

3. General Specialty Standards

The following standards apply to all SDI Diver Specialties.

3.1 *Administrative*

Instructors must ensure that all students complete the following forms – for each and every course and specialty the student participates in. These records must be kept for a minimum of seven years and must be completed prior to the start of the course. They are:

1. SDI Liability Release and Express Assumption of Risk Form
2. *SDI Medical Statement* Form (unless specifically not required in a non-diving course standard). If a student response on the form indicates that a physician's clearance is required for diving, the student must provide written clearance for diving without restriction from a licensed physician before participating in confined or open water training for any course or specialty training. A physician-signed medical is valid for up to 12 months with no change in medical condition unless a longer valid term is indicated on a specific medical form.
3. *SDI Diver Registration* Form or preferably register the student online in the member's section of the SDI website (upon completion of the specified program).
4. *SDI Diver Training* Record. Must be kept for a minimum of seven years.

3.2 *Accidents*

Hopefully a member will never have to do this; if a member were involved in an accident or simply witnessed an accident the SDI Accident Report Form must be completed by the member/witness and faxed to SDI Headquarters immediately after the accident occurred. Please refer to the SDI Standards, Part 1, section 6.4.8.

International Training strongly recommends that if any incident occurs, the dive computers are safely secured and potentially downloaded. This should be done in full cooperation with local authorities by encouraging the police, or other investigating authorities to download and preserve data from the victim's dive computer. Professional members should do this when they are giving their statements to the authorities. The professional member(s) involved in the incident must download their dive computer information and submit it with the incident report.

3.3 *Definitions*

Assistant or Assisted by = A person who is assisting a primary and certified instructor, IT staff instructor or instructor trainer for a course that they, the "assistant", is not certified to teach. Assistants can be used for the purposes of additional supervision and to increase ratios where standards and environmental conditions allow. Assistants listed on registrations will receive experience credits for courses they have assisted with only if listed on the initial registration form.

Co-Teach or 2nd Instructor = A person who is certified to teach the course taking place and is working together with an also certified instructor, IT staff instructor or instructor trainer. The 2nd instructor will receive equal credit for the course if listed on the initial registration form.

Student Prerequisites = conditions that must be met by students prior to beginning a course. These cannot be completed during the course unless specifically outlined in the standard. Conditions listed here cannot be waived by the instructor. Written standards waivers for prerequisites may be issued by the HQ training department depending on the course, dive site, and the specific prior experience of course participants.

3.4 *Equipment*

A personal dive computer (PDC) must be used during all confined and open-water training sessions, during SDI courses.

3.5 *Confined Water Training*

Confined water training must be conducted in a swimming pool or a confined body of water with the following conditions:

1. Approximately 3 Metres/10 Feet of visibility.
2. Calm surface conditions.
3. Easy access to depths that allow students to stand with their head above water.
4. Depths that allow skills, as defined in the confined water lesson guide, to be adequately demonstrated.
5. Equipment that is appropriate for the training site.
6. Confined water training sites, other than pools, must be approved by SDI Headquarters.

3.6 *Open Water Training*

The instructor, with the following considerations, must carefully choose an open water training site:

1. Body of water similar to the regional diving conditions: ocean, lake, etc.
2. Swimming pools are not considered an open water environment.
3. Water clarity.
4. Temperature above and below the water.
5. Weather conditions.
6. Water access.
7. Equipment adequate for the conditions.
8. Thermal protection appropriate for the conditions.
9. No dives are to require a decompression stop.
10. No dives will be conducted in an overhead environment unless otherwise stated.
11. A complete briefing that includes:
 - a. The dive site.
 - b. Water conditions.
 - c. Skills to be performed.
 - d. Entry/Exit to be used.
 - e. Emergency procedures.
12. A complete debriefing that includes:
 - a. Performance of divers as a whole.
 - b. Areas that need improvement.
 - c. Environmental observations.
 - d. Question and answers.

3.7 *Student – Minimum Equipment Requirements*

The students must have the following equipment:

1. Mask, fins and snorkel.
2. Buoyancy compensator device (BCD) with a low-pressure power inflator.
3. Regulator with submersible pressure gauge.

4. Alternate air source.
5. Weight system.
6. Personal dive computer (PDC) unless otherwise noted.
7. Exposure suit adequate for the training conditions.
8. Compressed gas cylinder.
9. Compass; during navigation skills.
10. Rescue signal.

Note: Students wearing air integrated hose-less computers are not required to carry a submersible pressure gauge.

