

## USA DIVE TRIP GUIDELINES FOR OVERSEAS DIVE TRIPS, MINI TRIPS, LOCAL DIVES

The USA dive trip guidelines are designed to establish a uniform set of objectives and rules for the formulation and execution of a quality dive trips. With the aid of these guidelines a qualified dive trip leader should be able to plan and execute an enjoyable, interesting dive trip at a price that reflects discount group rates. In addition to providing a service to members, the trips will enhance the image of the club. These guidelines apply to all club dives. The guideline objectives should be reviewed each year after the season is over to assess the results and to make any necessary adjustments.

Under Sea Adventurers Dive Club arranges dive trips as a service to its members and their guests. USA acts only as a coordinator between its members and the resorts, boats or agencies which market dive trips.

### **I. OVERALL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- A. Pursuant to the By-laws of Under Sea Adventurers, Inc. Article VI, Section 2C, the Vice President of Overseas Diving shall be responsible for coordinating all overseas trips, mini-dive trips, exotic trips, and related activities. An exotic trip is defined as a trip that is more distant than the Bahamas, Caribbean, Central America or Mexico. The exotic trip will be coordinated with the Vice President of Overseas Diving. A mini-trip is defined as a trip that costs less than \$300 such as weekend trips to the keys. A mini-trip will also be coordinated with the Vice President of Overseas Diving. The Vice President of Local Diving is responsible for day dive trips. The Vice President of Overseas Diving shall:
  - 1. Coordinate the dive site selections and dates to avoid duplication and scheduling conflicts.
  - 2. Select dive trip leaders and assure that they are able to plan and perform the dive trip.
  - 3. Keep accurate financial records of the dive trips.
  - 4. In the absence of a dive trip leader, see that the duties of the dive trip leader are performed.
  - 5. Review all dive trip materials.
- B. The Vice President of Overseas Diving has the full responsibility for this document. All changes must be submitted in writing to the Vice President of Overseas Diving for approval. After the Vice President of Overseas Diving has approved the changes, he/she will submit the changes to the Board of Directors for final approval. The Secretary of Under Seas Adventurers will be responsible for making the approved changes and for distribution of this document.

### **II. DIVE TRIP OBJECTIVES:**

- A. The primary dive season is between April 1st and October 31st except for exotic trips which may be anytime of the year.
- B. Local Diving:
  - 1. Minimum of one dive per month.
  - 2. Minimum of one raft-up trip per year.
  - 3. Trips should be self supporting.

4. Trips should provide a well rounded program in terms of variety, location and activity.
  5. Trip leader may receive a partial or full complimentary trip.
- C. All Overseas Trips
1. Trips should be self supporting.
  2. Trip leader may receive a partial or full complimentary trip based on the volume discounts the club receives. Trip leaders pay for all other elements of the trip. All discounts and complimentary trips other than the trip leader's complimentary trip shall be divided evenly between all other trip participants.
  3. The club should plan to rotate between premier diving locations over the course of several years.
  4. Above water side trips and activities are desirable but not required.
  5. Travel should be planned to areas that are expected to maintain political and economic stability.
  6. Air transportation should be on scheduled commercial airlines whenever possible.
- D. Liveaboard Boat Trips: Because boat trips can be uncomfortable when our club's trip participants share the limited space with strangers, the club should charter the entire boat when possible. Non USA members should be limited to guests of USA members.
- E. Overseas Resort Trips: group size to be determined by the resort's facilities.
- F. Mini-trips:
1. Short trips to nearby areas, priced under \$300.
  2. Trips should be self supporting.
  3. The price should include all expenses such as diving, hotel, meals if included in the dive/hotel package, and tips. The club may collect extra money from trip participants to fund reasonable miscellaneous expenses such as "Happy Hour."
  4. Dive trip leader may receive a partial or full complementary trip.

### **III. OVERSEAS AND LIVEBOARD DIVE TRIP SELECTION:**

- A. Selection process shall be managed by the Vice President of Overseas Diving.
1. Determine the requirements for next season's trips.
  2. Gather information on trip possibilities.
  3. Analyze information using the guideline objectives.
  4. Negotiate with the resort, liveaboard or travel agency.
  5. Trip dates should not conflict with other club events when possible.
  6. Consideration should be given to members such as teachers who have fixed work schedules.
- B. Dive trip approval process:
1. Prepare Trip Profile forms for all trips to be considered.
  2. Dive Committee recommends trips to the Bahamas, Caribbean, Central America, Mexico and the exotic trip destination.
  3. Board of Directors must approve all dive committee recommended trips or destinations chosen by a club vote.

