

Scuba Training Standards and Procedures



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Scuba General Training Standards

Overview

I. Governing Standard and Standards Waiver

Statements, written or oral, that are not processed in accordance with SSI Training Standards will not be considered the official position of SSI. The online English-metric version of the SSI Training and Training Center Standards are the default global standards.

a. Waivers from Standards

All waivers for deviations to the SSI Training Standards must be requested and approved in writing by the responsible SSI Service Center. The request must explain why the waiver is needed, and what will be done to ensure the quality of SSI training.

SSI Training Standards are updated annually; if a waiver for deviation is approved, it expires with the new Standards year.

Overview

How To Use These Standards

All SSI Training Centers and SSI Professionals, are accountable for following all general and program-specific training standards when conducting SSI approved programs.

For the purpose of these standards, an SSI Professional is defined as a person holding any professional-level rating with SSI, or any staff member of an SSI Training Center.

For the purpose of these standards, an SSI Training Center is defined as any business that conducts SSI training, including but not limited to: Dive Centers, Dive Resorts, Dive Schools, Swim Centers, etc.

I. General Training Standards

These standards apply to all SSI programs unless otherwise specified in program-specific training standards.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

Any active status SSI Professional with the minimum applicable instructor rating or higher may conduct training as specified in the program-specific standard.

III. Recommendations, Notes and Examples

These Training Standards include recommendations, notes and examples.

- RECOMMENDATIONS provide additional suggestions whenever student needs and abilities, environmental conditions or equipment make it possible to enhance the experience of the training activity.
- NOTES and EXAMPLES help clarify a specific standard or recommendation.

IV. Government Laws

If applicable, local, state and federal laws, bylaws and codes of practice supersede SSI Standards. SSI Training Centers and SSI Professionals are required to be familiar with these laws, and inform the responsible SSI Service Center, in writing, in the event of a conflict.

V. SSI Flexibility Rule

Students participating in SSI programs must complete all training requirements as set forth in the current SSI Training Standards and the applicable instructor manual. SSI Professionals must follow 100% of the SSI Total Teaching System; including all academic, pool/confined water, and open water requirements as outlined in the program-specific instructor manual.

The SSI Flexibility Rule also means that SSI Professionals can develop their own teaching style and program schedules including; the order and number of classroom and pool/confined water sessions, and the order of skills in the pool/confined water sessions and open water training dives.

SSI Professionals are NOT allowed to add skills that SSI does not endorse. Teaching additional skills or skills that “challenge” your students violates SSI Training Standards and can make you liable in the case of an incident. If you have any questions about the SSI Flexibility Rule and what skills are or are not allowed, please contact the responsible SSI Service Center for guidance or interpretation.

Example | Skills like ditching and recovering the scuba unit, breathing directly from the cylinder valve, and any ascents without the regulator in the mouth and/or the breathing gas turned off are not endorsed by SSI, and must NOT be taught during SSI training programs.

Example | Students are not required to complete pool/confined water skills while wearing wetsuits. However, to prepare students for the open water, SSI Professionals may elect to have an additional pool/confined-water training session for students to practice skills while wearing a wetsuit.

Example | If environmental conditions and student ability permit, SSI Professionals may evaluate any and all required skills during any open water training dive. All required open water training dives must still be completed for all SSI programs.

VI. Exceeding Standards

SSI Professionals may exceed standards, may provide more detailed coverage of the materials, and may provide additional in-water training sessions. Incorporating newer techniques and equipment is encouraged. Any specific knowledge and skills changes must be approved by the responsible SSI Service Center prior to incorporating the changes.

Overview

Program Definitions

I. Entry-Level Program

Any SSI program where no prerequisite certifications or experience are needed to participate. Open water training for all entry-level programs must be conducted during daylight hours (between sunrise and sunset) in water that allows direct vertical access to the surface.

II. Certification Program

A digital certification card must be issued once a student completes all requirements of a specific SSI certification program.

SSI issues this verification upon receipt of the SSI Professional's and SSI Training Center's confirmation of satisfactory completion of all program requirements by the student, as documented in the student's training record and logbook.

III. Recognition Program

A digital recognition card must be issued once a student has completed a SSI recognition program.

SSI issues this recognition upon receipt of the SSI Professional's and SSI Training Center's confirmation of satisfactory completion of all program requirements by the student, as documented in the student's training record and logbook.

Recognition cards are a proof of experience, but do not qualify the student to dive autonomously without additional training.

Participation Criteria

I. Age

The minimum age to begin any SSI program is listed in the individual program's training standards.

The student or candidate may register for a program at any point, but they may not begin any SSI training prior to reaching the minimum age requirement.

a. Minors

For the purpose of these standards, a minor is anyone younger than 18 years old who participates in an SSI training program unless local laws or regulations dictate a more-restrictive age (e.g. 15 years old).

II. Experience Prerequisites

The minimum experience prerequisites are listed in the individual program's training standards.

III. Water Fitness Evaluation

Some SSI programs have required water skills and stamina evaluations. The specific program training standards will specify whether these evaluations must be successfully completed prior to any in-water training, prior to any open water training or prior to certification.

Administration

Privacy Forms and Training Records

I. Completion Requirements

a. Training with an SSI Training Center

Training Records and required documentation are only valid for training conducted with the initiating SSI Training Center. If the student or candidate affiliates with another SSI Training Center, they must complete the required documentation for the new training center as well.

Duration of Validity

Some documentation is valid for the duration of the student/candidate's training with a single SSI Training Center. Other forms must be completed for individual training programs as outlined below.

