

NIGHT DIVING

Introduction

Night dives can be great fun, but they're not without risks.

Ensure the following conditions are met:

- Divers are familiar with dive site & the weather is good.
- Good surface visibility, don't dive in fog, heavy rain etc.
- All divers to have a main & backup light with new batteries along with a light stick attached to the tank valve.
- Exit points are clearly marked (colored lights or something to distinguish from other lights).

Night vision

Before getting on-site, warn about night vision. It takes at least 15 minutes of near-darkness for our vision to adjust to low light. A light beam shone in the eyes, or car headlights can destroy night vision for another 15 minutes. Advise that all divers check lights before gearing up and turn headlights off and use dim light while getting ready. When ready to dive, eyes will be well adjusted for night vision.

Lights

Divers should have two lights each, one main and one backup and a glow stick or similar small light source should be attached to the tank valve and left on during the dive. Avoid head-mounted lights on night dives as one glance at your buddy destroys their night vision.

If the lights have rechargeable batteries, make sure they are fully topped up. If they're disposable, put a fresh set of batteries in regardless.

Signals

Signal with the beam on the seabed where your buddy is looking, not in face. Common signals include:

- Rapid side-to-side movement underwater = attention, look this way.
- Rapid side-to-side movement on the surface = problems come get me.
- Slow large circle = OK (like finger and thumb circle).
- Steady beam straight up at surface of water - alarm to surface cover (most lights balanced to do this if let free for this reason).
- When giving hand signals, shine light at your hand so buddy can see it (tricky if two-handed signal - tuck torch under arm).
- It is important for buddy to confirm signal by repeating it as it is easy to misunderstand in dark.

Buddy checks are important as it is easy to miss things at night. Go through the checks religiously and test things work properly. On the dive, pay special attention to navigation as there are fewer cues than with sunlight. It is easy to get disorientated and to go deeper than you intended as you lose the normal darkening cues that you would get in the day. Watch your depth gauge often and check buddies too.

After dive and de-equipment, and search of whole area to ensure nothing left behind.