

## Incident Reporting for Near Misses British Sub Aqua Club system



### HISTORY

The BSAC was formed in 1953, the Scottish Sub Aqua Club also forming in the same year. In the early days there was a significant Military background to both the people and the early equipment available. It was understandable therefore that very early on there was early consideration given to the annual reporting of serious incidents.

The current Incident Reporting system formalised 1964 with the collation and presentation of a formal report to the Annual Diving Officers Conference. This report on diving incidents remains the most comprehensive in the world with over 50 years of continuous reporting.

Currently we report on around 400 individual incidents per year. Of these on average, 17 are fatalities; approximately 120 are incidences of Decompression Illness and around 60 are the result of illness or injury. This should be viewed in relation to an estimate of 2 million dives conducted within the UK each year.

### REPORT FORM

Over the years the BSAC have developed a Standard Incident Report form with numbered sections allowing the recording of:

- Location, qualifications, dive details
- Type of Incident
- Factors implicated
- Narrative

Divers are encouraged to record any unusual circumstance not just those incidents that lead to injury or damage. As far as the report is concerned the Resolution or avoidance is as important as evidence of injury.

### Report sources

BSAC members are encouraged to report any incident that involves them in any way. In addition incident reports are welcomed from any diver or other competent authority. As such we receive reports from managed inland Dive Centres on any incident occurring on their premises.

Other UK based diver training agencies including SAA, SSAC & PADI have now agreed to contribute reports received by them into the BSAC reporting system.

In addition rescue organisations including the MCA, RNLI and British Hyperbaric Association all feed their data into the system.

We make use of a Press cuttings service and both staff and members report on information from a variety of Websites.

### REPORTING PRINCIPLES

Confidentiality is guaranteed from the report and no names of identifying characteristics appear in the published report. The main objective of the published report is to allow others to learn from both understanding the incident and its resolution.

The report and the ongoing analysis is used to monitor and if necessary revise training and safety advice. It is appropriate to note that training programmes are constantly under review and it is rare for the incident data to drive change but any change made because of developing techniques will also be reviewed in light of incident statistics to ensure that a change does not result in producing a different type of incident.

To a significantly lesser extent Incident reports are viewed in light of civil claims. BSAC membership carries with it Third Party Liability (TPL) cover for each member to provide cover for claims made against them for their negligence. It is a requirement of the TPL cover that members report any incident that results in injury or damage and could result in a claim against them to report it at the earliest opportunity. This allows for the early capture of info and to determine if further investigation is necessary.

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

The data is collated by our Incidents Advisor, Brian Cumming, and is presented at the Annual Diving Officers Conference in December each year. The report is published and is available online from the BSAC Website with reports available in this format covering 1997 to 2004.

Each report contains an Overview including that years Statistics and the conclusions drawn from analysis of the report. The report then gives a summary of incidents in a range of categories:

- Fatalities
- DCI
- Injury/Illness
- Boat and surface
- Ascent
- Technique
- Equipment
- Misc.
- Overseas

Finally the report summarises with Historic analysis of any trends over the last ten years or more to place the present report in context.

## **OTHER REPORTS**

Diving Incident reporting systems, though less comprehensive are compiled by organisations such as Divers Alert Network (DAN) in the USA, South Pacific Underwater Medical Society (SPUMS) in Australia and the MCA in the UK, which reports less than 50% of the BSAC recorded incidents. In addition many of the popular Diving Magazines carried regular articles of the format "It happened to me" where the story is of something that went wrong and either how they resolved it or the lessons they learned from the experience.

Television programmes like Seaside Rescue also highlight incidents and whilst they may not always focus on the positive side of avoidance and are mainly a rescue process they do help to raise awareness and the consideration of incidents. Likewise incidents as highlighted within the MCA Press Releases and various website News pages and discussion Forums provide a healthy platform for discussion and debate on incident avoidance and resolution.

## **SAFETY ADVICE**

A range of safety groups aim to collate safety guidance and make it widely available to divers and interested parties including the British Diving Safety Group (BDSG), Combined Diving Associations (CDA) and the Watersports group of the National Water Safety Forum.

In particular the BSAC Website [www.bsac.org](http://www.bsac.org) this includes maintaining the National register for diving fatalities. This information is provided following a request to have a single source of data for comparison of diving fatality information for the current vs. the preceding year for the UK. This Fatalities Page does not simply list the data but provides a clear context for these incidents and appropriate links to supporting information to help promote a consistent message to all divers.

## **FUTURE**

The BSAC is committed to continuing to analyse and understand incident data and has created a new full time position of Safety & Development Manager whose remit will include further enhancing this representation. Planned developments will include producing an Online form that will feed data direct into the database and ease the handling of data. New sections of the Website are planned to bring together the existing and new collected Advice to further enhance diving safety.

## **ADVICE**

The BSAC has an established and well developed system that still would benefit from further development. The value of such a reporting system in monitoring trends and revising safety guidance and countering perceptions and threats of regulation are immeasurable. We would advise other watersports bodies to consider similar systems. In doing so we would advise that you cannot rely on a single source of information and need to seek out data from a variety of sources.

Start process from established principles of confidentiality and blame free reporting. This is necessary to ensure that there is a belief in a positive value to reporting incidents, including near misses.

Make it as easy as possible to submit reports and to record and manipulate the data. Online reports integrated into a database system will encourage reporting and not generate excessive administration but allow easy interrogation and analysis of the data. Identifying to members, participants or interested parties how their reporting will feedback and help enhance the safety of their activities will also provide encouragement.

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