

SSI Quality Management System



English-Imperial
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SSI Quality Management System

Preface

Note: The SSI Quality Management System (QMS) replaces previous versions of the Monitor Assessment Program (MAP), SSI Grievance Procedure, and associated components.



SSI Terms and Definitions

SSI Training Categories

- Snorkel / Freediving / Mermaid
- Swim / Lifeguard
- Recreational Scuba
- XR / Extended Range / Technical Diving
- React Right / CPR / First Aid / AED and O₂ Provider

SSI Quality Management System (QMS)

The SSI Quality Management System (abbreviated as QMS) is used by SSI Training Centers and SSI Professionals as a guide for maintaining quality and consistency when conducting SSI programs.

Program Terminology

SSI Recognition Program

A recognition program not resulting in an SSI certification (e.g. Try Scuba, Try Freediving, or Platinum Diver).

Participant

A person participating in a non-certification SSI recognition program.

SSI Training Program

A program resulting in an SSI certification (e.g. Open Water Diver).

Student

A person participating in an SSI training program that results in an SSI certification.

SSI Professional Program

A program resulting in an SSI Professional certification (e.g. Open Water Instructor).

Candidate

A person participating in an SSI training program where successful completion results in an SSI Professional certification.

Organizational Structure

SSI International

Refers to SSI International located in Wendelstein, Germany but generally refers to SSI activities and affiliates internationally.

SSI Service Center

Refers to regional SSI Service Center offices around the world.

SSI Training Center

Refers to any active status SSI Training Center offering SSI programs. SSI Training Centers are serviced through regional SSI Service Centers.

SSI Corporate Staff

Refers to employees that work directly for SSI International or an SSI Service Center.

SSI Professional

Refers to any active status SSI Professional with credentials to teach/supervise specific SSI programs, activities, and/or events.

International Quality Management System (QMS) Manager

An SSI International corporate staff member responsible for managing the QMS on a worldwide basis.

Service Center Quality Management System (QMS) Manager

An SSI corporate staff member responsible—in conjunction with the International QMS Manager—for managing the QMS on behalf of a regional SSI Service Center.

Training Center QMS Manager

An SSI Professional designated by the SSI Training Center to oversee the SSI QMS for that training center and its staff.

Documents and Forms

SSI Training Standards

A term referring to any or all SSI Training Standards, including SSI General Training Standards, SSI Program Standards, SSI Professional Standards, and SSI Training Center Standards.

Training Records

All required forms for a participant, student, or candidate needed to complete SSI recognition programs, SSI training programs, and SSI professional programs.

Quality Management System (QMS) Survey

An automatically generated email survey sent to participants, students, and candidates who participated in an SSI program. The purpose of the QMS Survey is to determine if the program was conducted in accordance with SSI Training Standards.

Quality Management System (QMS) Alert

A QMS Alert is automatically generated when a response on a QMS Survey indicates a possible SSI Training Standards violation.

Quality Management System (QMS) Complaint

A verifiable allegation submitted to an SSI Service Center that indicates one or more possible SSI Training Standards violations.

SSI Incident Report Form

A specific SSI form that shall be submitted to the responsible SSI Service Center by all SSI Professionals, including professional program candidates in training, who were directly involved in—or a witness to—an incident resulting in an injury or death to a participant in an SSI program, activity, or event.

Quality Management System (QMS) Case

A QMS Alert, Complaint, or Incident Report that results in a QMS Committee investigation of possible SSI Training Standards violations.

Quality Management System (QMS) Committee

A committee consisting of the International QMS Manager, regional SSI Service Center QMS Manager, and a third member (designated by the International and Service Center QMS Managers) tasked with investigating and resolving a QMS Case.

Overview

Intent

SSI is dedicated to providing "Excellence for Everyone" through consistent delivery of quality programs, activities, products, and services.

Purpose

Through the combined efforts of SSI International, SSI Service Centers, SSI Training Centers, SSI Professionals, and SSI customers, SSI maintains a reputation of delivering quality training programs, activities, products and services. The SSI Quality Management System (QMS) strives to maximize participant's competence while minimizing risks through consistent delivery of SSI programs at all levels and locations.

