

## Diving Codes of Practice (Infosheet ODR-2)

Sections 86 and 87 of the *Occupational Diving Regulations* require “Codes of Practice” to be approved and used before certain hazardous work can be done using SCUBA equipment. This Info-Sheet describes these codes of practice and how to get one.

### What is the purpose of a Code of Practice?

A code of practice is a document that a diving employer or a dive team sends in to the Director of the Occupational Health and Safety Division. It describes how a specific dive will be conducted and what precautions will be taken.

### When is a Code of Practice required?

A code of practice is required before SCUBA can be used:

1. Near underwater intakes of any size, except for activities integral to normal operations of seafood harvesting (see next paragraph);
2. To enter into pipes or confined spaces;
3. To approach operating intakes, exhausts or water control structures (like dams)
4. With enriched air as a breathing mixture.

For activities that are integral to the normal operations of seafood harvesting, a code of practice is required before SCUBA can be used while:

1. high-pressure jetting;
2. hoisting;
3. using power tools of any size;
4. diving near underwater intakes more than 10 cm in diameter. Note that a code of practice is **NOT** required when diving near underwater intakes more than 10 cm in diameter.

Without an approved code of practice, SCUBA equipment cannot be used in the above situations.

### What does “integral to normal operations of seafood harvesting” mean?

Seafood harvesting includes such operations as aquaculture and gathering sea urchins.

An operation is “integral to normal operations of seafood harvesting” if the seafood harvesting operation cannot be carried on without it.

Examples of integral operations are:

- cleaning aquaculture nets
- removing dead fish from aquaculture pens.

Examples of operations that are not integral are:

- building new aquaculture pens
- sea urchin gathering near a water intake.

### **What must the Code of Practice contain?**

The code of practice must include:

1. The name and contact information of the person applying for the code of practice
2. A general description of the dive (i.e. is it diving at an aquaculture site or entering a sunken ship)
3. The dive plan required by the *Occupational Diving Regulations*. This plan must include:
  - a. a description of the tasks to be performed and how they are to be performed
  - b. work procedures for each planned activity, including the diving equipment to be used
  - c. estimated and maximum time to be spent at each depth
  - d. where decompression will be used, the decompression tables and procedures
  - e. procedures for the identification and control of any known or anticipated health or safety hazards
  - f. a list of industrial plants and water control facilities in the immediate area of the dive site
  - g. instructions for getting medical assistance in an emergency
  - h. emergency procedures for:
    - i. evacuating an ill or injured diver
    - ii. aborting a dive;
    - iii. responding to:
      - (1) a loss of any communication with any diver
      - (2) a diving equipment malfunction
      - (3) hazardous weather or water conditions
      - (4) any difficulties in keeping the dive base stationary.
4. The health and safety responsibilities of the members of the dive team
5. Where there are other parties at the dive site, an indication that the other parties are aware of the proposed dive and have no objection to it
6. Any other information that is relevant to health and safety, such as the training and certifications of the dive team.

### **Do surface-supplied diving operations have to file similar codes of practice?**

No.

### **Who will review the code of practice?**

The Code of Practice will be reviewed by the Director of the Occupational Health and Safety Division. If the Director decides it is necessary, the Director will ask experts for advice.

### **What will the Director consider when reviewing the Code of Practice?**

The Director will be looking at the code of practice to decide if the planned diving operation is healthy and safe. In making that decision, the Director may consider:

1. the nature and duration of the work to be performed
2. the training of the people involved in the dive
3. the risk of diver entrapment or blocked access to the surface
4. potential exposure to a contaminated environment
5. whether the use of surface-supplied air would make the dive safer.

**How do I submit a Code of Practice?**

Mail or deliver the proposed Code of Practice to:  
Director of Occupational Health and Safety  
Nova Scotia Department of Environment & Labour  
5151 Terminal Road, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
P.O. Box 697  
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T8

**Is there a fee for submitting a Code of Practice?**

No.

**Can the Director order changes to a Code of Practice?**

Not directly. However, the Director can withhold his approval until he is satisfied that the code of practice is adequate.

**How can I learn more?**

To find out more about Diving Codes of Practice or any other issue related to the *Occupational Diving Regulations*, contact:

Occupational Health and Safety Division  
Nova Scotia Department of Environment & Labour  
5151 Terminal Road, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
P.O. Box 697  
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T8

Phone: (902) 424-5400 or 1-800-9LABOUR (in N.S.)

Fax: (902) 424-5640

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/enla/healthandsafety/>