Branch Treasurer should be able to calculate a 'hire' rate for each asset, for example, a Regulator, Buoyancy Compensator Device, Cylinder and weight belt hire would be £x.xx per day. This would allow trainees who haven't yet bought their own equipment the opportunity to dive, it will also give them some encouragement to purchase their own equipment.

It is unlikely the Branch boat would be hired out. If members want to go diving, it should be organised by the Branch using Branch equipment.

If the Branch has a compressor there is a temptation to offer gas to non-members, this is a commercial activity that would require commercial insurance at the least.

Setting a realistic level of Branch subscription that allows appropriately qualified members free use of Branch equipment may be altogether simpler, and avoids the administrative problems of charging and collecting the money!

If assets are hired to non-Branch members then the Branch is running a commercial operation and will have to comply with all the relevant legislation, expert legal advice should be sought.

3.6.8. Audit

Auditors are not legally required (unless the Branch is supplying any form of commercial trade), but it is recommended that the accounts are independently audited / checked before the Branch's Annual General Meeting. This gives the Branch membership, the Committee and the Treasurer some assurance that all is in order.

Section 3.7 Social & Fund-raising Activities

3.7.1. Social Meetings

A diving club is also a social club, catering for all classes of membership. Make your club a pleasure to belong to. A good social programme helps.

Dry meetings - are mainly social events, but may have an educational or instructional element. They can also be opportunities for fund raising. The frequency of dry meetings is a matter of Branch policy, but if they are used as opportunities for member education - guest speakers, film or slide shows, etc. - then a monthly programme could be adopted. Ideas for dry meetings:

- Guest speakers - Regional Coach, BSAC Council or National Diving Committee Members, Speakers from kindred bodies such as Marine Conservation, Nautical Archaeology etc., Commercial Divers, Water Authorities, First Aid talk / demonstration, members from other Branches who are engaged in an interesting project.
- Films and slide shows - Films on diving and related subjects from film hire libraries, member's diving holiday slides and videos.
- Inter-Branch quiz on diving topics or any other subject.
- Social events - Skittles, Barbecue, Karaoke, Discos, Cheese and Wine Tasting.

It is a good idea to include a 'Chairperson's Report' session at monthly Dry Meetings. This report may only take a few minutes and gives the Chairperson and / or other Branch Officers the opportunity to brief membership on the current activities and decisions of the Branch Committee, to announce plans for future diving and social activities, or to pass on any other matters of interest to members.

Branch Dinner – an annual dinner or disco / dance may be a popular occasion and the following points should be considered when planning / organising. Plan well in advance. Decide how big the event is to be and approximate cost of the tickets, then talk to hotels in the neighbourhood about availability of suitable rooms. Visit them to check the facilities and discuss menus, a bar extension, disco / dance facilities. Check if a 'Public Address' system is available, if there are to be speeches and presentations after the dinner.

The hotel should be able to give you a 'per head' price for the facilities and meal, but you may well find that a bar extension, disco, PA system etc. are extras. You will also have to take into account the cost of tickets and publicity. As a result of these costs you will be able to price the tickets.

Having found suitable facilities and menu, book early, if the event is to be at a weekend, remember that Friday and Saturday nights at hotel banqueting suites are usually booked well in advance, especially in the festive season around Christmas and the New Year. Some points to consider:

- Publicise early. Let members know the date, venue and ticket price as soon as possible so they can make plans to be there. Start selling tickets - get the money into the Branch bank account.
- Guest of Honour. If you want to have a fairly formal occasion with after dinner speeches and a presentation of Branch awards. Time for these must be planned into the timetable for the event. Guests of Honour should be contacted and invited in good time and accommodation arranged if the guest should have

to make a long journey to attend. Make sure all awards to be presented are prepared in time.

- Seating plan. Members will want to sit with friends so try to see that they can. The seating plan for the top table needs some thought. Place the Guest of Honour at the centre of the table with their partner on the left: and the Branch Chairperson beside their partner. The Chairperson's partner will sit on the right of the Guest of Honour. Other Branch Officers and partners with ladies and gentlemen alternating places will fill the table.
- Master of Ceremonies. Choose someone with a commanding personality and strong voice. The MC leads the VIPs to the top table and sees them correctly placed and seated. He will call upon a member to say Grace, and after the dinner, will propose any toasts and will introduce in turn those who are to make speeches and present awards.
- The BSAC Grace. This pre-dinner Grace was composed by BSAC Vice-President Kendall McDonald for the Club's 21st Anniversary Banquet in the presence of its President, HRH Prince Charles, at the Guildhall, London, in 1974.

“Almighty God, protect these Thy servants who go about their business in the deep of the sea. Lead them back safely to Thy sunlight. Keep the ills of the depths from them. And let them, having seen the secrets of Thine oceans, seek only to conserve such wonders for those who will follow after”.

- Speeches. Try to keep these brief and light-hearted, and avoid 'in jokes' which the majority may not understand.
- Awards and presentations. Again, try to keep these brief, by awarding major Branch trophies only.
- Transportation. Finally, consider minibus or coach hire, with door-to-door delivery home, so people can really enjoy the evening without fear of the breathalyser.

3.7.2. Fundraising

Don't miss the chance for fundraising! Run a Tombola or a raffle for a series of appropriate purchased or donated prizes.

All the advice above that applies to social activities applies equally to fundraising.

Responsibility for Chapter: Membership Department

Updates and amendments to this Chapter should be directed to membership@bsac.com

Chapter 4 – Management of Diving

Section 4.1 BSAC Qualifications

4.1.1. Diver Qualifications

Snorkel:

Experienced Snorkeller – This is an introductory course, available to anyone who is confident in the water and capable of swimming. It will train them in the use of basic snorkelling equipment of mask, fins and snorkel in a pool environment. No age limit is imposed but younger students should be confident in the water.

Snorkel Diver – A BSAC Member, who has achieved the level of Basic Snorkel Diver and progressed with pool training to be proficient in the basic snorkelling skills and been assessed for readiness for open water snorkelling.

On completion of training the student should be competent in the safe and correct use of mask, fins and snorkel for surface and brief breath-hold dives in warm waters. Membership of the BSAC is mandatory to embark on this training course.

Ocean Snorkel Diver – A BSAC Member, who has achieved the status of Snorkel Diver, and trained further to take a full and active part in open water snorkelling activities, including rescue techniques and further advanced exercises.

This grade of student, on completion of training, should be competent in the safe use of all appropriate open water snorkelling equipment including protective clothing and should be able to act safely as one of a buddy pair of snorkelers.

Advanced Ocean Snorkel Diver – A BSAC Member, who has achieved the status of Ocean Snorkel Diver, and trained to have a greater level of theoretical knowledge in all aspects of snorkelling and having broad practical experience of snorkel diving. The Advanced Ocean Snorkel Diver should know how snorkelling skills might be applied to specialist activities.

Snorkel Dive Manager – A BSAC Member, who has achieved the status of Advanced Ocean Snorkel Diver and trained to have further theoretical knowledge of snorkel diving and having practical experience of snorkel dive planning and leadership of snorkelling activities. The Snorkel Dive Manager must also hold the BSAC Advanced Snorkel Lifesaver Award and on completion of the course will be capable of organising and supervising group snorkelling activities.

SCUBA:

Ocean Diver – An Ocean Diver is defined as a diver who is competent to conduct dives:

- With another Ocean Diver or with a Sports Diver, within the restrictions of the conditions already encountered during their training.
- With a Dive Leader or higher grade, to expand their experience beyond the conditions encountered during their training, under the supervision of a Dive Manager.
- To a depth which is initially limited to the maximum experienced during training, but which can subsequently be extended progressively, under the supervision of a Qualified Instructor (QI), to a maximum of 20m.
- Using breathing gas mixes of Air, Nitrox 32 or Nitrox 36.
- Not requiring mandatory decompression stops.
- Under the on-site supervision of a Dive Manager with respect to site selection,

conditions and dive plan where other divers, capable of providing assistance and rescue, are available at the surface.

- Within BSAC safe diving recommendations.

Sports Diver – A Sports Diver is defined as a diver who is competent to:

- Conduct dives with an Ocean Diver within the restrictions of the conditions already encountered by the Ocean Diver during their training, and under the supervision of a Dive Manager.
- Conduct dives with another Sports Diver, within the restrictions of the conditions already encountered during their training or previous experience.
- Conduct dives with a Dive Leader or higher grade, to expand their experience beyond that previously encountered, under the supervision of a Dive Manager.
- Dive to a depth which is initially limited to 20 m, but which can subsequently be extended progressively, under the supervision of a Qualified Instructor, to a maximum of 35m.
- Use breathing gas mixes up to Nitrox 36.
- Plan and conduct dives requiring mandatory decompression stops.
- Rescue a casualty and provide Basic Life Support.
- Conduct dives where other divers, capable of providing assistance and rescue management skills, are available at the surface.
- Conduct dives within BSAC safe diving recommendations.

Dive Leader - A Dive Leader is defined as a diver who:

- Can plan and lead a range of dives including those requiring detailed dive, breathing gas and decompression requirements planning.
- Has the skill and level of knowledge to progressively extend their skills to take part in a wide range of adventurous dives.
- Has rescue management skills.
- Is competent to manage and supervise dives to locations well known to the Branch, or using experienced skippers, or in conditions not normally described as 'challenging'.
- Can dive to a depth which is initially limited to 35m, but which can subsequently be extended progressively to a maximum of 50m.
- Can conduct dives with divers of any grade, to expand their experience beyond that previously encountered by those divers, under the supervision of a Dive Manager.
- Can conduct experience building dives with trainee Ocean Divers, within the restrictions of the conditions already encountered by the trainee Ocean Diver, and under the supervision of a Dive Manager.

The Dive Leader course continues to build on the skills and knowledge of the diver. However, the experience element becomes increasingly important. The definitions of the qualifying dives therefore cover a wide range of conditions to provide the essential consolidation of skills and knowledge.