II. Training Record Components

Each student or candidate must complete the required components of the SSI Training Record prior to participating in any SSI training program. The forms of minors must be reviewed and signed by a parent or guardian.

a. Prior to Training

Prior to beginning training, they must complete the:

Registration Form

- Permanently valid

Privacy Policy Form

- Permanently valid unless the students requests to withdraw their consent
- SSI recommends that all SSI Training Centers have individuals complete the SSI Privacy Policy form when they register for a MySSI account or affiliate their existing MySSI account to the training center

SSI Responsible Diver Code

- Permanently valid within a category (scuba, freediving, XR, swim), and is re-affirmed by signing a completion record for any program in the same category
- Must be re-affirmed prior to starting any new training program in a different category

SSI Recreational Scuba Training Assumption of Risk, Liability Release, & Hold Harmless Agreement (where required)

- Valid for one (1) year from the date of signing

Note | Signing an Assumption of Risk, Liability Release, & Hold Harmless Agreement is contradictory to liability regulations in some countries of the world.

Example | The Assumption of Risk, Liability Release, & Hold Harmless Agreement is not valid in the European Union, so students should not be forced to sign it.

Youth Addendum (required for any student younger than 18 years old)

- Valid for one (1) year from the date of signing
- Must be signed by the responsible parent or guardian

b. Prior to In-Water Training

Prior to beginning any in-water training, they must complete the:

Diver Medical Participant Questionnaire

- Valid for one (1) year from the date of signing
- Must be updated if their medical condition changes
- If required by the Medical Participant Questionnaire, a signed Physician's Approval to Dive must be obtained prior to in-water training

Example | The Ecology programs and Diving Knowledge programs do not have mandatory in-water sessions. The Medical Participant Questionnaire is only required for these programs if in-water training is conducted as part of the program.

Physician's Approval to Dive (when required)

- Valid for one (1) year from the date of signing

c. Prior to Certification

Prior to receiving their certification or recognition card, they must complete the:

Program-specific Completion Record

- Must be completed for each training program

Online Final Exam Record

- Must be completed if the program's final exam is completed online

d. Professional Program Candidates

Prior to beginning training, candidates participating in SSI professional training programs must also complete the:

SSI Professional Agreement

- Permanently valid

Candidates participating in professional level training must have digital copies of the following documents uploaded into MySSI before the final certification(s) can be issued:

- RSTC Medical Participant Questionnaire signed by a physician within one (1) year
- Proof of CPR training within two (2) years
- Proof of First Aid training within two (2) years
- Proof of Oxygen First Aid training within (2) years

Exceptions

Candidates for the following programs are not required to upload these documents:

- Specialty Instructor | excluding React Right Instructor candidates
- Online Upgrade candidates

Administration

Medical History

I. Medical Participant Questionnaire

Each student must complete the SSI Diver Medical Participant Questionnaire, or submit a valid medical statement, prior to any in-water activity.

If the Medical Participant Questionnaire or the appearance/behavior of the student indicate any condition contrary to participation in any in-water activities, the student is required to provide the Physician's Approval to Dive form, signed by a licensed medical practitioner and based on a medical examination, prior to any in-water activity.

The Medical Participant Questionnaires of minors must be reviewed and signed by a parent or guardian prior to any in-water activity.

Medical Participant Questionnaires and the Physician's Approval to Dive form, or valid medical statements, are valid for 12 months from the date they are signed. Students may participate in multiple SSI training programs within the 12 months without completing another form.

If the student becomes ill or injured within the 12 months, they must complete a new Medical Participant Questionnaire prior to any in-water activities, following the protocol outlined above.

II. Professional Program Candidates

Each candidate participating in professional-level training must provide to the responsible SSI Service Center a Medical Participant Questionnaire and Physician's Approval to Dive form—or valid medical statement approved and signed by a licensed medical practitioner—based on a diving medical examination dated within one (1) year of the training completion date. These documents must be uploaded by the candidate via MySSI for approval.

Active status SSI Professionals are required to notify SSI if they develop a medical condition that interferes with their teaching ability. They must submit a new Medical Participant Questionnaire to the responsible SSI Service Center (by uploading the form into their MySSI account) to maintain their active status.

Administration

SSI Materials

I. Student Materials

Each student must be issued the appropriate Digital Training Kit (if available) for every program they are participating in.

II. Professional Materials

The SSI Training Standards, SSI Professional Training Materials and SSI Student Materials (digital learning and printable workbooks) form the basis of the SSI Teaching System and must be used for all SSI training programs. Whenever there is a discrepancy between these materials, the SSI Training Standards take precedence. If in doubt, contact the responsible SSI Service Center for guidance or interpretation.

Each SSI Professional has access to the most current Instructor Manual and Student Manual for the program they are conducting, as well as any additional training materials required by SSI or their affiliated Training Center.

Administration

Certification Procedures

I. Certifying Instructor

The certifying instructor is the instructor-of-record on the student's certification. They are responsible for ensuring that the training record is properly completed, including all required verification signatures and dates.

- For programs requiring in-water training, the certifying instructor is the SSI Professional who completes the final skill assessment with the student.
- For programs without in-water training, the certifying instructor is the SSI Professional who completes the final knowledge evaluation with the student.

II. Student Data Entry

Training Centers and SSI Professionals must confirm that the student or candidate's first and last name, contact data, birthdate, an acceptable photo that clearly shows the student's face, and email address are correctly entered into MySSI.

III. Processing Student Certifications and Recognitions

SSI certifications and recognitions must be issued to all students that successfully complete all SSI training requirements at all levels of training. Digital cards will be produced immediately after the certification or recognition is processed in MySSI. All certifications and recognitions must be processed within seven (7) days of the program's completion.

Note | Students are not required to achieve any program progress in the digital learning prior to receiving their certification or recognition card, as long as all requirements from the individual program standard are met.

Some recognition programs do not require a final knowledge evaluation. If there is no final exam for the program (see "Certification Requirements" in the individual program standard), then the SSI Professional issuing the certification or recognition card must verify that the student has the appropriate level of knowledge by either completing an academic session or by asking questions.

Note | After a certification or recognition is processed in MySSI, the student will be sent an email including a copy of their certification or recognition card. The student can also access all their certification and recognition cards by logging into their MySSI account, or on the MySSI app.