### **IV. IV.OUTLINE FOR PLANNING A DIVE TRIP**

- A. Itinerary:

1. Where the trip will go.
  2. Trip schedules.
  3. Side trips, if any.
- B. Facilities:
1. Hotel, boat, meals, etc.
  2. Diving.
  3. Safety
  4. Transportation.
  5. Taxi, limos, etc.
- C. Prices and Payments:
1. Price of trip to members is wholesale.
  2. Prepare schedule of deposits and payments for the trip.
- D. Side Activities:
1. Side trips for site seeing, etc.
  2. Local color or local tours.
  3. Hotel entertainment.
  4. Beaches, bars, etc.

## V. DIVE TRIP FINANCIAL PLAN REQUIREMENTS

- A. Cost of all overseas, local, and mini trips should include  
The cost of:
1. Hotel or liveaboard.
  2. Meals provided.
  3. Dives.
  4. Air transportation.
  5. Transfers and taxes.
  6. Happy hour expenses.
  7. Miscellaneous expense fund.
  8. Tours or side trips, if any.
  - 9. Non-member trip participants who are eligible for membership will pay an additional one-time forty dollar fee each year regardless of how many trips they go on. If an application for membership is submitted by the time the trip application is accepted, this fee will be waived.**
- B. The necessary financial information includes:
1. Wholesale or net prices of dive operators, hotels, liveaboards, and airfare.
  2. Deposits, payment schedule and refund policy of the dive operator, resort, or liveaboard.
- C. If possible, arrange for complimentary tripleaders.
- D. All expenses of a trip should have prior approval of the Vice President of Overseas Diving.
- E. Unused miscellaneous moneys greater than \$5.00 are to be returned to the participants.
- F. Members should be informed of the financial structure of the trip and be aware that they can request additional information on any aspect of the trip plan.
- G. The Vice President of Overseas Diving will give an annual accounting of the overseas trips for which they are responsible to the Board of Directors.

- H. The Vice President of Overseas Diving will ensure that a complete set of the documents that are necessary to execute each trip is in their possession and also in the possession of the trip leader. They may delegate someone else to maintain duplicate sets of these documents.

## **VI. LIVEBOARD SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**

- A. A chase boat will be available at all times.**
- B. A crew member will be on the dive deck while divers are in the water.**
- C. A dive briefing will be given before every dive.**
- D. At least 100 feet of tag line will be out on every dive.**
- E. Oxygen will be available at all times. The trip leader and assistant leader will be briefed on its use. DAN guidelines will be followed on its use.**

## **VII. ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDELINES**

**The following policy will be on every overseas trip registration form. All overseas trip participants must sign this policy.**

**USA policy requires that all members and guests be respectful of and sensitive to the fragile reef systems and their inhabitants. Members and guests will strive to maintain neutral buoyancy and will keep their gauges, fins, camera equipment, and bodies from contacting all living parts of the reefs. In a spirit of cooperation, members and guests will remind each other of their infractions to this policy. Members and guests will receive these reminders in the spirit they are given. As a condition to joining a USA trip, I agree to this policy and will take all reasonable precautions to avoid negatively impacting the underwater environment while diving on USA sponsored trips.**

**SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_**

## **VIII. DIVE TRIP MEMBER SIGN UP:**

- A. Local and Mini-Trip sign-up:**
  - 1. Any USA member in good standing may sign up for a trip on a first come, first served basis.
  - 2. Guests may sign up on a space available basis at the discretion of the trip leader.
  - 3. A deposit must be submitted when signing up.
  - 4. Deposits on local and mini-trips are not refundable until a replacement pays.
- B. Overseas trips.**
  - 1. An international dive trip is one that is sponsored by the Under Seas Adventurers to a destination outside the continental United States and costs over \$300.
  - 2. Initial sign-up period shall be a minimum of 15 days. The initial sign-up period for Caribbean, Bahamas, Mexico, and Central America trips shall begin January 1 unless the Vice President of Overseas Diving determines that it should be at a different date for specific trips. The initial sign-up period for exotic trips shall be set by the Vice President of Overseas Diving.
  - 3. **The order of priority for anyone who signs up during the initial sign-up period is as follows:**

- a) **First, the trip leader. Then the voting members of the Board of Directors who hold an elected or appointed position and who have served a minimum of one year on the Board of Directors at any time in the past. Then all other voting members of the Board of Directors. Then non-voting members of the Board of Directors. Priority within each of the above categories is based on the number of years on the board.**
  - b) **Then all other members based on length of membership with the highest priority going to the longest membership.**
  - c) **All members who are going on a trip are permitted to sign-up one guest for that trip during the initial sign-up period. This guest will have the same priority as the member.**
4. **After the initial sign-up period, members may sign up additional guests. The order of priority for these additional guests and all members who sign up after the initial sign-up period will be by order of sign-up.**
  5. **Before a guest's trip application can be accepted, it must be signed by the member who is inviting the guest.**
  6. **A standby list will be kept for all trips that are overbooked.**
  7. **Any person who has a trip payment that is 45 or more days overdue is subject to being removed from the list of trip participants without further notice.**
  8. **Room assignments at resorts or liveboards will be based on the same priority system as sign-ups in numbers 3 and 4 above.**
- C. Trip Leader Prerogative: While all members are eligible to participate in any club function, space permitting, certain trips require advanced skills or physical stamina. Trip leaders may use discretion in denying participation to an applicant for a specific trip upon approval of the Vice President of Overseas Diving.**