Advanced Diver – An Advanced Diver is defined as a diver who is comprehensively trained, experienced and responsible, and who can manage and supervise:

- A wide range of adventurous and challenging diving activities.
- Branch diving expeditions to explore unfamiliar locations.
- Branch diving activities including dives utilising developing technology and techniques.

While Advanced Divers do not necessarily need to be qualified to use emerging technologies themselves, they need to know enough about them to understand how to safely incorporate them within Branch diving.

First Class Diver - A First Class Diver is defined as a diver who:

- A level of practical diving skill and knowledge beyond advanced diver.
- The ability to organise groups of divers and lead major diving expeditions to achieve specific aims or objectives.
- The ability and knowledge to contribute to the BSAC at a Branch, regional and national level.

4.1.2. Instructor Qualifications

Snorkel:

Assistant Snorkel Instructor (Minimum age 16 years) – A Snorkel Diver, who has received training in instructional techniques in a confined water environment through a Nationally organised Snorkel Instructor Course. (The Assistant Snorkel Instructor may only train snorkellers under the direct supervision of a Snorkel Instructor and must be a current member of the BSAC).

Dolphin Snorkel Instructor (Minimum age 18 years) – A snorkel diver who has received training in the practical snorkelling instructional techniques targeted specifically at the training of under 18's in a confined water environment and assessed to be competent and confident to deliver the Dolphin Diver course. This instructor award is specific to corporate snorkelling events.

Snorkel Instructor (Minimum age 16 years) – A Snorkel Diver, who has been trained and assessed in a confined water environment, by BSAC Snorkel Instructor Trainers, as competent and confident to teach to Snorkel Diver level. (Those wishing to gain this qualification must be members of the BSAC and must maintain membership if they wish to use the qualification).

Advanced Snorkel Instructor (Minimum age 16 years) – A Snorkel Instructor and Snorkel Dive Manager, who holds the Advanced Snorkel Lifesaver Award and has taken an Advanced Snorkel Instructor Course at National level and who has passed the subsequent assessments.

Snorkel Instructor Trainer (Minimum age 18 years) – An Advanced Snorkel Instructor who has been Nationally assessed working on Snorkel Instructor Trainer and Assessment Courses. The Chief Examiner for Snorkelling approves and maintains the active Snorkel Instructor Trainer database and is responsible for allocation of staff to National events.

Note: All Snorkel Instructors under the age of 18 years must be supervised by an adult.

SCUBA:

Open Water Instructor (Minimum age 18 years) – The Open Water Instructor grade is the first level of BSAC Qualified Instructor and is the primary grade of instructor responsible for

teaching within the Branch and in BSAC Centres. Open Water Instructor consists of two core separately examined components, i.e. Practical Instructor and Theory Instructor. Open Water Instructors are able to teach all elements of the Diver Training Programme up to Dive Leader. In addition Open Water Instructors who are also Advanced Divers are able to teach most of the Advanced Diver syllabus though 3 components of this diver grade are required to be taught by an Advanced Instructor. Open Water Instructors are also able to supervise training provided within the Branch by Assistant Diving Instructors.

Open Water Instructor with Instructor Develop Course endorsement – this is an optional course that provides the Open Water Instructor with Instructor Trainer skills to aid in the development of their own branch instructors.

Advanced Instructor – The Advanced Instructor grade is the second level of BSAC Qualified Instructor and is the primary grade of instructor responsible for teaching within the Branch and in BSAC Centres. Advanced Instructors are able to teach all elements of the Diver Training Programme up to Advanced Diver as well as a wide range of specialist Skill Development Courses. Advanced Instructors have been specifically trained to teach all aspects of Dive Management, to recognise and use alternative teaching methods and are enabled to instruct using a range of alternative skills and techniques. Advanced Instructors also play a very important role in the supervision and development of Instructors within a Branch both in supervising training provided by Assistant Diving Instructors and helping them prepare for assessment to become Open Water Instructors. Advanced Instructor is the entry requirement for further progression to become an Instructor Trainer.

Instructor Trainers – Advanced Instructors who wish to be involved in Instructor Training are invited to attend an Instructor Training Course (ITC) and then subsequently work with approved Instructor Trainer mentors on Instructor Foundation and Open Water Instructor Courses. Once they have demonstrated a satisfactory level of competence and confidence a recommendation is made by the event Senior Instructor to the National Instructor Chief examiner who is responsible for approval of all Instructor Trainers and instructor standards.

National Instructor – National Instructors are really important to the organisation - they are the ones who bring forward new courses and adapt to technical developments in the sport. They have to ensure the safety and the quality of all of the training offered through our extensive instructor base.

4.1.3. Previous BSAC Qualifications

There are times when Qualified Instructors or Branch Officers, particularly the Diving Officer, are presented with old, previous or superseded BSAC Qualifications. In the first instance it is suggested that a discussion is held with the individual to establish the knowledge / skills gap (if any) exists and how the individual can be brought up-to-date. BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) should be contacted if further assistance is required.

Section 4.2 Diver Training

4.2.1. Conduct of Branch Training

It is not the intention of this manual to tell you how to conduct lessons in the classroom, pool or open water. The best way to learn these techniques is to attend Instructor Training Scheme courses to qualify as a BSAC Qualified Instructor. Full information on these courses is available on BSAC Website, see here.

4.2.2. Diving Instruction

If training is to be efficient and effective, it must be carefully organised and thoroughly conducted. This is the one area that above all, requires attention to detail and a professional attitude on the part of all concerned. While a dictionary defines a 'professional' as one who provides a service for financial reward, the word is also associated with someone who takes a pride in doing a job thoroughly. It is this latter definition, which should apply to teaching within a BSAC Branch. Efficiently conducted training will keep members happy: it also minimises the possibility of accidents.

Having joined a Branch, new members typically expect to begin training without delay and to make speedy progress - as perhaps they were promised when they took part in an Introduction to Diving / Try a Dive Course run by the Branch. Is the Branch able to keep this promise? BSAC Centre staff face the possibility of Consumer Protection Legislation if promised goods and services are not supplied. While such legislation does not apply to members clubs such as BSAC Branches, they have the same moral responsibility to provide the opportunities and services that were promised to new members when they were recruited.

A professional approach to the organisation and conduct of training will see that such promises are met as far as possible, and that comprehensive training is given. Not only is this good for the trainee, it also safeguards the instructors.

4.2.3. Independent Instructors

Instructors are reminded that for BSAC to maintain proper quality control, BSAC does not support independent instructors. All instructors must operate either through a BSAC Branch, Coaching Team or as a professional in a BSAC recognised training Centre.

4.2.4. Instructional Aids

Each BSAC Instructor should ideally have their own copies of the following documents:

Snorkel Instruction:

Snorkel Instructor Manual, which includes all the training material needed to teach the BSAC Snorkel Training Programme:

- Snorkelling for All Manual
- Introductory snorkelling pack
- Course Manuals for Snorkel Diver and Advanced Snorkeller
- Pool prompt cards for Snorkel Diver and Advanced Snorkeller training
- Student course notes and badges supporting the Dolphin Diver course
- Downloadedable certificates
- Snorkel Dive Managing slate
- Snorkelling Qualification Record Books

SCUBA Instruction:

The BSAC Instructor Manual, which is DVD based, contains instructor notes for each theory and practical lesson and is supplied with the original visual aids, together with Sample Theory Assessment papers.

Prompt Cards - waterproof slates on which practical lesson contents are printed are available for the Ocean Diver, Sport Diver, Dive Leader and Advanced Diver Training Programmes.

Branch Resource of Training Materials:

Branches are advised to hold a resource of the above BSAC publications, and for the appropriate sections / individual lesson materials to be made available to those who actually present lessons, for preparation and presentation purposes. Care needs to be taken in setting up and running a system, which ensures that these materials are made available in good time, and recovered soon after each lesson.

Student Study Packs:

Study Packs, containing Student Workbooks, The Diving Manual and Qualification Record Book, are available for Ocean Diver to Advanced Diver training. Student Workbooks give trainees the opportunity to read up theory lessons in advance / as revision, and give advice on what should be studied before each practical lesson.

4.2.5. Content of Diver Training Lessons

The BSAC Instructor Manual contains BSAC's recommendations for a comprehensive programmed learning course in diving. After commencing with a statement of the Achievement Targets for the lesson, abbreviated instructor notes (and the associated supporting materials) set out the information to be presented, the standards to be reached and a progression, which the instructor can follow to reach the desired lesson targets.

While every effort should be made to follow the recommended course progression and qualifying standards, there may be flexibility in the individual lessons that achieve the lesson targets. The BSAC believes that they are within the scope of the majority of Branches and Centres but if local conditions or individual ability, see Access to BSAC Branch Services (Section 3.5.8) make compliance with any aspect of a lesson impractical, then common sense and Safe Diving must prevail.

A BSAC Qualified Instructor, the Branch Diving Officer, a BSAC Branch or a BSAC Centre shall not add to or subtract from BSAC's training and qualifying requirements for any diver qualification (Section 4.1.1). Branches that require additional skills and knowledge because of unusual or unique diving circumstances are not permitted to include them as a mandatory requirement for any diver qualification. Students should gain these additional skills and knowledge as required for the conditions and for no other reason.

Apart from suggesting in the BSAC Instructor Manual the duration of each course leading to a BSAC qualification, the Club does not require any minimum period of time to elapse between the achievement of qualifications. Once all qualifying conditions are met there is nothing to be gained by demanding 'yet more experience'. It simply serves to alienate the member.

4.2.6. Who can Teach – and What?

It is BSAC's policy that all instruction shall be undertaken by Qualified Instructors (Section 2.2.1). All instruction must be carried out or supervised (the definition of supervision is contained in the BSAC Instructor Manual) by a Qualified Instructor. A 'supervising' Qualified Instructor may be assisted in presenting individual lessons as shown in Table 4.1.