IV. Processing Professional Certifications

Upon completion of all SSI training requirements for all professional programs, the candidate's training records or application form must be completed in full and uploaded in PDF format into the MySSI System or sent to the responsible SSI Service Center within seven (7) days of the program's completion.

Note | See Dive Professional Programs>Specialty Instructor for certifications issued using the co-teaching or verification methods, or for Specialty Instructor programs without digital materials.

For Specialty Instructor programs without digital materials, the certification is completed by the responsible Training Center, the Training Center QMS Manager authorizes the certification, and all required paperwork is maintained by the Training Center.

V. Junior Certifications

All students under the age of 15 that complete an SSI program will receive a Junior Diver certification for that program.

Digital Junior Diver certifications are automatically upgraded to the complete program certification when the student turns fifteen years old. Printed cards may be ordered and purchased through their local Training Center. Update the student's dives, photo and personal information in MySSI before printing the new certification.

VI. Issuing a Referral

Note | For entry-level scuba program referrals, see Entry-Level Programs.

If a student only completes a portion of an SSI program and chooses to complete the program with another Training Center, you must provide copies of all appropriate training documentation, as well as a copy of the student's Medical Participant Questionnaire (or other valid medical document), to the student and/or the receiving Training Center.

All original training documentation and medical forms must stay with the referring Training Center.

VII. Replacing Lost Cards

If a student has lost their printed card, do a diver search in MySSI to see if they have a digital card in their MySSI profile. If a digital card is found, have the student log in to access all their digital cards. They can order and purchase a printed card from their Training Center.

If there is no record of a digital card, contact the responsible SSI Service Center.

Recommendation / Individuals that have not been diving for five (5) years or longer should be considered inactive. Inactive divers should enroll in a Scuba Skills Update program to be eligible to replace a lost certification card.

VIII. Training Records and Logbooks

Training Records and logbooks must be used for monitoring and evaluating each student's progress.

a. Logbooks

The instructor and student must log and verify (digital logbook) or sign and date (paper logbook) all training dives conducted for SSI training programs upon completion of the applicable skills.

b. Training Records

The instructor and student must initial and sign the training completion record upon completion of each session. Training records must be maintained and retained for a minimum of ten (10) years by the Training Center.

Digital training record components that are uploaded into MySSI are held securely on SSI's servers. This meets the training center's requirements for record retention.

If necessary for quality management or grievance resolution, SSI Training Centers are required to send the training records or legible copies to the responsible SSI Service Center—or upload them using the QMS System—within the given time limit.

Recommendation / If possible, the appropriate parts of the training completion record should be completed by the student/candidate and the responsible SSI Professional at the end of each session or training day.

Note / Local laws may require that training records must be retained for more than ten (10) years.

Equivalent Certifications

I. Certifications from Recognized Training Agencies

Certifications issued by an SSI-recognized training agency or federation are considered equivalent SSI certifications. The certification holder may advance to the next level of training in the SSI Education System.

If a customer requests an equivalent SSI rating for a certification they hold from an SSI-recognized training agency or federation, it is at the discretion and liability of the SSI Professional or SSI Training Center to issue that certification.

II. Certifications from Non-Recognized Training Agencies

Students certified by training agencies or federations that are not recognized by SSI cannot be considered equivalent without an additional knowledge and skill evaluation administered by the SSI Professional.

These students must successfully pass the SSI Experienced Diver Test as outlined in the SSI Training Standards. Mastery of all diving skills of the level the diver is qualifying for must be displayed during the open water training dives.

After successful completion of the Experienced Diver Test, these students may be issued an equivalent SSI certification, and are eligible to attend the next higher program in the SSI Education System.

Training centers may still elect to recognize students certified by non-recognized training agencies or federations as equivalent, but do so at their own risk, taking full responsibility for the student's judgment and the associated liability risk.

Example / If an actively diving customer with your training center loses their Open Water Diver certification card that was issued by a certification agency that no longer exists, but the diver has other proof of diving experience (e.g. a signed logbook), then you may choose to issue this customer a new SSI certification based on your personal knowledge and verification of their diving experience.

The Training Center must issue a Digital Open Water Diver Kit and assess the diver's knowledge and skills before issuing a new certification. The Training Center must decide what level of assessment is required before issuing an equivalent SSI certification.

Recommendation / If a customer requests an equivalent SSI certification card, but does not have adequate verification of certification, issue a Digital Open Water Diver Kit and conduct an Experienced Diver Test.

III. SSI Recognition Criteria

To qualify as an SSI-recognized training agency or federation, all of the following requirements must be met:

- Be in business for at least five (5) years
- Provide a complete range of training materials in at least three (3) languages
- Have at least 250 instructors and 50 authorized training centers globally
- Hold an active global ISO certification
- Be an active member of at least one RSTC

After proof/fulfillment of these prerequisites, the organization will be added to the current version of the SSI Equivalency Chart, and will be treated as an SSI-recognized training agency or federation.

Professional Liability Requirements

I. Professional Liability Insurance

Where required (e.g. the United States), the SSI Professional must maintain professional liability insurance.

The SSI Professional must:

- Verify SSI is listed as an Additional Insured on the professional liability policy
- Verify the professional liability insurance covers all SSI programs the SSI Professional is authorized to conduct (e.g. XR Instructors are required to have a Technical Diving insurance endorsement)
- Verify current proof of professional liability insurance is uploaded to the SSI Professional's MySSI profile
- Not provide any professional services in the absence of professional liability insurance
- Comply with all insurance policy terms, conditions, warranties and exclusions

SSI and SSI Service Centers are not responsible for verifying that an SSI Professional complies with professional liability insurance requirements. However, certifications may not be processed in the absence of proof of insurance where required.

