



# UNDERCURRENTS

Newsletter of the Bluegrass Dive Club / [www.bluegrassdiveclub.com](http://www.bluegrassdiveclub.com)

September 2020

Volume 50, Number 9

## September's Club Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, September 22th  
**Time:** 7:30-PM (business)  
Social at 7  
**Location:** ZOOM; See the E-mail for Numbers Alex sent out.

## The Editor's Notes

By John Geddes



Its tuff to do a Newsletter when theres not to much news, so here is a few things for you to look at and a Safety article by Bart.

Here is an article from [TripAdvisor.com](https://www.tripadvisor.com) titled, 8 Countries Americans Can Visit Right Now.

[https://www.tripadvisor.com/Articles-l20062-Countries\\_for\\_americans\\_to\\_visit\\_now.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Articles-l20062-Countries_for_americans_to_visit_now.html)

## 2019 BGDC Officer's

Mark Kidd, President	221-7104
Kris Harn, Vice President	333-6911
Kathryn Bowers, Secretary	619-0166
Dan Miller, Treasurer	948-5133
Trip Director - Open Position	
Bart Bertetto, Safety Info Dir.	502-299-3656
Alex Fassas, Webmaster	582-1600
John Geddes, Newsletter Editor	608-0682

## Safety Information Director

By Bart Bertetto



### I Learned About Diving Safety from That

My mission is to provide you relevant safety information for your use. Each article will focus on a specific safety risk. I will draw from my experience, hopefully yours, and the dive community to highlight real risks that we must be aware of. So, if you see or hear of something that we could all learn from, please pass it to me. There is nothing like first-hand experience to drive a point home. This month's lesson is:

Dive Operations and COVID-19: Prepping for Return

**Note from Bart:** The Diver Alert Network website is a great resource for COVID-19 impact on the scuba diving industry. I have excerpted some FAQs that will be of most interest to us waiting to return. This month will cover the dive shop operation since that is usually where we begin our diving.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

While many dive businesses may not be operating due to national and local lockdown orders, divers and dive business owners are eagerly anticipating a return to diving. It's not

## **Safety Info Director Cont.**

too early to prepare for the resumption of diving when restrictions are lifted. The following Q&As have been compiled from questions sent in by divers, dive professionals and dive business owners and are intended to help everyone get ready for a safe return to the water.

A few basic rules apply to everyone, including staff and customers, regardless of activity.

- Wash hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (unless working with compressed gas, especially oxygen-enriched gas).
- Maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet (2 meters), and avoid direct contact with other people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Make sure you and the people around you follow good respiratory hygiene. Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue, and dispose of the tissue right away.
- The CDC recommends wearing a face covering in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Defer to local orders with regard to masks/face coverings to ensure compliance.

The recommendations that follow are meant to be treated as considerations for enabling businesses to resume operations as responsibly and safely as possible while acknowledging the realities of our industry. No two dive businesses or operations are the same; each will have its own concerns. While we have attempted to provide useful

information, we do not expect every business to adopt every measure. Rather, we encourage dive businesses to implement the measures they realistically can to promote the safety of staff, clients and the business itself.

### **PROTECTING STAFF AND CUSTOMERS**

#### **How can I protect my staff from COVID-19?**

For employees, the general COVID-19 safety recommendations, as published by the WHO and CDC, apply. The use of protective face masks, regular hand hygiene, and gloves (with proper training) can be considered when staff members are in direct contact with clients. Reducing the number of people in certain areas or designating areas for staff members only may also be useful. Compressors, equipment maintenance areas, rental equipment areas, offices and classrooms could be made temporarily off limits to customers (if they're not already) to limit virus transmission. Encourage clients to practice social distancing (use proper signage), and make sure they disinfect their equipment after every use.

#### **How can I ensure that my customers will not get COVID-19 from my facility?**

While you cannot fully guarantee this, you can certainly reduce the risk by enacting preventive measures, which include but are not limited to creating and enforcing strict disinfection procedures, preventing clients from gathering or sitting too close to each other, and most importantly, ensuring clients complete your health screening check before allowing them to attend a training session or dive. Clients with signs or symptoms should not be allowed to participate in any diving or related activities. Be sure to clearly post all disinfection policies to ensure that clients are aware before entering your business.

---

## **Safety Info Director Cont.**

---

### **Should I request something from my customers prior to their arrival?**

It takes only one infected person to spread the virus. Clients may not know they are infected, deny contact with an infected person, or assume that minor symptoms are not related to COVID-19. It is therefore important to ask if they have any indication of being unwell and encourage them to stay home or speak to a physician. You may want to consider refunding or rescheduling. You may also consider limiting visitors to only those who will be participating in diving or related activities.

### **Will maintaining social distance between customers in my dive center prevent the spread of the virus?**

Social distancing should be enforced, but is insufficient on its own to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing should reduce the spread of the virus between people, and the use of masks would reduce the risk further. Because clients might touch equipment or products, consider providing hand sanitizer or hand-washing facilities. You may also consider reducing the amount of stock in your shop area, as this would reduce the amount of disinfection necessary.