Training for:	Instructor must be at least (minimum level):
Ocean Diver	Sports Diver + Assistant Diving Instructor (under direct supervision of Qualified Instructor)
Sports Diver	Sports Diver + Assistant Diving Instructor (under direct supervision of Qualified Instructor)

Training for:	Instructor must be at least (minimum level):
Dive Leader	Dive Leader + Assistant Open Water instructor (under supervision of Qualified Instructor)
Advanced Diver	Advanced Diver + Qualified Instructor (some elements require a minimum of Advanced Instructor)

Table 4.1 – Minimum Instructor Qualification

The Qualified Instructor (minimum Open Water Instructor) who oversees open water training should acquaint the instructor with the aims of the training course and lesson contents, which are published in the BSAC Instructor Manual. Providing instructors with relevant lesson materials from the Branch Resource of Training Materials does this best.

Club Instructor is a pre-2002 Qualified Instructor qualification, because no open water assessment was required. Club Instructors are not permitted to supervise Assistant Diving Instructors, Assistant Open Water Instructors or Practical Instructors at open water locations. However, they are permitted to teach open water lessons (to their diver qualification) without the need for another Qualified Instructor to be present.

Technical Instructor:

A Technical Instructor is, as a minimum, an Open Water Instructor with an appropriately recognised technical qualification. The course and instructor standards are defined for each individual course and are available for download from BSAC's website: see Technical Diving - General.

Technical Instructor Trainer:

A Technical Instructor Trainer is, as a minimum, an Advanced Instructor with an appropriately recognised technical instructor qualification. The Technical Instructor Trainer standards are defined for each course type and are available for download from BSAC's website: see Technical Diving - General.

4.2.7. Sequence of Instruction

In the ideally run training programme, theory and practical lessons are presented in the order listed in BSAC's Instructor Manual / Qualification Record Book. It is useful to distinguish between knowledge, skill and experience. Practical ability is frequently best built on a foundation of relevant theory, yet the reverse is seldom true. Hence, Branches should avoid practical training getting well ahead of classroom lessons. Classroom lessons getting ahead of practical skill development are much less of a problem, so try to keep it that way. Logical progression should be observed where appropriate. However, it should be noted that full understanding of Dive Leader and Advanced Diver theory depends on established practical ability and actual diving experience. Maintaining the sequence of lessons also ensures trainees remain focussed on a single body of knowledge.

Attending Theory Lessons for Higher Qualifications:

Where there is no progressive build-up of knowledge over a series of qualifications, there is no real problem in trainees attending lessons for higher qualifications. Members under training for one level of qualification may wish to take a full and active part in classroom lessons for higher qualifications, and this might be encouraged in appropriate cases, for example, a trainee Ocean Diver might attend a Boat Handling theory lesson. However, in subject areas where there is a progressive build up of knowledge over a series of BSAC diving qualifications training should only be signed up when trainees have appropriate prior knowledge. For example:

- An Ocean Diver trainee who has passed the Ocean Diver theory assessment could benefit from Sports Diver theory lessons.
- An Ocean Diver trainee who has not passed the Ocean Diver theory assessment or whose theory training is incomplete, should be discouraged from attending higher qualification theory lessons. The higher-level theory lesson could be disrupted as the instructor may be forced to cover material from lower-level theory lessons.

Attending Practical Lessons for Higher Qualifications:

The principles described in the above sub-section apply equally to trainees wishing to attend practical lessons for higher diver qualifications.

4.2.8. Skill Development Courses

Branch Diving Officers and Instructors should bear in mind that elements of the Diver Training Programme can be achieved by attending a Skill Development Course e.g. Oxygen Administration or Practical Rescue Management. A trainee wishing to attend a Skill Development Course is required to meet the entry requirements of that course. A full list of courses with the entry requirements can be found in the annual 'Programme of Courses & Events' or obtained from BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3).

4.2.9. Refresher Training

If many months or years have passed between attending lessons and actually gaining a diver qualification, it is quite reasonable for the Branch Diving Officer to require the student to undertake refresher training by attending / conducting specific lesson(s) again.

Qualified divers, who have not dived for many months, or those rejoining / returning to the sport after a long absence, should undertake refresher training to bring them back to the qualification level, before being allowed to take an active part in Branch diving at their particular level. The longer the interval since the last dive, the greater the amount of refresher training needed.

BSAC does not publish Refresher Training programmes, since the needs of every 'reactivating' member are likely to differ widely. A few pool sessions, some theory study and a few supervised open water divers are usually sufficient, but if the Branch Diving Officer feels that more extensive retraining is necessary, they are at liberty to require it.

Refresher training is also useful for all members over the winter months and in particular, just before the start of the diving season. The BSAC's 'Safety First' programme is designed for this purpose. Full information and support materials are downloadable from BSAC Website.

4.2.10. Physical Contact During Practical Training

During some aspects of pool and open water practical training, especially when teaching rescue skills, physical contact may be necessary. Some sensitive people may object to this, and it is important that the reasons why contact is at times necessary are clearly explained at an early stage in the training programme, perhaps during the first Ocean Diver theory lesson 'OT1 – Ocean Diver Training'. In the case of children undertaking training, the reasons for such contact should also be explained to parents or guardians.

The problems of possible offence caused by necessary physical contact can be largely avoided by arranging for 'buddy pairs' under training to be of the same gender. Where contact is necessary, say so and explain why during lesson briefings. If pairing trainees by

gender is not possible, consider using a trained member of the same gender as the subject for a trainee to practice 'close contact' training such as during Basic Live Support training.

For the reasons contained the Clubmark standard in 'Adults and Children at Risk' (Section 2.1.1), Rescue Breaths and Chest Compressions should not be directly demonstrated, or mimicked, on minors by an adult. They should be taught by one of the following means:

- The instructor demonstrates on another adult whilst the child watches
- The instructor talks the child through the drill, with the child using another child as the partner
- The instructor talks the child through the drill with the child using a parent as a partner

If the child shows any discomfort at the prospect of actually making a seal during Rescue Breath training with any partner, then the drill should be carried out with a simulation or using a resuscitation manikin. The use of resuscitation manikins is strongly recommended for all who are learning Rescue Breaths and Chest Compressions.

4.2.11. Classroom Lessons

A proper classroom is by far the best place to present theory lessons. The efficient presentation of a classroom lesson requires these special facilities:

Students should be comfortable, in terms of seating (at desks or with writing surfaces available if notes are to be taken), suitable temperature, illumination, and ventilation. There should be no visual or audible distractions. The instructor and the teaching aids used should be the focus of student attention.

Teaching aids such as chalkboard, overhead projector (OHP) and screen, video monitor screen, etc. should be available - and the room should be large enough for their use.

Dedicated classrooms provide the right mood for learning and should be the first choice. As classrooms become more improvised so the teaching suffers from an increasing number of distractions and hence is less efficient. Therefore it is recommended the instructor carries out a Risk Assessment prior to the commencement of lessons.

4.2.12. Practical Lessons: Sheltered Water (Pool)

Risk Assessment:

In line with BSAC policy on Health & Safety (Section 2.1.2) carrying out a Risk Assessment is recommended for all Sheltered Water activities. The guidance contained on BSAC Website at Risk Assessment should be followed.

The Training Pool:

The ideal and safest place to learn initial diving skills is in the confines of a swimming pool, or some other sheltered water training area where the conditions approximate those of a swimming pool. Branches and Centres may train in open water, but the more extreme conditions met in the UK often mean that the rate of learning - initially, at least - may be slower than in the clearer and warmer waters of a swimming pool.

The ideal pool for diver training will have an area with a depth of between 3 - 4m and good water clarity. There should be safe access / exit points and ladders able to bear the weight of fully kitted divers. Where a depth of 3 - 4m is not available, including a longer

underwater approach can simulate activities where descents to such depths are required.

Diver training is not compatible with other uncontrolled / public activities going on in the pool at the same time unless they are clearly zoned off, so exclusive use by a diving club is preferred.

Make-up of Groups for Training:

This depends on the Branch's policy about membership recruitment. It is administratively and instructionally simpler to recruit and teach groups of students, rather than take members on individually and hope to fit them into the Branch training scheme.

The ratio of students to instructor should also be considered. An ideal SCUBA-training group is either two or four trainees, so they get used to the concept of the buddy system. A larger SCUBA group is less efficient because trainees are waiting (and getting cold) while others practice the drill, and the instructor cannot devote so much time to each individual. Larger groups may be more manageable when teaching surface oriented activities such as snorkelling.

Management of Pool Sessions:

In a busy Branch training pool, it may be advantageous to appoint a Pool Manager to supervise the overall safety of each session. The Pool Manager must liaise closely with the Branch Diving Officer / Training Officer and as a result, be aware of what each group under training is doing and where - and what other uncontrolled / non-training activities are taking place. If Branches are required to provide their own Lifeguard cover (but see Pool Safety Officer Guidelines) the responsibilities of Lifeguards may mean that the role of Pool Manager is superfluous.

The instructor in charge of each group under training will be primarily responsible for their safety, but other supervision, especially of any 'free swimming' / practice activities, may be desirable. The terms of a Branch's pool hire contract are likely to help a Branch decide whether a Pool Manager is a necessary function.

The Need for Control and Discipline – Pool Training:

There are various references in this guidance to the need for a degree of control and discipline in Branch training and diving activities. The Branch Diving Officer or an instructor should make the point in the Ocean Diver course Theory Lesson 'OT1 – Ocean Diver Training' that, for safety and overall efficiency during Branch training and diving activities, members must behave responsibly and accept the need for a degree of control and discipline. For those under training at Branch pool meetings this will include such apparently mundane matters as:

- Attend training sessions regularly and on time
- Bring all you need for both theory and classroom lessons
- Help yourself to progress by private study of Study Guides and The Diving Manual.