3.8 *Instructor – Minimum Equipment Requirements*

Unless otherwise noted, the minimum equipment requirements for training by an instructor, assistant instructor and divemaster is:

1. Mask, fins and snorkel.
2. Buoyancy compensator device (BCD) with a low-pressure power inflator.
3. Regulator with submersible pressure gauge.
4. Alternate air source.
5. Weight system.
6. Personal dive computer.
7. Exposure suit adequate for the training conditions.
8. Compressed gas cylinder.
9. Compass.
10. Cutting device.
11. Rescue signal.
12. A dive flag must be carried in accordance with local laws or regulations for all open water locations.

Note: Instructors wearing air integrated hose-less computers are not required to carry a submersible pressure gauge.

Note: Cylinder capacities used in the SDI Standards are based on manufacturer values or generalized conversions and are NOT exact conversions from metric to imperial due to variance in cylinder volume and working pressures. If you use metric cylinders, please use the metric size cylinder listed; likewise, if you use imperial cylinders, please use the imperial size cylinder listed, i.e., 3 litres/18 cubic Feet.

Note: Both instructor and students must wear a single cylinder back-mount configuration for the following courses: Scuba Discovery and Open Water Scuba Diver.

3.9 Qualification Procedures for Teaching a Specialty Course

To qualify to teach a specialty, the instructor must:

1. An active teaching SDI Instructor.
2. Provide proof of 25 logged dives in the specialty being applied for.
3. Complete the *SDI Specialty Instructor upgrade Form*, agree to use the latest approved SDI Specialty outlines, and provide dive history relevant to the specialty course requested.

OR

1. Provide proof of 10 logged dives in the specialty being applied for.
2. Complete the relevant SDI Specialty Instructor Course with an SDI Instructor Trainer qualified as an instructor in that specialty.
3. Complete the *SDI Specialty Instructor upgrade Form* and agree to use the latest approved SDI Specialty outlines.

Note:

1. Some courses such as VIP courses do require a specific instructor course to be taken before the instructor may actually teach the course – reference Part 4 of the SDI Standards for such instructor courses.
2. In order to be an instructor for the SDI Solo Diver Specialty Course, the instructor must:
 - a. Minimum age 21.
 - b. Have 1 year teaching experience.
 - c. Have certified 50 or more students at various diver levels.
 - d. This rating may be obtained by administrative upgrade, or by completing a course with an SDI Solo Diver Instructor Trainer but the prerequisites must be met either way.
3. Assistant instructors and Non-Diving Specialty Instructors must complete all specialty instructor courses with an active, qualified SDI Course Director or Instructor Trainer.

3.10 Combining Specialties

With the exception of SDI Deep Diver and SDI Computer Diver, none of the SDI Specialties may be combined into one program. An instructor may teach more than one specialty per day, but the courses must be taught separately.

Altitude, Boat, Computer Nitrox, Dry Suit, and Shore/Beach Divers specialties may be combined with an SDI Open Water Diver course. No other specialty course can be combined with the SDI Open Water Scuba Diver course.

The student must complete an academic review and receive the appropriate pool/confined water training prior to open water training.

To receive both the SDI Open Water Scuba Diver certification and the additional specialty certification, the student must complete 5 total scuba dives.

3.11 Procedure for Creating a Unique Specialty

Instructors often create their own specialties and wish to have a certification issued by SDI. The procedures for getting a unique specialty approved are as follows.

The instructor must:

1. Be an active teaching SDI Instructor.
2. Provide proof of 25 dives in the specialty being applied for.
3. Complete the SDI Specialty Instructor upgrade Form.
4. Submit an outline, in the same format as the core SDI Specialties, for approval by SDI Headquarters.
5. SDI Headquarters must approve the outline before the course can be taught.

3.12 Upgrading from SDI Junior certification to full SDI

This procedure is for divers who were initially certified with the Junior designation and are now eligible to upgrade to the full certification without age related restrictions.

Upgrade Requirements:

1. Provide verification of initial certification: certification card or formal verification letter on agency letterhead.
2. Provide verification of diving activity in the last 12 months: logbook or personal dive computer download *.
3. Divers who are under the age of 18 must provide a letter of approval to upgrade signed by parent or legal guardian.

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* If recent diving activity cannot be produced, diver will be directed to their nearest SDI Dive Center or equivalent to complete the Inactive Diver/Refresher program with an active Instructor.

Upon successful completion of the SDI Inactive Diver/Refresher program or equivalent, active Instructors must: provide a signed letter of update completion or signed logbook entry for Junior diver to submit to SDI World Headquarters or Regional Office.

Processing Procedure – Contact SDI World Headquarters or Regional Office. Submit appropriate documentation in accordance with upgrade requirements. After providing all required items and purchasing a new certification card, certification to be issued and credential sent to student.