Procedure

The SSI Quality Management System is used by SSI Training Centers and SSI Professionals as a means of maintaining quality and consistency when conducting SSI programs. This is accomplished through QMS (proactive efforts such as the SSI Responsible Diver Codes, student/candidate surveys, and Incident Reports) and QMS Quality Compliance (sustaining efforts such as QMS investigations and professional retraining).

- Monitor and verify SSI Training Standards compliance
- Standardized procedures for responding to complaints against SSI Training Centers and SSI Professionals
- Standardized investigations for training standards compliance
- QMS Committee duties and procedures
- Recognize and award SSI Training Centers and SSI Professionals for achievements and exceptional service

Economic and Business Impact

SSI is not responsible for loss of income by SSI Training Centers and/or SSI Professionals resulting from QMS inquiries, investigations or actions.

Government Statutes and Regulations

SSI Training Centers and SSI Professionals must comply with all applicable international, federal, state and local governing statutes, codes, regulations and rules. SSI Training Centers and SSI Professionals are solely responsible for conforming to all applicable statutes, codes, regulations, and rules. SSI does not get involved in, and shall not be responsible for enforcing government statutes, codes, regulations, and rules.

Overview

Structure

The QMS requires cooperation between SSI International, SSI Service Centers, SSI Training Centers, and SSI Professionals. Each SSI Service Center, SSI Training Center, and SSI Professional performs an important role in maintaining SSI's reputation for delivering quality training programs, activities, products, and services.

SSI International

- Develops, publishes, and maintains SSI Training Standards and program materials that are delivered by SSI Training Centers and SSI Professionals around the world
- Appoints SSI International QMS Managers
- Appoints Service Center QMS Managers
- Acts as the final authority on all QMS decisions
- Regularly schedules International QMS meetings

SSI Service Centers

- Provide business and customer service support to SSI Training Centers, SSI Professionals, and consumers in its territory
- The Service Center QMS Manager oversees the QMS procedures and compliance within the Service Center's territory
- Forward verified QMS Alerts, Complaints, and Incident Reports to the International QMS Manager
- Assist the International QMS Manager to resolve QMS Cases within the Service Center's territory
- SSI Service Centers will be notified when an SSI Professional has been placed in Administrative Hold status and what is required to return to active status
- SSI Service Centers will be notified when an affiliated SSI Training Center or SSI Professional has been expelled or terminated

SSI Training Centers

- Ensure SSI programs offered to the public are conducted by qualified SSI Professionals
- Assign and register a Training Center QMS Manager in MySSI to oversee the QMS procedures and standards compliance for the training center's affiliated staff
- Cooperate and assist in all QMS Alerts, investigations, actions, and compliance monitoring
- If an incident occurs during an SSI training program or activity (e.g. supervising a diver that becomes injured), the training center must submit a completed Incident Report to incident@divessi.com
- All Incident Reports must be treated as time sensitive, and must be delivered to SSI within two business days of the incident
- SSI should be notified as quickly as possible when the incident involves a serious injury (requiring hospitalization), missing diver, or fatality
- If a fatality occurs during training, the SSI Professional conducting the training is immediately and automatically placed in Administrative Hold status and may not conduct SSI programs until

reinstated to active status by SSI

SSI Professionals

- Comply with all SSI Training Standards
- Cooperate with the Training Center QMS Manager in verifying standards compliance and other QMS matters
- Cooperate and assist all QMS Alerts, investigations, actions, and compliance monitoring
- In the event of an incident during any SSI training program or activity (e.g. supervising a diver that becomes injured), the SSI Professional must send a completed Incident Report to incident@divessi.com
- The Professional must treat Incident Reports as time sensitive and submit them to SSI within two business days of an incident
- SSI should be notified as quickly as possible when the incident involves a serious injury (requiring hospitalization), missing diver, or fatality
- If a fatality occurs during training, the SSI Professional conducting the training is immediately and automatically placed in Administrative Hold status and may not conduct SSI programs until reinstated to active status by SSI