### **Are there any areas of my dive shop which should be temporary closed or made unavailable to customers?**

Changing rooms carry a heightened risk of contamination. Personal belongings of customers (including clothes) should be stored in such a way as to avoid contact with common surfaces. If stored in lockers, these must be sanitized after each use. To minimize the risk of contact, consider asking customers

to store personal items in plastic bags. Bathrooms also warrant special attention and should be disinfected regularly. Showers could be temporarily closed, and clients encouraged to shower and rinse their gear at home.

### **How can I best screen my customers to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infection?**

At this stage of uncertainty, and without a commercially available over-the-counter diagnostic test, screening for COVID-19 in the field would be a complicated issue. This is true for health care professionals and even more so for lay people.

No single screening process is perfect or suitable for all dive operations. With this in mind, you may want to consider the following, adapted to your specific situation, location, conditions and applicable regulations.

- Ask customers if they have any symptoms such as a cold, sniffles, coughing, fever, congestion, excessive fatigue or shortness of breath. Verify their answers with your observations during initial screening and afterward during normal activities. Note, for example, unwell appearance or unusual fatigue.
- Ask customers if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19. If yes, you should ask whether they have been examined by a medical professional and declared fit to dive.
- Ask customers if they have been in contact with anyone infected or suspected of having been infected in the past two weeks.

## **Safety Info Director Cont.**

- Using a contactless thermometer, take customers' temperatures daily and record these readings.

Next, inform customers of your infection control procedures: hand-washing/disinfecting, social distancing, wearing a mask, not sharing equipment, gear disinfection protocols and procedures specific to boats, the surface, etc.

Be sure to enforce your policies consistently among staff and customers — including screening and exposure/infection risk guidelines. Adhere to all local, state and federal orders.

If in doubt, consider prioritizing the health of staff and other customers over normal business.

### DISINFECTION

#### **How should I manage disinfection operations at my dive shop?**

Disinfection operations should be added to existing standard operating procedures. These procedures should follow local, state and federal guidelines on disinfection, and staff should be trained thoroughly in disinfection protocols. Identify high-touch surfaces in your operation, and ensure these are disinfected regularly. These include but are not limited to bathrooms, countertops, door handles and other surfaces staff and guests may touch often.

When using any disinfectant, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for use. Follow this with a thorough rinse in fresh water, and

allow the equipment to dry completely before use. For more information about choosing a disinfectant, go to [Disinfection of Scuba Equipment and COVID-19](#) on the DAN website.

**Note that alcohol-based hand sanitizers are incompatible with compressed gas, especially oxygen-enriched gas.**

If alcohol-based hand sanitizers are used before filling cylinders, ensure hands are completely dry and all alcohol has evaporated.

Equipment should be disinfected, especially when it comes into contact with the face, eyes or mouth. This includes but is not limited to:

- Second stage regulator mouthpiece and internal surfaces
- Snorkel
- BCD oral inflator
- Mask

#### **Which surfaces should I disinfect in the dive center?**

The CDC recommends disinfection of all frequently touched surfaces. In a dive shop these may include but are not limited to door handles, bathrooms, countertops, card-reading machines, fill stations, equipment workbenches, communal tools and computer keyboards and mice. When using any disinfectant, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.

#### **Which disinfectant should we use, and how should it be used?**

The choice of disinfectant is up to you; however, you should use a product that has

## **Safety Info Director Cont.**

been proven to work against the virus that causes COVID-19. The EPA's "List N" is made up of disinfectants that will kill the virus. Any disinfectant should be used according to manufacturer's directions, as both concentration and contact time differ from product to product. You can find more information [here](#).

### **How long should I soak equipment in disinfectant to effectively kill the new coronavirus?**

This is entirely dependent upon which disinfectant solution you choose for more information about selecting a disinfectant, see [Disinfection of Scuba Equipment and COVID-19](#) on the DAN website.

### **Is 70% alcohol an effective disinfectant for scuba equipment?**

According to the World Health Organization, a solution of 70% alcohol with a contact time of 1 minute would inactivate the new coronavirus, meaning that the surface must stay wet for this amount of time. However, isopropyl alcohol can degrade some types of rubber and plastic with repeated use, so to ensure you do not compromise the integrity of your equipment we recommend contacting the manufacturer for guidance. In addition, please be aware when using alcohol near any source of heat, flame or sparks, or compressed gas (especially oxygen-enriched gas), that it is highly volatile and flammable, presenting a significant risk of fire and explosion.

### **Can I use heat or hot water to disinfect equipment?**

Theoretically, heat is an efficient way to kill the new coronavirus. However, we are unaware of any studies that have been conducted on the survivability of the virus on scuba equipment. Using heat may not be the best method of disinfecting in terms of time-effectiveness. Some studies have shown that a temperature of between 140-155 degrees Fahrenheit (60-68 degrees Celsius) will inactivate the virus after 30-60 minutes. It does not seem feasible to keep scuba equipment at this high temperature for this amount of time for a few reasons — one being that it could damage or distort some parts and another being that you would have to use a specifically designed hot water bath or constantly monitor and adjust your heating mechanism to maintain a constant water temperature for that duration.

***Next month we will cover actual dive operations. 🚩***

## **Bluegrass Dive Club 2020 Calendar**

### **September**

8, Tuesday Board Meeting  
22, Tuesday **Dive Club Meeting**

### **October**

13, Tuesday Board Meeting  
27, Tuesday **Dive Club Meeting**

### **November**

10, Tuesday Board Meeting  
24, Tuesday **Dive Club Meeting**