

28th May 2020

Prepare to 'Arrive, Dive, Leave', says the BDSG

Earlier today – Thursday 28 May 2020 – the British Diving Safety Group COVID-19 team met to review recreational diving practices and the ongoing coronavirus crisis. The team are positively working together to enable divers to get back into the water safely.

Whilst there has been progress this week in three areas, the main message remains the same. *“At all times follow any specific guidance from your devolved Government administration regarding exercise and social distancing.”*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

Inland Dive Sites

On Tuesday 26 May a BDSG member provided hosting facilities and chaired an online meeting of the UK Inland Dive Sites (UKIDS). Whilst these dive centres acknowledge they would love to open their waters to divers now, it has to be done in a responsible manner that is safe and sustainable. Common protocols and measures were discussed including how to control the number of divers on the site, parking, booking in, the sharing of facilities, kitting up, surface interval social distancing etc.

Inland sites now have to put in place specific procedures in order to mitigate risk. Each site will be operating at less than maximum capacity. The key message will be *“arrive, dive, leave.”*

Each inland dive centre will open only when they are satisfied that their physical site logistics, social distancing and infection control will work for all. The site, the staff and the divers. Whilst best practice will be adhered to, procedures will vary from site to site, because each inland dive site has its own unique features.

Training

The BDSG COVID-19 team are acutely aware that the commencement of dive training is a priority for many businesses and clubs. It remains vital that any training activity is still conducted in accordance with the relevant national Government guidelines.



UKDMC

The UK Diving Medical Committee met over the weekend.

The diving doctors are concerned that they do not know how the lungs and heart will recover after COVID-19 infection. Depending on how the lungs heal, it could lead to a risk of pulmonary barotrauma. There is evidence from the Diamond Princess cruise passengers that asymptomatic people had significant changes to their lungs. Coronavirus can also affect heart function, that could lead to immersion pulmonary oedema (IPO).

The UKDMC are currently writing guidelines in plain English (which may include a flow chart) to enable divers to self-assess and be aware of the potential risks. For those that want more information, an article on COVID-19 was published in SCUBA Magazine last week. This was endorsed by UKDMC.

DAN EUROPE

Following discussions at today's meeting, DAN Europe are now working in partnership with the BDSG to produce specific and enhanced set of guidelines for British divers. This is based on DAN Europe's current guidance 'COVID-19 and Diving Activities: 10 Safety Recommendations'. A number of BDSG members are working on these amendments.

OTHER DIVING RESOURCES

One of the strengths of the BDSG is that all the diving agencies work together to achieve safe recreational diving for all. The group have therefore agreed that where one agency produces relevant guidelines on a specific topic, that these are shared or signed posted to, by all the agencies.

“Please work your way back into diving in a gentle manner”

In the meantime, the BDSG still advocates shallow, progressive shore diving subject to your local devolved Government guidelines. Scottish diving will begin to open up from Friday 29 May 2020. At this point you will be permitted to travel short distances for exercise in Scotland, i.e. broadly within five miles.

#BDSG #StaySafe #StayHome #WithMe #QuarantineAndChill #SafeHands
#FlattenTheCurve