Overview

Roles and Responsibilities

International QMS Manager

- Review all QMS Alerts, Complaints, and Incident Reports submitted by SSI Service Centers
- Oversee the QMS Alert system and correspond with SSI Training Centers and SSI Professionals to address survey alerts
- Oversee QMS Cases as needed
- If there is credible information that SSI Training Standards may have been violated, the SSI International QMS Manager will form and direct a QMS Committee to investigate the matter and determine if compliance action is appropriate
- Monitor QMS Cases until the case is closed
- Maintain QMS documentation in accordance with the SSI records retention policy
- Notify appropriate personnel at SSI International of QMS Assurance and QMS Compliance issues that indicate modification of training standards or products is appropriate

Service Center QMS Manager

- Review all QMS Alerts, Complaints, and Incident Reports submitted to the SSI Service Center
- Oversee the QMS Alert system and correspond with SSI Training Centers and Professionals to resolve QMS Alerts in the Service Center's territory
- When appropriate, open a QMS Case to investigate and take action on verified standards violations in the Service Center's territory
- Forward all verified QMS Alerts, Complaints, and Incident Reports to the International Quality Manager
- Participate in the QMS Committee investigations within the Service Center's territory in cooperation with the International QMS Manager
- Report QMS activities to the International QMS Manager

Training Center QMS Manager

Qualifications

- The Training Center QMS Manager must be at least an active status SSI Professional
- SSI recommends that the training center assign a highly experienced SSI Professional who participates in SSI updates as its QMS Manager

SSI Dive Center / Dive Resort Instructor Responsibilities

- Manage the affiliated training center's QMS process to make certain all affiliated SSI Professionals comply with SSI Training Standards
- Provide periodic in-house training and communications to the training center's affiliated SSI Professionals and staff regarding SSI Training Standards, SSI program materials, and QMS procedures and compliance
- Provide positive feedback related to the overall quality and consistency of their training center's delivery of SSI programs

- Verify their training center's affiliated SSI Professionals are in active status, renewed, insured (where required), and properly credentialed for the programs they conduct
- Verify their training center's QMS Alerts are responded to in a timely manner and provide documentation as requested
- Cooperate with SSI QMS Committee requests
- Contact the SSI Service Center whenever the training center staff has a question or disagreement regarding SSI Training Standards
- Review training records to verify they are properly completed before filing
- Attend mandatory updates hosted by the SSI Service Center to maintain knowledge and effectiveness as the Training Center QMS Manager
- Notify the SSI Service Center anytime there is a change in the designation of the Training Center QMS Manager
- Review and sign all applications for Specialty Instructor certifications submitted by SSI Professionals at their affiliated training center

SSI Professionals

- Understand and agree to the requirements and responsibilities of an SSI Professional by signing the SSI Professional Agreement at the beginning of SSI Professional training and at annual renewal
- SSI Professionals are responsible for maintaining their skills and knowledge by reading SSI communications, newsletters, and training bulletins
- If an SSI Professional receives a QMS Alert and does not respond to the inquiry within five (5) business days, that professional will be placed in Administrative Hold status until the Alert has been resolved and closed

When conducting SSI programs:

- Conduct programs within SSI Training Standards
- Use the most current SSI instructor manuals, final exams and cue cards/wetnotes (available in the MyDownloads area of MySSI)
- Ensure each student has met all prerequisites and requirements for the SSI program before issuing them an SSI certification

Completing SSI Training Records:

- Keep training records for a minimum of ten (10) years.
- Actively promote the Responsible Diver Codes
- Complete training records including all required forms for all participants, students, and candidates as outlined in the SSI Training Standards
- Review completed training records for completeness and accuracy before submitting to the training center
- Read, understand, and implement all changes in the SSI Training Standards

SSI Program Customers

Training records are an essential and required component of the SSI QMS. SSI participants, students, and candidates proactively engage in the SSI QMS through proper completion of their training records.