SSI Professional Duties

SSI Professional Status

I. Active Status

SSI Professionals must fulfill the following prerequisites to maintain active status:

- Affiliate with an active status Training Center.
- Read and sign (online) the SSI Professional's Agreement and pay the annual membership dues.
- Maintain professional liability insurance (if required legally in the country). The SSI Professional must list SSI as an additional insured in the policy and must provide current proof-of-insurance to the responsible SSI Service Center.

II. Inactive Status

An SSI Professional who has met all the active status requirements but is not affiliated with an active status Training Center, and/or lacks current proof of professional liability insurance (where required).

The SSI Professional in inactive status will pay a reduced renewal fee and will still have access to training materials, but they cannot conduct any SSI programs until they return to active status.

III. Canceled Status

An individual who has been certified as an SSI Professional, but has not paid any annual fees to SSI.

IV. Administrative Hold Status

A temporary status assigned to an SSI Professional as the result of a Verified QMS Complaint, Alert, or Incident Report. The SSI Professional must not conduct SSI programs while in Administrative Hold status. This status is generally communicated to the professional by the International QMS Manager.

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

The individual's certification data cannot be verified any longer by the SSI Diver Verification system.

V. Expelled Status

An individual who has been certified as an SSI Professional, but has been expelled from SSI due to severe breaches of SSI Ethical or Training Standards. A member in expelled status cannot obtain active teaching status again with SSI globally, and the individual's certification data cannot be verified any longer by the SSI Diver Verification system.

a. Individuals Expelled From Other Agencies

If a professional is expelled from another agency for any reason, they may be eligible to earn SSI active status. This decision is at the discretion of SSI International, and will be considered on an individual basis. See the SSI Quality Management System Manual for more information.

VI. Retired Status

Some SSI Professionals are placed in "Retired Status" if they do not meet the minimum active status requirements for their highest professional rating. SSI Professionals in retired status remain in active status for the highest professional certification that they meet the minimum active status requirements for. They may also continue to conduct all student-level programs that they are qualified to teach.

Affected certifications

- Assistant Instructor Trainer/Dive Control Specialist
- Instructor Trainer
- Instructor Certifier

SSI Professional Duties

Returning to Active Status

SSI Professionals in canceled status may return to active status by completing the following requirements, which are determined by the length of time the professional has been out of active status.

I. Duration of Inactivity

Any duration:

- If an SSI Professional is in canceled status with SSI for any period of time, but has maintained active status with a recognized training agency, the responsible SSI Service Center may—at their discretion—permit the SSI Professional to complete an SSI Crossover program to return to active status.

Less than two (2) years:

- Complete all components of the online renewal process.

Greater than two (2), but less than five (5) years:

Option 1

- Successfully complete an SSI Professional Crossover program for the applicable certification level.

Option 2

- Successfully complete a Professional Update for the applicable certification level as defined below.

Greater than five (5), but less than ten (10) years:

- Successfully complete a Professional Update for the applicable certification level as defined below.

Greater than ten (10) years:

- Complete all program requirements, including any water fitness evaluations, digital learning materials, academic assessments, final exams, and in-water training requirements as outlined in the program-specific instructor manual.

Note | Open Water Instructors who are returning to active status are only required to complete the Instructor Training Course, and do not need to complete an additional Instructor Evaluation.

SSI Professional Duties

SSI Professional Update

I. Intent

The intent of the SSI Professional Update program is to update and reactivate SSI Professionals that have been in canceled status for at least two (2) years.

II. Purpose

SSI Professional Updates evaluate a candidate's knowledge of general diving theory, program-specific information, SSI training and teaching philosophies, in-water abilities, and any required teaching and evaluation requirements.

If there is any doubt or concern about a candidate's abilities, the Professional Update should be used to evaluate the candidate before issuing any SSI professional-level certification.

III. Requirements For Completion

a. Dive Guide/Divemaster Update

- Purchase and complete the Crossover/Update Kit
- Complete the Dive Guide final exam with a passing score of at least 90%

Complete the following Practical Application Sessions from the instructor manual for the Dive Guide program:

- Practical Application 1 | Candidate Water Fitness Evaluation
- Practical Application 3 | Open Water Diver Skills Workshop
- Practical Application 4 | Diver Stress & Rescue Skills Workshop
- Practical Application 5 | Dive Briefing Evaluation
- Practical Application 6 | Dive Guiding Evaluation

Note | The first three Practical Application Sessions may be conducted in a single pool/confined water session, and the last two Practical Application Sessions may be conducted in a single open water training dive.

b. Assistant Instructor Update

- Purchase and complete the Crossover/Update Kit
- Complete the Assistant Instructor final exam with a passing score of at least 90%

Complete the following Practical Application Sessions from the instructor manual for the Instructor Training Course:

- Practical Application 1 | Candidate Water Fitness Evaluation
- Practical Application 2 | Academic Presentation Open Water Diver
- Practical Application 5 | Workshop Open Water Diver and Scuba Skills Update
- Practical Application 6 | Pool/Confined Water Presentation Open Water Diver Skill
- Practical Application 10 | Workshop Diver Stress & Rescue Skills

c. Open Water Instructor/Divemaster Instructor Update

In addition to the requirements for an Assistant Instructor Update, Open Water Instructor candidates must also complete:

- Practical Application 13 | Open Water Presentation Open Water Skills

d. Assistant Instructor Trainer/Master Instructor Update

In addition to the requirements for an Open Water Instructor Update, Assistant Instructor Trainer candidates must also:

- Complete the Assistant Instructor Trainer final exam with a passing score of at least 90%

And complete the following practical application sessions as outlined in the instructor manual for the Assistant Instructor Trainer Seminar:

- Practical Application 5 | Academic Presentation Assistant Instructor Program
- Practical Application Session 7 | Academic Presentation Evaluation
- Practical Application 10 | In-Water Presentation Evaluations

OR

- Co-teach at least one (1) complete Assistant Instructor Training Course with an active status Assistant Instructor Trainer or higher.

e. Instructor Trainer Update

- The Instructor Trainer returning to active status must audit a complete Instructor Trainer Seminar or complete an Instructor Trainer Update.
- The Instructor Trainer Update must be directly supervised by an active status International Training Director, and approved by the responsible SSI Service Center.