Lifeguards at Branch Pool Meetings:

In the UK, the Health and Safety at Work Regulations oblige swimming pool management to provide lifeguard cover when members of the public are using the pool. Branches may find that similar requirements are imposed upon them in respect of their own Branch pool lease. Pool management may require the Branch to pay for the presence of staff lifeguards at their sub-aqua training session - and yet the staff lifeguards, who usually hold

the RLSS Pool Bronze Medallion award, are unlikely to be experienced in diver rescue skills.

When the Diving at Work Regulations 1997 were introduced, BSAC met with the Health & Safety Executive and it was agreed that BSAC Lifesaver Award was a much more appropriate rescue qualification for life-guarding sub-aqua training pool sessions. This is enshrined in a publication prepared jointly by the Health & Safety Executive and Sports England entitled 'Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools'. Further guidance is available from "*Pool Safety Officers Guidelines*" Technical Note T.1.

Should your Branch be asked to pay for the provision of Lifeguards at your pool meeting, or to accept increased pool hire charges to pay for them, ask the Pool Manager or Pool Management Committee to consider allowing you to provide your own team of BSAC Lifesaver Award holders instead. If they have worries about doing so, invite them to seek clarification concerning Health & Safety Executive acceptance of BSAC Lifesaver Award as an alternative standard for sub-aqua pool session lifeguards. BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) can provide an information sheet on the subject, which may be helpful in such cases.

All Branches, in the UK or overseas, should provide lifeguards / safety cover at pool training sessions: it is a sensible and responsible action to take. Encourage members to gain BSAC Lifesaver Award and to join the Branch pool lifeguard team and take their turn in it. Lifeguards should keep a continuous watch on all pool activities by patrolling round the poolside and should be relieved by another lifeguard at 30 - 50 minute intervals. Both Pool Managers and Lifeguards should be conspicuously identified.

Making the most of Pool Time:

The high cost of hiring a swimming pool for Branch training sessions means that every available minute of water time should be used in order to get the best value for money. Consider applying these recommendations:

- Keep groups under training together and with the same instructor if possible. Time will not then be wasted as students find their instructor and the rest of the group. Instructors should tell their group exactly where to assemble on the poolside.
- As far as possible, have students assemble and check equipment prior to the pool session so time is not wasted doing it on the poolside.
- Keep lesson briefings as short as possible. If the class assembles in the foyer of the building, or in the changing room before your pool-time starts, start briefings then and just do buddy and equipment checks on the pool side. De-briefings can also be covered in the same way.
- All instructors should plan the contents and progressions of lessons, and have extra activities planned to occupy students usefully if the lesson is finished early. BSAC Pool Prompt Cards are helpful in this respect.
- Zone the pool by area, depth and (if appropriate) time, so that each activity has the optimum water space for each specific lesson. Ask pool attendants to provide lane-marker ropes to help in zoning. The Branch Diving / Training Officer is likely to be responsible for zoning the pool in accordance with the requirements of each lesson and should tell each instructor where they are to conduct their lesson.
- Identify those in authority. It may be helpful if instructors - as well as the Pool Manager and Lifeguards - are clearly identified by different coloured T-shirts.

4.2.13. Practical Lessons: Open Water

Risk Assessment:

In line with BSAC policy on Health & Safety (Section 2.1.2) carrying out a Risk Assessment is recommended for all Open Water activities. The guidance contained on BSAC Website at Risk Assessment should be followed.

Progression:

There is a fairly simple and logical progression from practical training in the swimming pool to that in open water and generally, the same safeguards apply. Open water training should only begin once all relevant practical training in the pools has been satisfactorily completed.

It helps if trainees embarking on open water practical lessons do so with the same instructor who taught them in the pool. Students know the instructor and the instructor knows them, and may be able to anticipate who is likely to need most care and attention.

Introducing Diving Suits:

In UK waters, progression to open water practical lessons is likely to include the first use of diving suits. It will be necessary to teach students how to dress in diving suits and to give them the opportunity of suit familiarisation in the water before open water lessons actually begin. If this can be done in the pool, so much the better: treat it as an extra pool lesson between Ocean Diver Pool Lessons and the first Open Water Lesson.

With drysuit diving now commonplace in UK, the usual problem when providing drysuit training in the pool is overheating, in which case provide it as an additional open water session before the first Ocean Diver open water lesson. Any diving suit will initially introduce problems of buoyancy control and acclimatisation to cold water, and allowances should be made during initial open water dives.

Some drysuit training is included in the Diver Training Programme and also BSAC Drysuit

Training skill development course is available from the Skill Development Courses page at www.bsac.com.

Structure of Open Water Practical Lessons:

In addition to devoting the greater part of each dive to underwater exploration, Ocean and Sports Diver open water lessons are deliberately structured to include opportunities for trainees to repeat and develop skills initially learned in the pool, but with the added challenges of the real diving environment. These challenges are usually the added factors of protective clothing and associated buoyancy changes, and perhaps cold, turbid and moving water. Some skills such as use of an Alternative Supply, or Controlled Buoyant Lift, need to be repeated 'on a larger scale' while others (e.g. entry and exit to / from open water in full kit, and use of a compass for navigation) can only be learned in open water.

To ensure the development of the trainee into a qualified diver, it is important that all Ocean and Sports Diver open water practical lessons should be seen as structured lessons first and foremost, during which the teaching / training objectives as described in the Training Programme are carried out early in each dive. These drills will only take a few minutes, leaving the greater part of the total dive duration for enjoyable exploration. During the exploration phase, demonstrate and encourage buddy monitoring, dive leadership and Safe Diving.

Should any trainee fail to achieve a satisfactory standard or fail to reach the stated achievement targets in any of the required drills, the open water practical lesson should not be accepted as satisfactorily completed. It should be repeated, but the failed lesson may be recorded as an experience dive.

Instructors for Open Water Lessons - Instructor / Student Ratio:

The BSAC Instructor Manual contains the guidance on Instructor / Student ratios.

Diving Conditions:

Ocean Divers are required to gain experience of a variety of different dive sites and diving conditions concurrently with their open water lessons. Dive Managers and Instructors should plan these lessons accordingly. On the day, the conditions at the site should be safe and manageable by the trainee, bearing in mind their previous exposure and experience. Even though it will lead to disappointment, it would be foolish to put a trainee into rough water and very restricted visibility.

Gaining Experience Concurrently – Ocean and Sports Diver Training:

Foregoing text has explained that the 'Exploratory Dive' element of each Ocean Diver open water lesson requires more emphasis on buddy monitoring and dive leadership rather than specific skills learning and practice. In this case, the Branch Diving Officer can choose to have the dive led by someone who has been assessed as a BSAC Dive Leader, or above. A Dive Leader should be more than capable of supervising a trainee practising and repeating their diving skills while gaining experience, hence building confidence and competence in their new underwater environment.

"New skills must be introduced and developed by a Qualified Instructor."

It is also recognised that, in many Branches, trainees are taken on 'experience dives' to maintain their interest and build confidence levels whilst working towards their diver qualification. Dive Leaders are able to lead these sessions so long as they do not exceed the skill levels achieved and depths reached by the trainee thus far. Clearly such dives

are for fun and experience only, and should not be portrayed to the student as a required part of training or lessons completed. Please refer to the BSAC Instructor Manual for further guidance.

4.2.14. Pool Training: Gas Residues

After weekend dives, it is common practice to use up gas residues in diving cylinders at the next midweek Branch pool training session. These residues may now include Nitrox. BSAC does not consider this to be a problem for either the Instructor or the trainee in the pool only.

4.2.15. Instructor’s Record of Training Given

BSAC Qualified Instructors are advised to record the hours they spend in teaching in their personal Instructor’s Training Log.

Section 4.3 Depth Limits

4.3.1. Diver Qualification Limits

The different BSAC qualification levels initially impose depth limits, but the maximum recommended depth limit of 50m for ‘air’ diving has been adopted by BSAC on the advice of the Royal Navy and Health & Safety Executive. Air becomes an unsafe diving gas at greater depths. Table 4.2 defines depth limits when diving on air for each diver qualification.

BSAC Qualification Level	Depth Limit ‘Air’
Ocean Diver under training	Specific limits for each dive.
Ocean Diver	To a depth which is initially limited to the maximum experienced during training, but which can subsequently be extended progressively, under the supervision of a Qualified Instructor, to a maximum of 20m. No Stop diving only. Using breathing gas mixes of Air, Nitrox 32 or Nitrox 36.
Sports Diver – on qualifying	Dive to a depth which is initially limited to 20m, but which can subsequently be extended progressively, under the supervision of a Qualified Instructor, to a maximum of 35m, and may involve decompression. Use breathing gas mixes up to Nitrox 36.
Dive Leader – on qualifying	Can dive to a depth which is initially limited to 35m, but which can subsequently be extended progressively to a maximum of 50m.
Advanced Diver – following progressive build up to depth	50m.
First Class Diver – following progressive build up to depth	50m.

Table 4.2 – Diver Qualification Depth Limits (Air)

4.3.2. Depth Experience: Sports Divers / Dive Leaders

It should be noted that at the end of the course, the Sports Diver / Dive Leader has only dived to a maximum depth of 20 / 35m respectively, but according to the definition of the Sports Diver / Dive Leader’s abilities (in their Qualification Record Book), they are qualified to dive to a maximum depth of 35 / 50m. When building their depth experience, Sports Divers / Dive Leaders shall follow the requirements for ‘Depth Experience’ described in the

Note that:

- This experience is gained AFTER qualifying as a Sports Diver / Dive Leader and NOT as part of the training to gain that qualification.
- If a Sports Diver / Dive Leader has no wish to dive deeper than initial qualifying depth, they do not have to.
- A Risk Assessment should have been carried out, but for depths greater than 30m this shall be a mandatory requirement.

