

Skill Development Course - Syllabus

FIRST AID FOR DIVERS

COURSE AIM

The course aim is to teach the basics of first aid likely to be needed in the BSAC diving environment, making use of the resources likely to be available at the time including improvisation of dressings and splints using materials and equipment commonly available at the dive site or in a boat. The course focuses on the recognition and treatment of conditions which are not covered in the BSAC Diver Training Programme.

DURATION

One day.

INSTRUCTORS

The lead instructor must be a BSAC Open Water Instructor or above who has attended First Aid for Divers, or has equivalent or more extensive training approved by the Chief Instructor for Rescue Skills. A list of approved training is published on bsac.com, along with a procedure for applying for approval of training not on the list.

Lead instructors must also self certify that they have demonstrated their knowledge of the course content and competence in all the skills taught, to the standards defined in the Instructor Manual, to another BSAC Open Water Instructor or above within the year preceding the course.

The lead instructor should verify that all the assisting instructors have an appropriate knowledge of the course content and an appropriate level of competence in the skills being taught.

The student to instructor ratio for practical training should not exceed 12:1. There is no limit for theory-only sessions.

ENTRY LEVEL

Any BSAC member.

Experience on dive trips, and knowledge of diving procedures and diving related physiology to at least Ocean Diver level is advantageous.

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

A suitable classroom with teaching aids for the presentation of theory lessons.

Practical sessions require sufficient suitable space for 'casualties' to lie on the floor while 'first aiders' work on them.

Each student requires:

- triangular bandage
- dressing (with integral bandaging material)
- diving gloves/hood

- weightbelt (weights are not required)
- fins

Two first aid kits are required for demonstration purposes: one suitable for use in a small boat and one for use in a large hard boat or as a shore based dive manager's kit.

A selection of items that commonly appear on a dive site (such as oars, long-sleeved jackets, jumpers, knife straps and sheaths, lifejackets, snorkels, electrical insulating tape, survival blankets and old rags of various sizes) is required for practical sessions. The intention of the course is to teach divers how to improvise to supplement what is available in their first aid kit.

For the casualty examination lesson, a number of small torches will be required.

Sufficient quantities of the above equipment will be needed to ensure that all pairs of students have adequate resources during the practical sessions.

Students will need to kneel or lie on the floor at times during the course, and should wear clothing appropriate to the venue.

ADMINISTRATION

See the BSAC website, and the FAD Instructor Manual, for current procedures. An FAD Student Pack must be provided for each student.

QUALIFICATION

Qualification card confirming course attendance, supplied by BSAC HQ on payment of fees and confirmation of attendance on the course. There are no examinations or assessments.

First aid skills deteriorate rapidly if not used or practiced regularly so it is recommended that students undertake a refresher course at least every three years.

COURSE CONTENTS

This course teaches BSAC members basic first aid relevant to the types of accident and illness that may arise in the sport diving environment, many of which are not specific to diving but just happen when the individual is engaged in diving related activities. Throughout the course instruction concentrates on the real-life situation, emphasising the practical content with only sufficient explanatory theory to put the practice into context.

The emphasis of this course is somewhat different to those run by the major first aid organisations, where first aid is taught for the non-diving situation leaving divers themselves to resolve the application of the techniques taught to diving situations.

The course contains explicit images of actual injuries, which some people might find disturbing.

The detailed course contents are set out in the Instructor Manual and Visual Aids, which can be downloaded from the BSAC website. The following is a summary.

1. Introduction (15 minutes)

- Introductions and domestic arrangements

2. Principles and Priorities of First Aid (30 minutes)

- Principles
- Role of first aider
- Multiple casualties
- Hygiene

3. Casualty Examination (40 minutes)

- Practical

4. Summoning Assistance (10 minutes)

- Getting help at sea
- Getting help on land

5. Shock (15 minutes)

- Causes
- Signs and symptoms
- Treatment

6. First Aid Kits (15 minutes)

- Small boat kit
- Dive manager's kit
- Supplementing the kits
- Improvisation

7. Wounds and Bleeding (20 minutes)

- Bleeding and clotting
- Types of wound and causes
- General treatment principles
- Internal bleeding

8. Bandaging (60 minutes)

- Practical

9. Burns (15 minutes)

- Classification of burns
- Types of burn and causes
- General treatment principles
- Electrical burns
- Chemical burns
- Knowing when hospital treatment is needed

10. Injuries to Muscles, Bones and Joints (20 minutes)

- The skeleton
- Sprains and strains
- Causes signs symptoms and treatment
- Fractures and dislocations
- Causes signs symptoms and treatment
- Practical issues

11. Other Conditions (30 minutes)

Signs symptoms and treatment of the following conditions

- Minor barotrauma
 - Mask squeeze
 - Ears
 - Sinuses

- Teeth
- Life-threatening conditions
 - Severe head injury
 - Stroke
 - Heart attack
 - Blast injury
- Miscellaneous
- Marine animal stings
 - Seasickness
 - Hypothermia
 - Hyperthermia
 - Exhaustion

12. Dressings, Splinting and Moving Casualties (90 minutes)

- Practical.

13. Open Forum, Debrief and Disperse (20 minutes)

- Course debriefing
- Issue Student Packs
- Disperse

Course benefits

For students

- lots of practice, under the guidance of experienced instructors, gives you the confidence to give first aid in a real emergency
- FAD is specifically tailored to diving, which means that you can be sure the techniques you learn will be effective in dealing with diving accidents, as well as being applicable in non-diving situations
- if you already have first aid training, FAD is a quick and easy way to "practise practise practise" your skills, while learning the best way to apply them in diving
- learning first aid broadens your diving skills, because it is not taught in the main Diver Training Programme

For instructors

- students enjoy this course so you will enjoy the positive feedback
- teaching the course will help keep your own first aid skills fresh
- working on the course with other instructors can be great fun
- becoming an FAD instructor broadens your instructing skills

For branches

- it adds first aid, not taught in the main Diver Training Programme, to your members' skills, which means that your branch dives will be safer
- FAD is designed for divers, so you can be sure that the techniques your members learn will be effective in dealing with diving accidents
- FAD can be run at a wide variety of locations, so you can easily run it in-house to help maintain your members' interest over the winter