IV. Certification

- Upon completion of training, upload the candidate's training record with all required documentation into the MySSI System or send it to the responsible SSI Service Center.

SSI Professional Duties

Ethical Standards

As an SSI Professional, you are accountable for your decisions and actions when representing SSI and conducting SSI programs. SSI expects you to display appropriate professional behavior at all times while conducting SSI training or other related activities. The guidelines listed below are expected and required of each SSI Professional:

- Be a professional role model at all times during training and other business-related activities.
- Be a role model to the public, practicing and promoting safe diving, environmental awareness, and minimal ecological impact.
- Advocate and promote adherence to the appropriate SSI Responsible Diver Code during all diving activities.
- Conduct all SSI programs with integrity and honesty and with the goal of providing the best possible customer experience.
- Adhere to SSI Training Standards and Procedures. Attend SSI Professional updates when required and on a regular basis.
- Do not disparage or otherwise make negative statements about SSI International, SSI Training Centers, SSI Professionals, or any other member of the diving industry.
- You are required to notify SSI immediately—or prior to any professional-level training—if you have been convicted of a felony or any form of sexual offense.
- Notify SSI if an SSI Training Center or SSI Professional is the subject of an ethical or standards violation, investigation, action, or proceeding brought by any other recognized training agency or governmental agency.
- Indemnify and hold harmless SSI, its officers, directors, and assignees for any loss, claim, or damage resulting from action of an SSI Training Center, SSI Professional or their agents, students, or assignees.
- Comply with all quality management and compliance procedures outlined in the SSI Quality Management System Manual.

The SSI Professional understands that any breach of these Ethical Standards may result in an SSI QMS review and compliance action, which may have an effect on their SSI Professional status.

SSI Professional Duties

SSI Quality Management

Note | SSI has implemented a completely new Quality Management System (QMS). The new Quality Management System (QMS) replaces previous versions of the Monitor Assessment Program (MAP), SSI Grievance Procedure and associated components with immediate effect. For definitions of terminology and a detailed description of SSI Quality Management procedures, please see the SSI Quality Management System Manual.

Equipment Definitions

Snorkeling Programs

I. Snorkeling

During all in-water snorkeling training, each student and instructor must be equipped with a properly fitted Total Snorkeling System that includes:

- Mask
- Snorkel
- Fins
- Exposure suit appropriate for the environment

Equipment Definitions

Recreational Scuba Programs

I. Breathing Gas

(Also referred to in these standards as “air”) can include compressed ambient air, enriched air nitrox, or any other breathable mixed gas used during open circuit, semi-closed rebreather, or closed-circuit rebreather diving.

- If nitrox is used as a breathing gas, the ppO₂ at any point in the dive must not exceed 1.4 bar/ata.
- For SSI Decompression Diving training, the ppO₂ during the decompression stage must not exceed 1.6 bar/ata.

II. Scuba Diving

a. Minimum Student Equipment

During all in-water scuba training, each student must be equipped with a properly fitted Total Diving System:

- Mask
- Snorkel
- Fins
- Buoyancy compensator with power inflator
- Weight System
- Delivery System with cylinder, primary regulator and alternate air source
- Information System with submersible pressure gauge, depth gauge, and timing device (a dive computer is recommended)
- Exposure suit appropriate for the environment
- Logbook

Note / There must be a sufficient amount of removable weight to make the student positively buoyant at any depth. Students must be able to achieve enough positive buoyancy so their head floats above the surface.

Note / At the instructor's discretion, the use of the snorkel during in-water training is optional for all certification programs other than Snorkel Diver, Scuba Diver, Referral Diver, Indoor Diver and Open Water Diver.

Note / Specific program's training standards may require additional student and/or dive professional equipment.

b. Minimum Scuba Professional Equipment

During all in-water scuba training, each SSI Dive Professional directly supervising training must be equipped with a properly fitted Total Diving System.

- SSI Professionals must have experience with the equipment they use while conducting SSI programs. They must be able to perform all required skills at a professional level, including rescue and resuscitation skills.

Recommendation / SSI Professionals that use dry suits or full face masks during SSI programs must have practical experience using these types of equipment (at least 10 logged dives) before using the equipment.

During all open water training, each SSI Professional must be equipped with at least all student equipment, plus:

- A dive computer
- A deployable surface marker buoy (DSMB)
- A surface emergency signaling device
- A cutting device
- A compass

Candidates for SSI Dive Professional programs must use a professional-level Total Diving System.

Note / SSI Dive Professionals may conduct open water training dives for non entry-level programs on a rebreather or sidemount configuration if they have all the components of a Total Diving System.

III. Sidemount Diving

a. Sidemount Total Diving System

During all in-water sidemount training, each student must be equipped with a properly-fitted Sidemount Total Diving System:

- Buoyancy compensator with sufficient lift capacity for the planned dive
- An industry-approved sidemount harness
- One delivery system that has a regulator with a 6-7 foot hose
- One delivery system that has a regulator with a 19-30 inch hose and neck retainer
- Two cylinders with independent valves
- Submersible pressure gauge with a 6-10 inch high-pressure hose (all cylinders must have an SPG attached)
- Integrated depth gauge and timing device or dive computer

And

- Mask
- Fins
- Exposure suit appropriate for the environment
- A cutting device
- One signaling device for deploying from depth (red surface marker buoy is recommended, but follow local guidelines)
- A reel or spool (appropriate for the maximum planned depth)
- One surface signaling device (whistle or similar)
- Logbook

Sidemount configurations are not permitted during experience or entry-level training programs. Students with an SSI Recreational Sidemount Diving certification (or equivalent) may participate in SSI recreational scuba specialty programs using a sidemount configuration if they have all the components of a Total Diving System. The SSI Professional conducting the program must have direct and recent knowledge of the student's equipment configuration and skills.