## **IX. OVERSEAS TRIP CANCELLATION POLICY**

- A. **All notices of trip cancellation must be in writing and submitted to the trip leader.**
- B. **Resort trips – If a trip leader receives written notice of cancellation within 90 or more days before trip departure, all payments minus any cancellation expenses will be refunded within ten days. If a trip leader receives written notice less than 90 days before trip departure, the cancellation request will be considered a late cancellation. Payments that have been made on late cancellations will be held until the trip has been completed. All costs incurred because of late cancellations will be divided evenly among everyone who submitted a late cancellation. Everyone's share of the late cancellation costs will be subtracted from the payments they have made, and the remainder will be refunded.**
- C. **Liveboard trips – No refunds for cancellations will be made until after the trip has been completed. All costs incurred because of cancellations will be divided evenly among everyone who has canceled. Everyone's share of the cancellation costs will be subtracted from the payment they have made, and the remainder will be refunded.**

## **X. DIVE TRIP LEADER QUALIFICATIONS**

- A. Trip leaders should have participated in one or preferably several dive trips of the same category that they are chosen to lead.
- B. Leaders will be selected by the Vice President of Overseas Diving.
- C. First choice of a dive trip leader will be from the Board of Directors and working committee members.

## **XI. DIVE TRIP LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- A. The trip leader is the focal point for all information concerning the trip. The leader handles all details of immigration, customs, taxes, transfers, departure taxes, travel arrangements, room assignments and coordination among the participants.
- B. Informing trip participants and club
  - 1. Prepare a written announcement of the trip for the December newsletter or whenever deemed necessary by the Vice President of Overseas Diving.
  - 2. Give a presentation about the trip at the January general meeting or other month for exotic trips and a summary of the trip with slides at a general meeting after the trip.
  - 3. Notify all sign-ups of their status within 2 weeks of the selection process.
  - 4. Send written trip details to participants that includes dates, times, papers required, what to bring, etc.
  - 5. Make an effort to fill all vacancies on their trip.
  - 6. Plan the trip diving and social activities.
  - 7. Inform trip participants well in advance of diving and social activities.
  - 8. Take pictures of the trip for candid camera show and scrapbook with the club camera.
  - 9. Collect the trip registration and guest forms from each trip participant.
- C. Finances
  - 1. Collect trip payments and promptly turn them over to the overseas trip accountant.
  - 2. Obtain social, gratuity, and miscellaneous funds before the trip and convert them to travelers checks or cash.
  - 3. All financial transactions must be approved by the Vice President of Overseas Diving.
  - 4. Return unused social and miscellaneous funds to the overseas trip accountant.
  - 5. Submit a final accounting spreadsheet with expense receipts to the Vice President of Overseas Diving as soon as possible but no later than 15 days after completion of the trip. The spreadsheet will contain the actual amounts spent, not the estimated amounts that are on the Trip Profile Sheet. Ask the Overseas Vice President for the actual amounts spent on the airfare, resort, liveaboard, and extras such as night dives. The final trip accounting spreadsheet and all contracts and other documents for running the trip will be given to the Vice President of Overseas Diving and stored in the club dive trip archives.
- D. Safety and emergency
  - 1. When traveling with a doctor who has agreed to be responsible for dispersing drugs from the clubs medical kit, obtain the medical kit from the club medical advisor.

2. If oxygen is not readily available at the resort or liveaboard, take oxygen equipment that is obtainable from the club medical advisor.
  3. Take the club save-a-dive kit. After returning, inventory it and return it to the overseas trip vice president.
  4. Collect the emergency contact forms and leave them with the Vice President of Overseas Diving.
  5. Take copies of the emergency forms on the trip.
  6. Inform another trip participant of all financial and administrative details of the trip in case you get sick, bent, etc.
- E. Keep the Vice President of Overseas Diving informed of all details of the trip.
- F. Handle all details of immigration, customs, air travel, taxis, transfers, departure taxes, etc.
- G. The trip leader will use the priority system in the Dive Guidelines to assign rooms or cabins. Upon arrival at the resort or liveaboard, the trip leader will verify the proper assignment of rooms or cabins before trip participants are given their room or cabin assignment.**



revised April 2000