SSI participants, students, and candidates further engage in the SSI QMS through their commitment to diving in accordance with the applicable SSI Responsible Diver Code:

- SSI Responsible Introductory Diver Code
- SSI Responsible Freediver Code
- SSI Responsible Diver Code
- SSI Responsible XR Diver Code

QMS Documentation

Record Keeping

Training Records

SSI has various required forms that must be completed when conducting SSI programs. In combination, these forms constitute the student's/candidate's Training Records. These forms are available in the MyDownloads section of MySSI.

SSI forms have various expiration dates that must be maintained. It is both the responsibility of the training center and professional to verify that all SSI-required forms are current for each program conducted. To review the SSI forms required to complete a training record, please refer to the applicable section in the SSI Training Standards.

Training Records (specific to the category of instruction)

- Recreational Scuba
- Extended Range (OC/SCR/CCR)
- Freediving/Mermaid/Snorkeling (Breath-Hold)
- Swim/Lifeguard
- Professional

QMS Surveys

Intent

Provide 100% of the participants, students, and candidates the opportunity to evaluate and provide feedback about their SSI program, SSI Training Center, and SSI Professional. QMS Surveys are specifically designed to maintain quality instruction, identify opportunities for improvement, and assure standards compliance.

Purpose

QMS Surveys allow participants, students and candidates to give direct feedback about their experience regarding the SSI program. In addition to overall satisfaction, QMS Survey questions are used to determine if the training was conducted in accordance with SSI Training Standards. QMS Surveys also allow participants to request information about continued education programs.

Procedure

QMS Surveys are in emails sent to participants, students, or candidates who were registered in MySSI and have completed an SSI program.

A person submitting a QMS Survey has the option to share their completed survey with their affiliated SSI Training Center.

QMS Survey Content

- Program evaluation
- Training center evaluation
- Program standards evaluation
- Direct feedback option
- Interest in continuing training/programs

QMS Surveys are specific to the following categories of instruction:

- Recreational Scuba
- Extended Range (OC/SCR/CCR)
- Freediving/Mermaid/Snorkeling (Breath-Hold)
- Swim/Lifeguard
- Professional

QMS Surveys are completed by the following:

- Participants (e.g., those who participated in recognition programs such as Try Scuba)
- Students (e.g., those who participated in certification programs such as Open Water Diver)
- Candidates (e.g., those who participated in professional level programs such as the Instructor Training Course)

QMS Alerts

Intent

QMS Alerts are intended to maintain SSI Training Standards and the overall quality and consistency of delivery of SSI programs, products, activities, and services worldwide.

Procedure

When a participant, student, or candidate answers a question on the QMS Survey that indicates an SSI Training Standard may have been violated, a QMS Alert is automatically generated.

The QMS Alert is sent by email to the Service Center QMS Manager, the SSI Professional who is the certifying instructor of record, and the affiliated Training Center QMS Manager.

Responding to a QMS Alert

When a QMS Alert is generated, SSI requires the SSI Professional conducting the program to respond to an inquiry within a designated time frame (usually five business days). SSI will determine the appropriate response time based on the circumstances and possible standards violation(s).

All responses by the SSI Professional or Training Center QMS Manager must be sent through a response link provided in the QMS Alert email.

QMS Complaints

Intent

When a valid complaint is received about an SSI Professional, SSI Training Center, SSI Service Center, or SSI International, SSI QMS Managers will attempt to resolve the complaint in accordance with the QMS. All complaints must be submitted in writing.

Written complaints must be sent by e-mail to:

Email to incident@divessi.com

Types of Complaints

Business Practices Complaints

SSI's primary focus is on adherence to SSI Training Standards during SSI programs. Not all complaints are within the scope of SSI's responsibility or ability to regulate.

SSI generally does not investigate complaints involving accusations such as business practices, pricing, store policies, refunds, etc. The SSI International QMS Manager has sole discretion to determine whether SSI will investigate complaints of this nature.