4.3.3. Depth Experience: Technical Diving

On qualifying as a Sports Diver and have demonstrated diving up to 35 m, a Sports Diver or higher may undertake technical diver training. When diving on diving gas mixtures other than air, different limits apply according to the gas mixture or breathing system used. These limits are covered in the respective gas mixture or breathing system training courses. The following table lists the limit imposed by BSAC 'Mixed Gas' courses:

BSAC Qualification	Depth Limit 'Mixed Gas'
Sports Mixed Gas	50m; Gas mix 20/30
Explorer Mixed Gas	60m; Gas mix 18/35
Advanced Mixed Gas	80m; Custom mix
Expedition Mixed Gas	TBA

Table 4.3 – BSAC 'Mixed Gas' courses Depth Limits

Section 4.4 Qualifications

4.4.1. BSAC Qualification Record Book (QRB)

The Qualification Record Book (also referred to as the QRB) is a member's prime record of training and qualification. In this respect it becomes a valuable document, which should be treated with care. Wear and tear can be avoided by using a BSAC Qualification Photo-card as portable and durable evidence of qualification.

Do encourage members to take photocopies of their Qualification Record Book as each qualification level is attained, keep them somewhere safe and maintain online records through www.bsac.com. Such copies are invaluable if a Qualification Record Book is lost and needs to be replaced. BSAC Headquarters does not necessarily have up-to-date records of the qualifications achieved by members, other than those awarded at national level, i.e. Qualified Instructors and First Class Divers. Also, do keep Branch training records for every member. The Branch Diving Officer's Record Card is available from BSAC Mail Shop for this purpose.

Following the award of a Diver Qualification by the Lead Instructor (Section 4.4.4) the member sends, to BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3), proof of their new qualification and a photo ID to receive their "Q" Card – the cost of which was included in the Training Pack.

4.4.2. Training and Assessment

Authority to Conduct Training and Assessments:

BSAC's policy on instruction (Sections 2.2.1) and the section on 'Who Can Teach – and What' (Section 4.2.6) define who can conduct lessons. However, the limitation that needs to be born in mind: a Qualified Instructor who is a Dive Leader cannot train or assess a

member for the Advanced Diver qualification. Only a Qualified Instructor who is already an Advanced Diver may do so.

Note: some elements of Advanced Diver training must be conducted by a minimum of an Advanced Instructor.

Signing up Training and Assessments:

This is the responsibility of Qualified Instructors within the Branch. While training may be delegated to Assistant Diving Instructors appointed by the Branch Diving Officer / Training Officer / Qualified Instructor, qualification record signatories shall only be those who have been examined at national level.

Qualified Instructors may sign-up training (up to their own diver qualification):

- Theory Instructor may only sign-up theory lessons.
- Practical Instructors may only sign-up practical lessons.

The award of Club Instructor (Section 4.2.6) ceased in 2002, but it is still a recognised Qualified Instructor qualification and may sign up lessons they conduct themselves, theory and practical (Sheltered and Open Water) to their diver qualification.

Supervised theory lessons and practical training conducted by an Assistant Diving Instructor in Sheltered Water (Pool) only. A Club Instructor is not authorised to sign-up training conducted by an Assistant Diving Instructor or Assistant Open Water Instructor in Open Water.

Assistant Diving Instructors who actually conduct lessons may sign Branch Lesson Record Sheets and advise the Qualified Instructor, Training Officer, Branch Diving Officer and Records Officer as appropriate, so that the Branch's own records of training are kept up to date. However, the signature in the member's Qualification Record Book must be that of a Qualified Instructor.

4.4.3. Theory Tests

Procedures for conducting Theory Tests are fully explained in the BSAC Instructor Manual. Theory Tests may be presented as either a written test – consistent and convenient if there are several students – or as an oral test where individual students are asked questions and give spoken answers. The latter format is particularly discreet and therefore helpful if a student has a learning or reading difficulty.

4.4.4. Authority: Award BSAC Diving Qualifications

In accordance with Diving Qualifications (Section 3.2.3) diving qualifications (Section 4.1.1) are awarded by the BSAC facility (Branch or Centre) that completed the training. The signature on the qualification page is purely confirmation that all the required elements for that diving qualification have been signed by a Qualified Instructor.

Both Branches and Centres are reminded that training carried out and verified as meeting the training requirements by the signature of a Qualified Instructor is acceptable and does not need to be repeated.

Notwithstanding the above any BSAC Branch or Centre is free to ask a new member or client to do a "check out" dive to confirm current level of dive fitness and baseline skills.

If anyone has any doubts as to the authenticity or membership status of a signatory a telephone call or email to HQ would normally resolve these doubts.

For Dual Members (Section 3.5.6) the above procedure should be followed.

Branch Committee approval is not required because:

The National Diving Officer has delegated the authority to the lead instructor of the Branch, not to the Branch Committee.

The National Diving Officer is not prepared to accept a situation where Committee Members less qualified could veto the decision of the Branch's lead instructor for the award of a diving qualification.

4.4.5. When awarding BSAC Qualifications

Impartiality:

When considering the award of a diving qualification the lead instructor must be impartial and not allow personal differences to prejudice their judgement. If the member has achieved appropriate standards in all the qualification requirements, the qualification should be awarded without delay, but see 'Candidate's overall attitude' (below).

Personality problems can manifest themselves during training and every effort should be made to resolve them, or put them to one side, when considering the award of a qualification.

Lead instructors and Branch Diving Officers are obliged to consider support levels and conditional qualifications where members are unable or become unable to demonstrate competence in fundamental diving skills assessed at Ocean and Sports Diver levels. They should refer to the relevant advice available from BSAC Headquarters and before using it for the first time discuss the particular case with the National Diving Committee's Accessibility Officer accessibility@bsac.com.

Branch Diving Officers should not regard 'pushy members keen to qualify before their time' as either a threat or a problem. If they meet the qualification requirements, qualify them - and use their enthusiasm for the benefit of the Branch! It is far better to have a Branch of happy, qualified members rather than disgruntled ones who are not allowed to qualify because 'their face doesn't fit' or for similar spurious reasons. The higher their qualifications, the more use they are within the Branch.

Candidate's Overall Attitude:

While there is no 'Character Reference' box to tick on any training record page of the member's Qualification Record Book, members seeking a qualification should be expected to display common sense and a duty of care appropriate to the qualification they seek. This becomes progressively more important as they aspire to Dive Leader and Advanced Diver qualifications. Evident absence of 'the right attitude' can be grounds for declining to award a qualification until it changes for the better, but Branch Lead Instructors must be prepared to justify / explain to the member involved any delay in awarding a qualification on these grounds, and provide whatever retraining / guidance is necessary. Regional Coaches can be called in to arbitrate, if necessary.

No Additional Qualifying Conditions:

Please refer to 'The Conduct of Diver Training Lessons' (Section 4.2.5).

Dual Members:

Please refer to Dual Membership (Section 3.5.6).

Lead Instructor's Authority - A Reminder:

The authority of a lead instructor is not absolute, but is delegated to them by the BSAC National Diving Officer. Consequently, it can be withdrawn or over-ridden. Allowing personality problems to stand in the way of awarding a qualification, or demanding more than the published qualifying requirements would be regarded as unreasonably withholding a qualification. In such cases the National Diving Officer might choose to override the decision of a lead instructor, usually following an investigation by the Regional Coach and/or National Diving Committee who would act as an arbiter.

4.4.6. Awarding BSAC Diving Qualifications

Once all qualifying requirements have been met and a member has submitted their Qualification Record Book to the lead instructor then a diving qualification should be granted, it is the lead instructor alone who grants the qualification by signing off the appropriate certificate page in the member's Qualification Record Book, they will also stamp the qualification page with the Club Stamp.

Typically, this may be done at a Branch Committee Meeting, when the award of qualifications would be reported by the lead instructor to the Committee and recorded in Branch Committee Minutes. The Branch Records Officer should be notified so that Branch training records / the Branch Diving Officer's Record Card for the member, can be kept updated.

Once the qualification page has been signed by the Lead Instructor the member can then complete the "Q" Card application form, which came in their Training Pack, and send it to BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) along with a ID type photo. Their "Q" Card will then be dispatched to their home address.

Diving Experience Required for Dive Leader or Advanced Diver:

Members wishing to qualify as Dive Leader or Advanced Diver are required to log at least 20 open water experience dives since gaining their last qualification. These dives should show that the member has taken part in a wide range of different diving activities, experiences and conditions. The BSAC Instructor Manual gives detailed guidance on the open water experience dives required.

Training started prior to the 2007 Diver Training Programme:

A member who is part way through training for a pre-2007 Diver Training Programme course should complete the course under that syllabus. As from the 1st January 2006 BSAC ceased supporting courses started prior to the 2002 Diver Training Programme syllabus. In exceptional situations a Branch Diving Officer may decide that an individual may complete the earlier course. It will be the Branch Diving Officer's responsibility to arrange any support required. The Diver Qualification can only be awarded when the student has completed additional elements from the current Diver Training Programme to bring the member in line with current standards; the relevant Nitrox Workshop(s) should also be completed.

Qualifications above the level held by the lead instructor:

In the event of wishing to qualify an Advanced Diver when the lead instructor does not hold this qualification themselves, the lead instructor must seek guidance, ideally from the BSAC Regional Coach, a Qualified Instructor from within the Branch or from neighbouring Branches whom holds the Advanced Diver qualification. Under these circumstances, they should make the decision as to whether the qualification should be awarded and if so,

should either:

- Recommend to the Branch Committee that the lead instructor awards and signs the qualification.
- Confirm the award and sign the qualification themselves.

In either case, the course of action taken must be recorded in Branch Committee Minutes (Section 3.4.4) and subsequently entered in Branch Training Records.

4.4.7. Certificates and Badges

The BSAC Mail Shop can supply A4 format presentation certificates and cloth badges for all snorkelling and diving qualifications up to Advanced Diver. Branches enter the member's name, sign them and present them, together with a badge, perhaps, to newly qualified members at a Branch's Social Meetings (Section 3.7.1) such as a Dry Meeting or Annual Dinner.

Those who qualify as BSAC Qualified Instructors and First Class Divers receive Qualification Record Book Certificates, a Presentation Certificate and a badge as part of the qualification package.

