

INHERENT HAZARDS & RISKS OF DIVING ACTIVITIES
READ & SIGN BEFORE COMPLETING THE HSA LIABILITY RELEASE

To SCUBA DIVE safely you need to know a few basic rules & procedures that are very IMPORTANT because you are in and under the water, in the sun, around hard surfaces, and breathing compressed air. These safety rules and procedures will be covered in detail during your scuba-training course.

- a. Breathe: This is the first rule, and it is completely up to you. It is very easy, you just breathe all the time, but it is the MOST IMPORTANT thing you will have to do. If you hold your breath you can rupture your lungs, which is VERY SERIOUS! This is called an Air Embolism and it can cause very serious injuries, even death.
- b. Ears: Your ears may experience some pressure, or even hurt, when you descend underwater. This is normal, and you have probably already experienced this pressure in your ears if you have dove underwater, flown in an airplane, or driven in the mountains. You must 'equalize' this pressure, if you cannot it can cause damage to your ears & sinuses.
- c. Sun: Wear sunscreen, you will burn easier around water, even if it is overcast!
- d. Thermoregulation: Have water and shade available to avoid overheating.
- e. Protective clothing: Keep your legs and feet covered. The pool and openwater environments have hard and abrasive surfaces that can cause abrasions and tissue breakdown for people with reduced circulation (SCI and residual limbs).
- f. Dive Duration: Because you are breathing compressed air underwater your body fluids and tissues absorb more nitrogen than at sea level. This build-up of nitrogen can cause decompression sickness (DCS). DCS can result in from mild to very serious injuries, even death. To avoid this we have 'no decompression limits' set for the time one can spend at various depths, making it easy to avoid.
- g. Hard Surfaces: Place padding, such as an exercise mat or towel, on pool and boat deck surfaces, and on other hard surfaces, to protect the skin, if needed.
- h. Transfer from your wheelchair: Be sure to tell those assisting your transfer what method you use, and then have them explain what they intend to do before they assist you. Be sure to tell them if you have poor balance, and have them lift your legs (not drag them) at the knee, so that your legs bend naturally.
- i. Ascend: Swim slowly, 30 feet/minute, to the surface. Do NOT use a Buoyancy Control Device (BCD) to ascend, swim to the surface, when your head breaks the surface, inflate the BCD, and attain positive buoyancy and comfort at the surface BEFORE removing your regulator. Swimming too fast to the surface can cause an Air Embolism.
- j. Exit the water: Remove your weights, then Scuba unit. Be sure you have in-water and surface support. Exit the water, with assistance if necessary. Your in-water assistant will support your legs during the exit.
- k. Recompression Chamber: A recompression chamber is needed to treat various diving related injuries, primarily Decompression Sickness and Air Embolism.

Participant Name _____ Signature _____

Witness Name _____ Signature _____

Name of Parent or Guardian _____ Signature _____

Date ____/____/____