QMS Complaints

For the purposes of quality management, there are two (2) types of complaints:

Complaints that do not indicate a violation of SSI Training Standards

- Complaints about an SSI Professional or SSI Training Center that do not indicate any training standards violations should be handled by the SSI Training Center. An example of these types of complaints is a payment or refund discrepancy between the customer and the SSI Training Center.
- Complaints about an SSI Service Center or SSI International must be submitted in writing to incident@divessi.com for review by an SSI International QMS Manager.

Complaints that indicate a possible violation of SSI Training Standards

- Complaints about an SSI Professional or training center that potentially indicate an ethical or training standards violation must be submitted in writing to incident@divessi.com for review by an SSI International QMS Manager.

Incident Reports

Intent

Incident Reports are intended to help maintain the overall quality and consistency of delivery of SSI programs, products and services worldwide. They are a formal process for SSI to gain a better understanding of adverse mishaps during training or supervision of SSI programs and activities. This helps to fulfill the SSI Quality Management System and determine possible methods to avoid or mitigate adverse mishaps in the future.

Procedure

Anytime there is an incident during an SSI program or activity that results in an injury or fatality to a participant, student, candidate, or a professional, an SSI Incident Report form must be submitted to incident@divessi.com within two (2) business days of the incident.

Email to incident@divessi.com

An Incident Report must be completed and submitted by each SSI Professional and professional candidate that was directly involved or witnessed an incident.

Incident

For SSI QMS purposes, an incident is defined as any adverse mishap during instruction or supervision of SSI programs or activities that resulted in any of the following:

- Injury or illness requiring professional medical attention
- A missing person or fatality
- An incident that could escalate to a complaint, claim or lawsuit against an SSI Professional or SSI Training Center

Submitting an Incident Report

Incident Reports must be submitted to the SSI Service Center as soon as possible (no later than two business days from the time of the mishap).

When necessary, verify that appropriate emergency response, care and/or transportation has been accomplished, then submit the SSI Incident Report. SSI will confirm receipt of the Incident Report. Please call SSI if you have not received confirmation within two business days of submitting an Incident Report.

An SSI Professional involved in the death of a participant/student/candidate for which they were providing instruction is automatically placed on Administrative Hold at the time of the fatal incident.

Automatic Administrative Hold

Severe injuries or fatalities are traumatic events for all those involved. The physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the SSI Professional must be taken into consideration before returning to teaching.

The involved SSI Professional shall notify the SSI Service Center QMS Manager of the fatal incident (immediately after emergency response has been completed).

For the well-being of all involved, an SSI Professional involved in a student fatality may not conduct any SSI programs until SSI International returns them to active status. The Service Center QMS Manager is notified when the SSI Professional is placed in Administrative Hold status, and when SSI International determines that they may return to active status.

QMS Investigations

QMS Committee

Intent

QMS Committees are formed to investigate QMS Alerts, Complaints, and Incident Reports that indicate possible SSI Training Standards violations. If the QMS Committee verifies that standards have been violated, the Committee will then determine corrective action and appropriate action to ensure future compliance.

Procedure

Formation of a QMS Committee

- When an SSI Service Center receives a written QMS Complaint or Incident Report, they will acknowledge receipt to the submitting party
- After a QMS Alert, Complaint, or Incident Report has been identified as a possible SSI Training Standards violation, the Service Center QMS Manager will open a QMS Case
- The Service Center QMS Manager will notify the International QMS Manager of verified SSI Training Standards violations
- The International QMS Manager will determine if the case warrants formation of a QMS Committee or if the matter may be resolved without a formal committee

Committee Structure

- A QMS Committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members including the International QMS Manager, Service Center QMS Manager, and another member assigned by the International QMS Manager
- One (1) committee member will be chosen to communicate on its behalf with the involved parties
- Communications between the QMS Committee and involved parties must be in writing
- Communications throughout the investigation and compliance action (if applicable) shall be confidential
- At the QMS Committee's discretion, the results of their investigation and compliance action may be posted publicly (i.e., when an SSI Professional has been expelled)

QMS Committee Duties

Once a QMS Committee has been formed, the SSI Training Center and SSI Professional(s) identified in the QMS Alert, Complaint, or Incident Report will be notified by email (or certified mail if applicable) of the QMS Committee's formation. The QMS Committee will determine the scope of investigation and will gather relevant information.