It is worth remembering BSAC has a selection of Trophies and Awards (Section 1.6) for both individuals and Branches.

4.4.8. BSAC "Q" Cards

A plastic BSAC Diving Qualification Card ("Q" Card) - one can be issued for every BSAC Snorkeller, Diver or Instructor qualification held - serves as a more portable and waterproof evidence of your qualifications. Your photograph appears on the card to give it authenticity. Similar cards are also available for BSAC Technical Qualifications.

Application Forms for BSAC "Q" Cards are now contained in each diver training pack and are also available from BSAC Headquarters. Members who complete a BSAC Technical Qualification are issued a BSAC "Q" Card. Cards can be replaced on payment of the full card price. It is not possible to upgrade a card: a new card will be required for the higher qualification.

Evidence of qualification usually has to be presented to holiday destination Diving Centres before you can book on dive trips and hire equipment. So, if planning to take diving holiday abroad, take at least your membership card to confirm your BSAC Public Liability cover is valid (Note: this is not travel insurance which should be purchased separately) and your BSAC "Q" Card as evidence of your qualification. Also take your Diving Record Book in case you are asked to provide evidence of recent diving experience. It is not unusual for a Dive Resort to require its clients to demonstrate basic diving safety skills before serious diving begins. They do so with your safety in mind.

4.4.9. CMAS Cards

The "World Confederation of Underwater Activities" or "Confédération Mondiale des Activités Subaquatiques" (CMAS) is a world federation of diving organisations, for the UK the Sub-Aqua Association is the member organisation. CMAS does not issue its own diving qualifications, but does enable members in one organisation to match a qualification in another via a system of stars. Following an agreement with the Sub-Aqua Association BSAC members can apply for a CMAS Card of equivalent qualification. Please contact the BSAC Mail Shop who will inform you of the costs and procedure.

4.4.10. Other Agencies: Diving Qualifications

There is no point in wasting Branch instructional time in teaching new members to do things that they can already do. New members who can present diving qualifications issued by other training agencies or national diving federations should not be expected to start again, but neither are they automatically given a corresponding BSAC qualification. Instead, if they wish to advance their training with BSAC, they should be issued with a Statement of Alternative Training (SALT). This scheme is explained in detail on BSAC web Site at Already a Diver.

Section 4.5 Technical Qualifications

4.5.1. Introduction

The range of equipment for diving has expanded since the 1995 when nitrox was introduced into BSAC diving. Members can now train and dive using Semi-closed or Closed Circuit Rebreathers. In 2006, BSAC introduced its own mixed gas diver-training programme supporting open circuit and rebreather divers.

4.5.2. Technical Qualifications

For those wanting to gain appropriate technical qualifications or to take advantage of the new equipment and techniques, they can undertake an appropriate Skill Development Courses.

The courses have been designed to allow for full flexibility, targeting the recreational diver who is looking to extend their basic skills without extending their diving envelope and the diver; who is seeking to extend their diving envelope to 80 metres and beyond. The courses have been tailored to specifically support BSAC Branch members. The courses deliver the level of competence and confidence expected of the diver and also contains BSAC specific content, such as, buddy diving, Dive Management, first aid, maintenance workshop and deep water rescue skills that are not, included in alternative technical agency courses.

The Skill Development Course portfolio includes:

- Accelerated Decompression Procedures Diver
- Advanced Mixed Gas Diver
- Advanced Mixed Gas Rebreather Diver
- Advanced Nitrox
- Mixed Gas Blender
- Nitrox Blender
- Sport Mixed Gas Diver
- Sport Mixed Gas Rebreather Diver

These courses are taught by appropriately qualified Technical Instructors (Section 4.2.6).

Section 4.6 Dive Planning

4.6.1. Diving

Diving shall be conducted in accordance with BSAC Safe Diving, also see "Definition of an Authorised Dive".

4.6.2. Authorised Dives

BSAC Members should make themselves familiar with the document "Definition of an

Authorised Dive”, available on the BSAC Website. The Branch Diving Officer’s responsibilities for authorising diving are contained in this document.

While not wishing to define the minimum number of persons present necessary to make a dive official, the National Diving Committee advises Branch Diving Officers to consider the qualifications and experience of those seeking approval of their dive, and take into account the dive plan, Dive Manager (Section 4.8), Risk Assessment and safety precautions carefully before granting approval.

Guarding Against Unsafe Dives:

There is of course, no way of preventing members taking part in dives which do not have the Branch Diving Officer’s approval (see “Definition of an Authorised Dive”) - indeed, BSAC Public Liability Insurance still applies so long as the dive is carried out in accordance with BSAC diving recommendations (including a Risk Assessment). One danger of such dives is that Ocean Divers or partially trained divers might be tempted or encouraged to take part in dives which are beyond their capabilities. The Branch Diving Officer should guard against this by explaining to and reminding all members of the dangers of diving without adequate training, supervision and / or control, and by asking experienced divers not to encourage members to take part in dives for which they are not prepared or experienced. It should be remembered “Ocean and trainee divers are ONLY allowed to dive on properly managed dives”.

Dives Out-side Safe Diving:

Occasionally members insist on going ahead with plans for dives that the Branch Diving Officer considers unwise, unsafe or beyond the experience of someone in the party (see “Definition of an Authorised Dive”). In these circumstances the Branch Diving Officer’s reservations must be expressed in writing to all members involved, and a copy kept in the Branch records. Inclusion as part of the Branch Diving Officer’s report at the next Committee Meeting will ensure there is a record in the Minutes (Section 3.4.4). Where the advice of the Branch Diving Officer is ignored or disregarded the Branch Diving Officer should take disciplinary action against the individuals. Reference to BSAC disciplinary policy “*BSAC Volunteers – Procedure for change of status*” should be made.

Note: The act of DOING NOTHING could compromise the Branch Diving Officer’s defence if a claim was made. Taking action as described above will help safeguard the Branch Diving Officer and the Branch Committee in the event of an accident and any subsequent legal proceedings that may follow, in that it will show that they made reasonable efforts to forewarn, prevent and discourage those involved.

4.6.3. Branch Diving Programme

All Branches should make an effort to plan a programme of dives and publish it at the start of the diving season. Ideally a copy would be issued to each diving member. It should give the date, venue and name of the Dive Manager for each event. The guidance on the Data Protection Act 1998 (Section 3.5.11) should be followed when including Dive Manager contact details. The Diving Programme should not be restricted to listing one-day diving meetings, but should include Branch diving holidays, Bank Holiday long weekend expeditions, social events and other important dates, which members need to keep in mind.

4.6.4. Why have a Dive Programme?

The varied programme of dives should provide for all levels of ability, from initial open water dives for Ocean Divers to adventurous dives for the more experienced. For those

under training, remember that BSAC has published models for a series of structured open water lessons for Ocean Diver, Sports Diver and Dive Leader qualifications (see the BSAC Instructor Manuals and Instructor Prompt Cards). These may require experience of different diving environments and sites, both coastal and inland.

In a small Branch and with a little planning, most members' interests can be catered for at the same site. It may not be quite so easy for a larger Branch, or where there are a lot of trainees who need to undertake particular open water lessons or gain particular types of diving experience. Some degree of dive site segregation may be desirable. The Branch Diving Officer or Expeditions Leader may recommend that a number of smaller groups operate from several different sites on the same day, rather than all using the same beach, therefore avoiding overcrowding. For example, a group of Advanced Divers might work from a small cove while a party of Ocean Divers are undergoing intensive Sports Diver lessons elsewhere.

Splitting interests in this way can also take place when the Branch is meeting at one site. In this case, there should be two separate Dive Managers; one for the advanced group, another for the group training. Consideration should be given to the availability and allocation of Branch Equipment when parties are split up in this way. Yet another variation might be to arrange advanced diving in the morning and open water Lessons for Ocean and Sports Diver candidates in the afternoon. Since the latter are likely to be in shallower water, the morning's Assistant Instructors / Qualified Instructors should incur no decompression problems during the afternoon activities.

Senior divers should understand that the introduction of beginners to the sport in this way is part of their own development as a responsible and more highly qualified diver. It gives the beginner the opportunity to acquire skills and techniques under the guidance of an experienced diver, while the latter is given the opportunity to accept responsibility and develop leadership and instructional skills.

4.6.5. Experienced Divers

The Branch Diving Officer should realise that experienced divers are entitled to their fun. Nothing will kill their interest as active Branch members more quickly than always being expected to look after trainees. They are then likely to form a faction who never take part in dives or training activities organised by the Branch; or they may leave the Branch altogether.

Either way, it is a great loss of useful talent to the Branch. The Branch Diving Officer or Expedition Leader should therefore plan dives for the experienced and other specialised interests groups as part of the annual diving programme; if necessary, restricting the dive to qualified Dive Leaders or Advanced Divers only. This restriction also encourages members to gain higher qualifications so that they are qualified to take part.

Experienced divers should also be encouraged to become involved with the expeditions involving divers from more than one Branch. Branches can also arrange similar charters or land based expeditions for their more experienced divers. An ideal job for the Expedition Leader. There are times when Advanced Divers want to dive together. If there are insufficient numbers in a Branch the Regional Expedition Diving Scheme (known as REDS) offers an alternative, bringing together Advanced Divers from a number of Branches to undertake challenging and interesting projects.

Section 4.7 Diving Equipment

4.7.1. What Equipment?

An active Branch will need a variety of equipment, which might include:

- Classroom teaching aids such as projection equipment and screen or a resuscitation manikin.
- SCUBA sets with AS and BC, and weightbelts, for beginners use during pool training and perhaps initial open water dives.
- At least one fully equipped boat, for safe and adventurous diving and training.
- If the Branch is distant from a reliable dive shop for compressed diving gas, a compressor may be required.
- Marine radios, Global Positioning System, oxygen administration apparatus, first aid kit, Nitrox analyser.

BSAC, as a National Club, cannot provide any equipment for Branch use. The amount, type and quality of Branch equipment is for the Branch Committee to decide, and it will have to be funded from Branch subscriptions and other fund-raising efforts, see assets (Section 3.6.5).