IV. Rebreathers

Students certified as an SSI CCR Diving or SSI SCR Diving certification (or equivalent) may participate in SSI recreational scuba programs using a rebreather if they have all the components of a Total Diving System.

The SSI Professional conducting the program must have direct and recent knowledge of the student's equipment configuration and skills.

V. Recreational Decompression Diving Program

a. Minimum Single-Cylinder Total Diving System

- Buoyancy compensator including power inflator and D-rings appropriate for stage cylinders
- Delivery system with a primary (6- to 7-foot hose is recommended) and an alternate air source
- Primary cylinder (high capacity is recommended)
- Submersible pressure gauge (digital or analog)
- Dive computer
- Single-stage cylinder with a delivery system and submersible pressure gauge

And

- Mask
- Fins
- Exposure suit appropriate for the environment
- A cutting device
- One signaling device for deploying from depth (red surface marker buoy is recommended, but follow local guidelines)
- A reel or spool (appropriate for the maximum planned depth)
- One surface signaling device (whistle or similar)
- Logbook

Conducting SSI Programs

Assessing Knowledge and Skill

SSI Training Centers and SSI Professionals must ensure that each student receives the required knowledge, skills and experience to comfortably and confidently dive at the specified level of training before conducting open water training dives.

It is the SSI Professional's duty to ensure that all students achieve mastery of all required skills before issuing a certification. To achieve mastery the student must be able to comfortably repeat the skill in diverse and adverse conditions.

I. Skill Mastery Definitions

Expert-Level Quality

- The skill is completed without pauses or mistakes, and can be repeated without noticeable effort.

Demonstration-Level Quality

- The skill is completed without hesitation or mistakes, and can be repeated without noticeable effort.
- Each key point of the skill is clearly identified and demonstrated during the exercise with pauses for emphasis.

II. Final Exam

If a final exam is required for certification, the following requirements must be met:

- The student/candidate must complete the exam without outside assistance or personal notes
- A qualified SSI Professional must directly supervise written final exams
- The professional administering the exam may only provide clarification to help explain the question
- Minimum passing score for student-level programs (written exam): 80%
- Minimum passing score for student-level programs (when an online exam is available): 100%
- Minimum passing score for professional-level programs: 90%

a. Approved Materials

Students and candidates may use the following materials to complete the final exam:

- SSI Training Standards
- Calculator
- Air/Nitrox tables (if applicable)

b. Instructor Assistance

If the final exam is not available in the student's native language, or the student has a documented learning disability, the SSI Professional conducting training may administer the exam orally. The answer sheet must still be completed by the student and signed by both the student and SSI Professional.

If the student is younger than 15 years old, the SSI Professionals may rephrase or explain a question or answer on the final exam to help clarify a concept, but they may not answer, or help the student answer, the question.

Conducting SSI Programs

Program Duration and Time Limits

I. Program Duration

There is no maximum time limit for the duration of any SSI program. Some SSI programs may have minimum program hours listed in their standards.

a. Professional Training Programs

The number of classes, hours and sessions per day are set by the individual instructor, based on the candidate's needs, ability and local water conditions.

II. Time Limit to Complete a Program

Open water training for all SSI programs must be completed within six (6) months of the last academic or in-water training session. If it has been more than six (6) months, an SSI Professional must conduct a reevaluation (both knowledge and skill review) to determine if the student is sufficiently proficient to continue to the open water training.

For any entry-level training, if it has been more than 12 months since the student's last in-water session, the student must complete an SSI Scuba Skills Update.

Process the Scuba Skills Update in MySSI and issue a digital card to the student prior to any open water training dives.

Recommendation / For entry-level programs, if it has been more than six (6) months since a student has completed all academic and pool/confined water training, have the student complete a Scuba Skills Update.

III. Dives Per Day

Three (3) open water scuba training dives per day is the maximum allowed, unless otherwise indicated in the specific program standards.

The maximum number of training dives is two (2) per day if any dive on a given day is planned to, or actually requires, staged decompression stops.

Recommendation / If conducting three (3) or more dives in one (1) day with junior divers (10 to 14 years old), reduce the maximum dive time to 30 minutes for any dives deeper than 40 feet, and extend surface intervals to two (2) hours between dives.

IV. Duration of a Dive

Dive time for an individual open water scuba training dive must be at least 15 minutes. The dive must include an entry and exit from the water and putting on and taking off the scuba unit.

Note / All SSI training dives must be conducted as no-decompression dives unless indicated otherwise in the specific program's standards.

Conducting SSI Programs

Specialized Equipment

I. Guidelines for Specialized Diving Equipment

If specialized equipment or additional equipment is incorporated into SSI training programs, you must conduct an equipment orientation prior to taking students into the open water. Additional training is intended to provide practice and basic proficiency with the equipment, and should include a review of specialty materials, academic sessions, and pool/confined water training sessions.

Additional cylinders or specialized configurations like full face masks must be introduced to students in pool/confined water prior to taking students into open water.

II. Dry Suits

During all in-water scuba training, the instructor directly supervising the program must be an active status SSI Dry Suit Diving Specialty Instructor.

The student-to-instructor ratio for any entry-level in-water scuba training where a student will be in a dry suit is 4:1.

Each student must meet one of the following requirements to use a dry suit:

- Have an SSI Dry Suit Diving certification or equivalent from a recognized training agency.
- For scuba experience programs, be under the direct supervision of an active status SSI Dry Suit Diving Specialty Instructor.
- For entry-level scuba programs, be enrolled in the SSI Dry Suit Diving specialty program. The pool/confined water session for the Dry Suit Diving specialty must be completed prior to any open-water training.
- For scuba specialty programs, provide proof of five (5) logged open water dives in a dry suit outside of training. The pool/confined water session from the Dry Suit Diving specialty program must be completed prior to any open-water training.