Responding to QMS Committee Notifications & Requests

The QMS Committee will determine the response time for the SSI Training Center and SSI Professional involved, based on the circumstances and alleged violations.

Investigation Process

Initial Review

Upon the receipt of an SSI Professional's written response, the QMS Committee will review both the allegation(s) (from a QMS Alert, Complaint or Incident Report) and all response(s) to determine if SSI Training Standards have been violated.

Depending on the allegation(s) and the SSI Professional's response(s), the QMS Committee may further investigate the case.

After investigating the allegation(s), the SSI Professional's response(s), and conducting a reasonable investigation, the QMS Committee will determine whether compliance action is warranted.

Non-Response

If a written response is not received by the designated deadline, or the response is incomplete, the SSI Professional will be placed on Administrative Hold.

Compliance Action

No Action

Based on the further clarifying information or investigation, a determination is made that SSI Training Standards were not violated, therefore no further action is required. An email confirming that the case has been closed will be sent to the Training Center QMS Manager and the involved SSI Professional(s).

Administrative Hold

An SSI Professional in Administrative Hold status may not teach any SSI programs until the QMS Case is fully resolved. Once the case is closed, an email will be sent to the Training Center QMS Manager and involved SSI Professional(s) informing them the case is closed and the professional is reinstated to active status.

Mandatory Compliance Action

Compliance by the SSI Professional may require a combination of QMS Compliance Action(s) and mandatory monitoring to verify future compliance. QMS Compliance Action(s) shall be at the discretion of the International QMS Manager.

Future Compliance

The SSI QMS Committee reserves the right to require future action to verify the responsible parties are complying with SSI Training Standards, e.g., requiring the SSI Training Centers and SSI Professionals to submit training records of future students (for a time period set by the committee) to confirm they are being completed as required.

Case Resolution

QMS Compliance Agreement

This refers to when an SSI Professional is required to read and sign a QMS Compliance Agreement affirming they will comply with SSI Training Standards. The Training Center QMS Manager must also co-sign this agreement, verifying they are aware that a standards violation occurred and that they will

oversee the involved SSI Professional(s) and all training center staff to verify future compliance.

Upon receipt of the signed QMS Compliance Agreement and at the discretion of the International QMS Manager, the involved SSI Professional(s) will be reinstated to active status.

QMS Compliance Retraining

Depending on the circumstances, an SSI Professional may be required to participate in mandatory QMS Compliance Retraining. The QMS Committee will determine the scope and extent of retraining. All costs incurred by SSI to conduct retraining shall be reimbursed by the involved professional(s).

Upon successful completion of QMS Compliance Retraining, and at the discretion of the International QMS Manager, the involved SSI Professional(s) will be reinstated to active status.

Suspension

This refers to an SSI Professional for whom SSI has suspended the individual's SSI Professional credential(s). The suspended professional is no longer permitted to conduct SSI programs.

Expulsion

SSI reserves the right to expel any SSI Training Center or SSI Professional for any reason, with or without cause. Once expelled, a person cannot obtain active teaching status again with SSI anywhere in the world, and that individual's certification data will no longer be accessible from SSI. SSI will post the names of expelled SSI Training Centers and SSI Professionals on its website.

Protecting the Future

QMS Committees may make recommendations to appropriate departments within SSI to prevent such occurrences from happening again.

Records Retention

Procedure

The SSI International QMS Manager, affiliate Service Center QMS Manager and involved SSI Training Center must retain QMS Case records for ten (10) years. This records retention policy is only applicable to QMS Cases that determined that an SSI Training Standards violation occurred, and corrective action was required. The QMS Case records will normally include the following:

- Notice of an Alert, Complaint, Incident or other verified standards violation
- SSI Training Center Number
- SSI Professional Master Identification Number (MID)
- Relevant correspondence
- Participant, student, or candidate training records
- Investigation documentation
- Verified standards violation
- Compliance documentation
- Resolution documentation

