This document describes the project approval process and exposure control guidelines for essential dive operations during the COVID-19 research stand down. The following are considered minimum requirements as of the date of this document and this document covers local diving only (i.e. Santa Barbara Channel region). Additional measures may be required by the UCSB Dive Control Board (DCB) based upon specific characteristics of the planned operations, environmental conditions, current community public health situation, or further guidance from UCSB or the State of CA.

**DIVE PROJECT – UPDATED APPROVAL PROCESS**

- Copy of the Office of Research Shutdown Exception letter must be submitted to UCSB's DCB with an updated copy of the Dive Plan. Information on OR's Shutdown of All On-Campus Research and requests for shutdown exemption for essential research can be found [here](#).
- Diving Safety Plan must be approved by the DCB (or designated sub-committee), any associated committees (e.g. Small Boat Committee) and support services (e.g. EH&S, EEMB Marine Ops).
- Any UCSB research boating operations must follow the current UCSB's COVID-19 Research Boating Guidelines.
- Lead Diver must confirm prior to each dive day:
  - Local launch ramps or hoists are open and available on the dive day.
  - Vessel Assist available for your area of travel.
  - UCSB Launchmaster approval for UCSB related boating activity.
  - Local hospitals and chambers operations are not limited by COVID-19 cases.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES**

Approved essential dive activities should make every effort to mitigate transmission as outlined by the current [CDC](#), [CA-State](#), & [DAN](#) recommendations plus the guidelines noted below:

- All boating operations must be conducted with the consideration that any member of the operations is potentially asymptomatic, infected and contagious.
- Each team member should be asymptomatic for at least 2 weeks prior to field day and will not participate should they feel ill or have reasonable cause to believe they have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Dive teams and auxiliary personnel must be kept to a minimum and must be approved by the Primary Investigator (PI) and the Dive Safety Officer (DSO).
• Before each field day the PI will review with the team: the plan, PPE to be used, the current CDC recommendations and any general concern for safety associated with the field operation.
• During all aspects of the operation, social distancing of 6ft or greater should be maintained unless appropriate PPE are employed. Since social distancing of 6ft or greater can be difficult to effectively maintain while working on UCSB's Research Vessels, **PPE is also required to be worn while on the boat.**
• Proper PPE and sanitizing procedures must also be practiced during use of any shared equipment: VHF radio, GPS, Nitrox Analyzer, etc. (see **UCSB Boating Guidelines for Boat and Boat Specific Equipment Cleaning/Disinfection**)
• The PI of the project is to ensure all team members have the appropriate PPE with appropriate training and they are being used correctly.
• Vehicle sizing must be also be planned to allow adequate social distancing and personnel driving in separate vehicles may be required.
• Additional protective measures may be required any time the current social distancing and PPE recommendations, including face coverings, are difficult to maintain.

**DIVER REQUIREMENTS**

- All divers must get direct approval from the DSO before joining an approved dive project.
- Each diver must only handle, test and clean his/her own SCUBA equipment.
- Each diver will perform functional testing and demonstrate operation of his/her equipment while observed by their dive buddy.
- SCUBA equipment (Reg/BC/Mask/Snorkel/Wetsuit) used by one diver will not be used by another diver unless equipment has been cleaned, disinfected and dried before use. Contact the DSO for recommended disinfectant to use with SCUBA gear.

**BUDDY AND EQUIPMENT CHECK**

- During pre-dive checks, divers must not breathe from their own secondary second stage. Pre-dive functional testing must be accomplished via depressing the purge and listening for free flows.
- If air sharing is required, refrain from sharing a single second stage unless refraining would result in injury or loss of life. Responding divers will establish contact and control, and then donate the secondary second stage.
  - **Configurations with auxiliary second stages integrated into a BC inflator are not compatible with this requirement and cannot be used as the divers second stage until further notice. All regulators must have an octopus second stage.**

**RESCUES**

- In-water surface tows should be performed with the primary objective of expediting extraction and proper PPE, such as a pocket mask, should be used for rescue breaths if necessary.
ACTIVE DIVER STATUS DUE DATES

- **Dive Physical:** Expiration date for any recently expired dive physical may be extended for a limited time and any requested extensions are at the discretion of the DCB.

- **Regulator/BC Inspection Date:** Expiration date may be extended for a limited time for any recently expired Regulator/BC Inspection Date after a functional check is completed by the diver in the presence of the Lead Diver of the project. Any requested extensions are at the discretion of the DCB.

- **Diver Emergency Management Training:** Annual Diver CPR/O2/1st Aid expiration dates may be extended by 12-months if a current UCSB diver completes DAN's First Aid for Professional Divers eLearning program and reviews UCSB Diving Emergency Management Procedures. Any requested extensions are at the discretion of the DCB.

- Contact the DSO to inquire about requesting an extension of an expiration date noted on Webdiver.