III. Use of Surface Floats and Flags

Follow the local requirements for using surface floats or diver down buoys whenever open water training is conducted.

IV. Staged Decompression

A guideline, physical structure or a reel and delayed surface marker buoy must be used for ascents on dives where staged decompression is simulated or conducted.

Conducting SSI Programs Using Certified Assistants

I. Recreational-Level Training

- An active status SSI Divemaster or higher may act as a certified assistant for some scuba training programs.
- For scuba specialty programs, a certified assistant must hold the diver-level certification for the applicable program.
- They may assist with in-water training, and may increase ratios if specified by the program standard.
- If an SSI Assistant Instructor is used as a certified assistant during entry-level programs, they are considered as another instructor, and may double ratios for pool/confined water training sessions.

II. Professional-Level Training

- An active status SSI Assistant Instructor Trainer may act as a certified assistant for the Instructor Training Course and the Assistant Instructor Trainer Seminar.
- An active status SSI Assistant Instructor may act as a certified assistant for the Dive Guide program.
- An active status SSI Instructor Trainer may act as a certified assistant for the Instructor Trainer Seminar.

Conducting SSI Programs

Supervision

SSI Professionals must not engage in any activities other than supervision during in-water training for all entry-level programs.

Activities that do not affect the SSI Professional's ability to supervise and assist their students (e.g. taking a class photo with a pocket-sized camera) are permitted.

I. Direct Supervision

An active status SSI Professional certified to conduct the applicable SSI program must personally supervise and evaluate all students during any training. They may not delegate the supervision to a certified assistant.

II. Indirect Supervision

An active status SSI Professional certified to conduct the applicable SSI program is not required to personally observe all student knowledge and skills, but they must manage all program activities and be present at the training location.

In some SSI programs, an active status SSI Professional may delegate some supervision to a certified assistant, but the instructor must still be present at the location, and managing all program activities.

III. Distance Learning

With distance learning, the academic portion of the program is conducted by correspondence or over the internet, without the student's physical presence at the SSI Training Center.

All academic sessions for all SSI programs can be conducted using distance learning.

IV. Proximity

Some program-specific standards require a minimum proximity (physical distance) between the SSI Professional and their students during in-water training.

V. Student-To-Instructor Ratios

The student-to-instructor ratio for academic sessions is set by the individual instructor, based on the ability of the instructor to deal effectively with all student needs.

The maximum student-to-instructor ratio for in-water training is provided in each specific program standard. Any certified divers that dive with a class during open water training dives must be counted towards the student-to-instructor ratios.

If conditions dictate, decrease the student-to-instructor ratio.

Recommendation / Whenever possible, additional certified assistants should be used during training.

VI. Emergency Ascent Skills

An SSI Open Water Instructor or higher must directly conduct all simulated emergency ascent skills during in-water training.

Emergency ascent skills

- Emergency Swimming Ascent
- Emergency Buoyant Ascent
- Gas-Sharing Ascent
- Rescuing an Unconscious Diver

Any ascent training done during open water scuba training dives that simulates any emergency condition must be done from depths of thirty (30) feet or less.

During simulated emergency ascents, the Open Water Instructor must establish physical contact with the student or buddy team before the ascent begins, and maintain direct physical contact during the entire ascent.

Conducting SSI Programs

Duty of Care

I. Obligation of Care

All SSI Professionals must inform students that if they become excessively cold or tired, are under undue stress, are low on gas, injured, not feeling well, or have recently been sick, they must not dive, or must not continue the dive, as is appropriate.

II. Environmental Conditions

Instructors have an obligation to cancel or modify open water training dives when environmental conditions, a student's physical or mental condition or equipment difficulties make it advisable.

Note / This judgment can only be made by the SSI Professional at the time and place of the open water training dive. Students who do not successfully complete the required skills during a training dive may complete those skills during a later training dive.

III. Skill Level

Only realistic skills may be presented when students reach a level of SSI training where they are capable of dealing with underwater problems. The students should solve these problems as they would in real-world diving situations.

IV. Forcing Students

SSI Professionals must never force students to perform skills if the student indicates (verbally or physically) that they do not want to perform the skill.

V. Emergency Plan

Any SSI Professional conducting in-water training must have a written emergency plan for incidents for each location where training is conducted.

VI. First Aid Equipment

Emergency equipment must be available in the vicinity of the dive site, including a first aid kit, oxygen unit and communications equipment. This equipment must be accessible at all times while training is being conducted.

VII. Reporting Procedures

In the event that an SSI Professional is involved in, or is witness to an incident, or if a claim or suit is filed against them or their Training Center, they must immediately notify the responsible SSI Service Center, their Insurance Agent and their affiliated Training Center's Insurance Agent.

Recommendation / Use the SSI Incident Report form found in the MySSI download section.

Conducting SSI Programs

Environmental Definitions

I. Shallow Water

Water shallow enough to stand with the head out of the water.

II. Deep Water

Water too deep to stand in with the head out of the water.

III. Deep Diving

Defined as any dive deeper than 60 feet.

IV. Diving At Altitude

SSI Professionals must plan all dives conducted above 1,000 feet in elevation using specific altitude tables/software or altitude-compatible dive computers.

V. Diving in Cold Water

SSI Professionals must ensure that proper exposure protection is available to all students before conducting training in cold water.

If dry suits are being used during open water training dives, the student must have an SSI Dry Suit Diving specialty certification (or equivalent) or be enrolled in the SSI Dry Suit specialty program. The pool/confined water session for the Dry Suit Diving specialty program must be completed prior to any open water training.

Note | When training in cold water, always adhere to the equipment manufacturer's guidelines.

VI. Excursion Dive

A dive without formal performance requirements made prior to completion of all open water training dives. Entry-level students must be directly supervised during excursion dives.