If Branch SCUBA sets are to be made available to members for open water dives, you will need to set up a system for keeping track of who has them, and ensuring that they are returned in time for filling in readiness for the next pool training session.

4.7.2. Maintenance

Branch equipment represents a considerable capital asset, and its working life can be maximised by regular maintenance in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations. Also, part of the Branch's duty of care is to ensure that equipment for use by members is kept in good order and is thus 'fit for its purpose'. A regular testing and overhaul programme led by a competent person should be used to check kit - especially SCUBA sets upon which member's lives may depend, and the quality of the breathing gas that is put into them from the Branch compressor / cylinder filling station.

BSAC recommends that SCUBA sets are inspected and tested, and regulators serviced, by competent 'manufacturer approved' service agents. IDEST (Inspectorate for Diving Equipment Servicing and Testing) recognised service agencies are particularly suitable. The manufacturer's approved service engineer should inspect diving gas compressors periodically.

4.7.3. Use

Branch members are co-owners of Branch equipment, since all members of the Branch are deemed to be 'mutually trading'. Currently members injured by the use of Branch equipment (maintained to the manufacturers recommendations) are covered under BSAC's Third Party / Public Liability insurance. However, in these days of increased risk of litigation it is advisable to contact BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) to ensure this is still the case. A summary of the current cover is available on BSAC Website at Third Party Liability Insurance. Consumer Legislation governs hiring Branch equipment to non-members. However, additional insurance could be arranged by the Branch Committee, allowing hire to non-members, but see Hiring out Equipment (Section 3.6.7).

4.7.4. Insurance for Branch Equipment

Please refer to Insurance in Section 3.6.4.

Section 4.8 Dive Manager

4.8.1. The Dive Manager

Formally known as the Dive Marshal.

All Diving (Section 4.6.1) must be Managed. The skills and experience required for this demanding, but important task is integrated into Sports Diver, Dive Leader and Advanced Diver training. However, for divers who qualified prior to September 2002 these skills were not taught until Advanced Diver.

At the time of writing:

- a Sports Diver shall be trained to be an Assistant Dive Manager,
- a Dive Leader shall be capable of Dive Managing known sites,
- an Advanced Diver shall be able to manage and supervise diving to explore unfamiliar locations.

It becomes progressively more difficult for BSAC to condone dives managed by members who have not received appropriate training as their level of qualification falls lower and lower. While two Sports Divers may dive together, they certainly do not have the experience to organise a dive for a larger group. Members are encouraged to become trained in what to do, even if achievement of Advanced Diver qualification is some way off.

The Branch Diving Officer should carefully consider their duty of care when authorising dives to be managed by members less qualified than that stated above, see "Definition of an Authorised Dive". Seek experienced Dive Managers from the Regional Coaching Scheme, or from neighbouring Branches, to assist you.

Should the Dive Manager wish to dive, a competent person (Sports Diver or above) should take over the duty for the duration of the Dive Manager's dive and remain out of the water. An acting Dive Manager at least should be on the surface whenever diving is taking place. Like the Dive Manager, the assistant that person must know what to do in the event of an emergency. Dive leaders (leader of the buddy pair) should understand that they assume some of the responsibilities of the Dive Manager when they lead a group underwater.

4.8.2. Dive Manager Liability

Membership Liability insurance is not cancelled simply because a dive is not managed by a Dive Leader / Advanced Diver - but lack of Dive Managing experience could affect the success of a claim made against the Dive Manager. Where a Dive Leader / Advanced Diver is not available to manage dives, greater care must be taken in all aspects of planning and dive conduct, and ambitious dive plans may have to be curtailed or cancelled so that the abilities of both Dive Manager and divers are not over-reached such that safety is compromised, a Risk Assessment will help to make the decision whether to dive or not.

4.8.3. Duties of the Dive Manager

These are fully explained in the theory lessons of the appropriate diver qualification. The subject is also covered in BSAC The Diving Manual and other publications such as Safe Diving.

In the unlikely event that the Dive Manager and more highly qualified Branch member (including the Branch Diving Officer) were to disagree during diving activities, the Dive Manager's decision would stand for the remainder of diving activities. Please see 'Dive

Discipline' (Section 4.11).

Section 4.9 Visiting Divers

Please refer to Visiting or Transferring Member (Section 3.5.9).

Section 4.10 Dive Expeditions

4.10.1. Objective

Having formed a Branch, trained a number of divers to at least Sports Diver or recruited new qualified members. What are you going to do? The whole point of forming a diving club is to go diving as a club. Most Branches will organise at least one expedition a year, usually called the 'club holiday', but expeditions can be arranged for a variety of things, like:

- Branch Holiday
- Archaeological Project
- A particular demanding dive
- Concentrated training at a remote location
- Wreck Survey
- Environmental Survey

Once the reason for going on an expedition has been agreed by the Branch Committee they will want to appoint or approve an organiser, i.e. an Expedition Leader. It is suggested that this person be at least a BSAC Advanced Diver. Not because other Branch members don't know how to plan, there will be a number of members who perform this function as part of their jobs, but an Advanced Diver has been trained to consider the special aspects of diving, please see Dive Manager (Section 4.8).

4.10.2. Planning

With the objective identified and an Expedition Leader appointed (please bear in mind a volunteer is much better than someone who has been press-ganged into taking on the job) the expedition will require planning. For large or complex expeditions it is recommended a team be put together to help the Expedition Leader. Some tasks that may need to be undertaken include:

- Finding appropriate accommodation.
- Obtaining access permission / permits.
- Organising travel arrangements to / from the expedition location.
- Researching diving gas stations, refreshment facilities, toilets, etc.
- Selecting Dive Managers for each stage of the expedition.
- Ensuring appropriate equipment is available during the expedition.
- Controlling the expedition finances income and expenditure.
- Carrying out Risk Assessments.

4.10.3. Accommodation

When looking for sleeping / living accommodation it is worth taking the following into account:

- Male / Female mix of the group
- Minors (under 18) in the group
- Storage / drying area for wet / dry suits
- Cooking / catering facilities
- Car parking

Note: Whether sleeping accommodation is split male / female or mixed will depend on the attitudes of expedition members. However, never mix adults with minors (except parents and their own children) or minors of mixed sex.

4.10.4. Permission / Permits

In the UK and at most locations around the world, land and resources are owned, either by the State or individuals. During the planning of an expedition access requirements need to be defined for:

- Camp sites
- Car parking
- Launching / Recovery of boat(s)
- Storage of boat(s) / equipment
- Wrecks
- Marine parks

4.10.5. Travel

Some factors to consider:

- Location
- Equipment / Boat
- Numbers
- Transport
- Accommodation
- Food / Meals
- Dive Managers
- Diving gas Station

Section 4.11 Dive Discipline

4.11.1. Discipline

Discipline and adherence to BSAC recommendations is also important on dives. Article 87.(C) states that:

"To secure safety and discipline on diving expeditions the Expedition Leader may suspend for the duration of the expedition any member who fails to obey orders given by such a leader for the said purpose. All such suspensions shall be reported promptly to the Branch Committee".

The term 'Diving Expedition' is equally interpreted by BSAC as meaning a dive organised by a Branch. Processes for disciplining members are explained under 'Procedures for Disciplining Members' (Section 3.5.10), and should be in Branch Bye-Laws.

A Dive Manager (Section 4.8) shall be considered the Expedition Leader for the purposes of ensuring safety and discipline when diving.

Section 4.12 Incident Reports

4.12.1. Purposes

Diving incidents and accidents should be reported for two reasons:

So that training and diving techniques can be developed and improved.

So that any claims on the Membership Liability Insurance can be actioned without delay.

One of the objectives of this Handbook is to assist those responsible for training within Branches and to make sure their members are adequately trained. Poor training, lack of judgement, equipment failure and lack of progressive experience, all contribute to the cause of diving accidents. Unfortunately, accidents and incidents do happen. For those involved, lessons can be learned which will perhaps prevent other divers from making the same mistakes.

In 1969 BSAC established a voluntary incident reporting scheme that has grown into a valuable source of information. Over the years, analysis of the information provided on Incident Reports has proved indispensable in identifying trends. Every year the National Diving Committee publishes an Annual Incident Report that highlights the year's incidents along with detailed information on specific categories. Information is gathered from a large variety of sources, including the individuals and Branches involved, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), British Hyperbaric Association (recompression chamber operators), the Institute of Naval Medicine, and a press cuttings service.

4.12.2. How Lessons are Learned and Applied

The National Diving Committee, through its Incidents Adviser, analyses all facts relating to diving incidents and accidents. An annual Diving Incidents Report is published and is launched as a presentation at BSAC Diving Officers' Conference. This Report is available to every Branch of BSAC so that members can learn from the mistakes of others and avoid the same errors themselves.

The National Diving Committee considers whether changes in training and tests, diving recommendations, etc. should be made as a result of knowledge gained from BSAC Incident Reports. The Safe Diving booklet emphasises points which are revealed or learnt from the analysis of incidents and accidents. The Incidents Adviser liaises with the Royal Navy, Health & Safety Executive Diving Inspectors, the Coastguard Service and other interested organisations.

Not all incidents or accidents have an unhappy ending. A Branch's involvement may be to assist or rescue others – and not necessarily divers. Good publicity can be gained, and where diver rescues do take place, there might be a BSAC Trophy or Award (Section 1.6) for those who made the rescue.

4.12.3. Incident / Accident Reporting

Diving incidents analysis can only work effectively if full information about incidents and accidents are disclosed. All incidents and accidents should be reported, not just serious ones. A great deal can be learnt from analysing a 'near miss' or oversight. The BSAC has an Incident / Accident Report Form, and it is desirable that this form should be used when reporting an incident or accident. Copies are freely available from the Technical Department at BSAC Headquarters.

An initial written report may be made by letter, email, or fax. Any report is better than none, but the use of the official document saves time when analysing the incident. The Incident / Accident Report Form should be completed and forwarded to BSAC Headquarters

(Section 1.3), for the attention of the Incidents Adviser. Other relevant material such as statements from witnesses, press cuttings, etc., should accompany the report.

4.12.4. Fatalities, Injuries, Damage to Property

Should an accident occur in which lives are lost, serious injuries sustained or property damaged, the Diving Resources at BSAC Headquarters (Section 1.3) must be notified at the earliest possible opportunity.

This is best done by telephone (+44 (0) 151 350 6200) – leave a message if the call is made outside normal Headquarters hours – or by Email (see BSAC Headquarters Contact List for current e-mail addresses) or fax (+44 (0)151 350 6215).

Serious accidents may result in a claim on the Membership Liability Insurance policy. It is therefore essential – and a condition of the insurance policy - that the insurers are advised quickly that a claim is a possibility; otherwise the cover could be invalidated. BSAC Headquarters will notify the Incidents Adviser and the Insurers who if necessary will appoint legal specialists and other experts. (See also Section 1.5.3 – Conditions of Insurance).

BSAC Headquarters will notify the Regional Coach, whose duties include the investigation of accidents and incidents. The Coach can help the Branch with its own internal enquiry and with the completion of the Incident / Accident Report Form.

It should be stressed that except in the initial enquiry at Branch level or in the Courts (if the matter ever gets that far), BSAC will not publish the names of those persons involved: anonymity is assured. The report to the Diving Officers' Conference makes no reference to the Branch involved and refers only to 'Diver A', 'Diver B', etc. Reports should be honest and factual. Attempts to conceal the truth bring only disrepute to those involved and perhaps serious legal trouble in the event of a fatality or serious accident.

4.12.5. Media Interest

It is a sorry fact that the local media will be among the first to want to know more about serious diving accidents and fatalities, and will have no hesitation in trying to learn more from those involved 'in their darkest hour'. If BSAC Headquarters is quickly given all the facts from the Branch involved, media calls can be directed to the Chief Executive, see also Media Contact (Section 2.1.4).

4.12.6. Branch Inquiry after a Diving Incident

Lessons can be learned from any diving incident, however minor. Branches should make an effort to find out what initially caused the problem; or lead progressively to a more serious accident if that was the case. Remember the 'Incident Pit' – see BSAC 'Safety & Rescue for Divers' Manual.

Do not think that you must find someone to blame: the same thing could happen to you on your next dive – but is less likely to if you have analysed the causes of someone else's mishap and know why it happened. Learn from the mistakes that we all make from time to time, and share the knowledge with all members of the Branch. Members of BSAC Regional Coaching Teams may be able to act as an independent co-ordinator of a Branch inquiry, if required.

In the case of very serious accidents or fatalities, members may be traumatised and even in shock. In such cases great care and sensitivity may be necessary when consoling those

who feel that they are to blame; that they could have done more to prevent an accident or affect a rescue. It is not for any Branch to accuse or blame if it is clear that someone was careless or negligent, but this must be made clear in the Incident / Accident Report Form. In the event that a claim for damages is made, the insurers will need this information, and will do their best to defend the actions of the member as the claim takes its course. But remember the Membership Liability Insurance Policy protects that member.

4.12.7. Post Traumatic Stress Counselling

Incidents leading to serious injury or death are fortunately rare in diving but it would be unrealistic to pretend they never happen. Often, after a significant incident, the survivors are shocked and approach BSAC Headquarters to seek counselling or support. Over the last decade or so, critical incident debriefing and counselling has become part of many people's expectations. However, recent research has suggested that professional debriefing after traumatic events, rather than helping, may make the situation worse. In consequence many agencies to which distressed people might turn to for help are now advising support from family and friends in the first instance rather than from counsellors, psychologists or psychiatrists.

If something happens to your group you should certainly do all you humanly can to offer extended sympathy and support to the survivors, their friends and family. If an individual close to you or in your group has such a 'near miss' then it would be only reasonable to expect them to be very upset, distressed, perhaps tearful and have difficulty in concentrating immediately afterwards.

This can go on for many days depending on the person, how close they were to the victim and to the incident. Do all you can to support them in this period and if they want professional help, try to encourage them to talk to their GP who should know of local services that may be able to help.

Keep in contact, and be aware that if after six months, the individuals are still so affected to the extent that they are still getting flashbacks, finding it difficult to sleep or just get on with their lives, that is the time when they should be encouraged to seek professional help.

Responsibility for Chapter: National Diving Officer

Updates and amendments to this Chapter should be directed to natdo@bsac.com

Chapter 5 – Annexes & Forms


Annex A: Branch Accounts – Example

Annex B: Branch Committee Meeting Agenda – Example

Annex A

Branch Accounts – Example

Income and Expenditure:

Branch Logo	<BSAC Branch Name>			
	Income and Expenditure Account For year ending <day month year>			
	Notes	2003	2002	
Income				
Subscriptions	1	£7,751	£6,816	
Donations & grants		£386	£354	
Courses/Intro to Diving		£300	£335	
Fundraising		(£-16)	£203	
Shop sales		£242	£	
Gas sales less purchases		£8	(£-143)	
Deposit interest		£287	£250	
Sundry Income		£10	£	
Surplus (deficit) on:				
Diving expeditions	2	(£-2,108)	(£-1,044)	
Equipment sales & hire		£72	£176	
		<u>(£-2,036)</u>	<u>(£-868)</u>	
Total income:		£6,933	£6,947	
Expenditure				
Hire of club house & pool	3	£2,358	£2,136	
Repairs & running costs	4	£613	£236	
Stock purchases		£210	£105	
Insurance		£182	£148	
Awards/Gifts		£106	£420	
Tax - Savings Account		£57	£50	
Bank Charges		£	£	
Sundry Expenses	5	£247	£149	
Total expenditure:		(£-3,774)	(£-3,244)	
Depreciation		£1,580	£1,384	
Write-off		£150	£	
		<u>(£-1,730)</u>	<u>(£-1,384)</u>	
Surplus (deficit) for year		<u>£1,429</u>	<u>£2,319</u>	

Balance Sheet – Example

Branch Logo

<BSAC Branch Name>
Balance Sheet
At <day month year>



	Notes	2003	2002
Fixed assets	6		
Boat, Engines & trailer		£6,757	£1,295
Diving equipment		<u>£2,186</u>	<u>£1,957</u>
		£8,943	£3,252
Current assets			
Stock of goods for sale		£40	£0
Debtors & prepayments		£531	£531
Cash at building society		£7,659	£11,193
Cash at bank		£812	£1,984
Cash in hand		<u>£0</u>	<u>£0</u>
		£9,043	£13,708
Less: Current Liabilities			
Creditors & accruals		<u>(£-88)</u>	<u>(£-491)</u>
		£8,955	£13,217
		<u>£17,898</u>	<u>£16,469</u>
Financed by:			
General fund		£16,469	£14,151
At <date year started>			
Surplus (deficit) for year		£1,429	£2,318
At <date year ended>		<u>£17,898</u>	<u>£16,469</u>

<Name> – Chairman

<Name> – Treasurer

Auditors Report – Example

Auditors Report:

We have examined the books and records of <Branch Name>, BS-AC Branch <xxxx>, and confirm that the attached Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet for the Year Ended <day month year> are in accordance with the accounting records and other information and explanations given to us.

Signed:

Signed:

<Name>:

<Name>:

Notes – Example

Branch Logo

<BSAC Branch Name>

Notes to the Accounts
Dated <day month year>



	2003	2002
1 Subscriptions		
Club fees	£8,910	£8,549
Snorkel Club	£491	£192
BS-AC fees	<u>(£-1,649)</u>	<u>(£-1,925)</u>
	<u>£7,751</u>	<u>£6,816</u>
2 Diving Expeditions		
Income	£5,888	£8,829
Expenditure	(£-4,559)	(£-9,873)
Chinook	(£-1,212)	
Osprey	<u>(£-2,225)</u>	
	<u>(£-2,108)</u>	<u>(£-1,044)</u>
3 Hire of Club House & Pool		
Pool	£2,114	£1,905
Club House	£141	£170
Lecture Room	£59	£
Notice Board	<u>£43</u>	<u>£60</u>
	<u>(£-2,358)</u>	<u>(£-2,135)</u>
4 Repairs & running costs		
DV Servicing	£554	£236
Training Aids		
O2 Fill/Rental	<u>£59</u>	
	<u>(£-613)</u>	<u>(£-236)</u>
5 Sundry Expenses		
Books	£21	
Stationery	£12	
Postage & Packing	£138	
Photocopying	<u>£77</u>	
	<u>(£-247)</u>	<u>£</u>
6 Fixed Assets		
Boat(s)		
At <date year started>	£1,295	£945
Acquisitions	£6,341	£1,277

Depreciation	(£-811)	(£-927)
Write-off	(£-68)	£
At <date year ended>	<u>£6,757</u>	<u>£1,295</u>

Diving Equipment (Including O2 and Training Equipment)

At <date year started>	£1,957	£1,572
Acquisitions	£1,081	£842
Depreciation	(£-770)	(£-457)
Write-off/Disposed of	(£-82)	£
At <date year ended>	<u>£2,186</u>	<u>£1,957</u>

Annex B

Branch Committee Meeting Agenda – Example

1. Chairperson's opening remarks.
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Minutes of the previous meeting (mainly to check that they represent an accurate report of the meeting. They do not have to be read through in detail if previously circulated).
4. Matters arising from Minutes of the previous meeting (a chance to deal with matters which remain outstanding if not to be covered elsewhere on the agenda).
5. Reports:
 - Chairperson
 - Branch Diving Officer
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Others
6. Special subjects (preferably advised in advance).
7. Any other business (AOB) – at the Chairperson's discretion. (Important or lengthy subjects should be dealt with as Special subjects. It helps to advise the Chairperson at the start of the meeting of matters to be raised under AOB).
8. Date and venue of next meeting.