VII. Indoor Diving

Aquariums and purpose-built artificial diving facilities with a minimum depth greater than fifteen (15) feet, and a minimum water surface area of 120 square yards may be used to conduct training dives for the following programs:

- Snorkel Diver
- Try Scuba
- Basic Diver
- Scuba Diver
- Indoor Diver
- Open Water Training Dives 1 and 2 of the Open Water Diver program
- Any specialty program relevant to this particular environment

Note | All standards including depth limits still apply when conducting training at an Indoor Diving Facility. Contact the responsible SSI Service Center if you are unsure if an Indoor Diving location is appropriate for training.

VIII. Night Diving

Any dive conducted after sunset and before sunrise. SSI Professionals must make underwater dive lights available to all students when conducting training at night.

Conducting SSI Programs

Training Environments and Depth Limits

I. Pool

An enclosed artificial structure filled with water that is used for swimming and dive skills development. It must have adequate visibility to ensure an instructor can observe their students at all times.

- The maximum depth for all pool/confined water training is 15 feet unless specified in the program-specific standard.

II. Confined Water

Any body of water with a depth appropriate to the activity that offers conditions similar to those of a pool including visibility, depth, water movement, and access.

For all entry-level programs, pool/confined water should have depths both shallow enough for all students to stand up in and deep enough to adequately perform the program required skills.

- The maximum depth for all pool/confined water training is 15 feet unless specified in the program-specific standard.
- If shallow water is not available, the instructor must use a platform within six (6) feet of the surface, a float with handles, or a descent line, and must reduce ratios as necessary to ensure the comfort and safety of their students.

III. Open Water

An outdoor body of water suitable for swimming or diving activities with depths greater than fifteen (15) feet. Environmental conditions must be consistent with the requirements for the training program.

- The minimum depth for open water training dives is 15 feet.
- The maximum depth for recreational diving is 130 feet.
- The maximum depths of open water training dives are listed in each program's specific standards.

IV. Recommended Depth Limits After Certification

After certification, SSI certified divers should dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy, in environments and to a depth equivalent with their experience and level of training.

Recommended depth limit based on certification:

- Scuba Diver | 40 feet with an active status dive professional
- Junior Open Water Diver | 60 feet
- Open Water Diver | 60 feet
- Advanced Adventurer | 100 feet if conducting the Deep Diving Adventure Dive
- Junior Advanced Adventurer | 70 feet if conducting the Deep Diving Adventure Dive
- Deep Diving Specialty | 130 feet
- Decompression Diving | 130 feet and 15 minutes of decompression
- Enriched Air Nitrox | Do not exceed a maximum ppO_2 of 1.4 bar/ata

Recommended depth limit based on age:

- 10- and 11-year-olds | 40 feet with an active status dive professional, or certified adult

Conducting SSI Programs

Overhead Environments

I. Linear Distance

The standards for SSI Overhead Environment programs include limitations for linear distances. Linear distance is defined as the sum of the vertical distance, plus the horizontal distance, that the diver must swim to reach the surface.

II. Swim-Through

A natural or artificial structure that restricts direct vertical access to the surface.

A swim-through must:

- Be less than thirty (30) feet in length
- At depths shallower than 100 feet
- Have separate and clearly visible entry and exit points, free of obstruction or entanglement hazards

During non entry-level programs, active status SSI Professionals may accompany students through a swim-through as defined above.

III. Daylight Zone Overhead Environments

A natural or artificial structure that restricts direct vertical access to the surface. It has a clearly visible entry point, and at all times the student can see a safe window of natural day light, large enough to allow access to the surface in an emergency. All daylight zone overhead environment dives require a fixed guideline that leads back to the entry point. The line must be suitable to the environment, be tied outside of any overhead restriction, and must not require navigation decisions to be made.

Active status SSI Professionals certified to teach SSI Overhead Environment Specialties or XR Overhead Environment programs may accompany students in overhead environments that meet the above definition.

IV. Dives Outside the Daylight Zone

A dive in a natural or artificial structure that restricts direct vertical access to the surface. The diver may be any distance from a safe exit, provided enough gas has been planned to allow 1/3 of the total gas volume to be held in reserve upon exit (assuming no emergencies). All overhead environment dives require a fixed guideline that leads to an entry/exit point. The line must be suitable to the environment and be tied outside of any overhead restriction.

Dives that meet this definition are not permitted during recreational scuba training programs.

Conducting SSI Programs

SSI In-Water Training Philosophy

I. Teaching Air-Sharing Skills

For entry-level SSI programs, SSI Professionals may teach either method of air sharing (passing the primary or passing the alternate regulator).

a. Air-Sharing Skills During Entry-Level Training

Due to the wide variety of equipment configurations, SSI encourages SSI Professionals to teach both methods of air sharing to entry-level divers.

As dive professionals, we have an obligation to provide students with the knowledge and training necessary to dive autonomously with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments consistent with their training. This includes equipment configurations they may encounter in equipment they purchase, rent, or see on their buddy.

b. Rationale For Passing The Primary Air Source

There are four common Delivery System configurations in modern recreational scuba:

- A first stage and primary second-stage with a traditional alternate air source (additional second-stage regulator)
- A first stage and primary second-stage with an integrated alternate air source and BC inflator
- A first stage and long hose primary second-stage with an alternate air source (additional second-stage regulator) on a necklace
- A first stage and primary second-stage, and an additional first stage with alternate air source (additional second-stage regulator)

c. Air Sharing During Professional-Level Training

Since passing the primary works with most equipment configurations, it is SSI's preferred method, and is a required and evaluated skill for all SSI Professional training programs.

Attention:

Read the owner's manual of the regulator before performing air-sharing exercises. If the manual explicitly says that the regulator is for the use of only one person, at minimum the instructor needs to be equipped with an independent redundant breathing system to perform this exercise. If that regulator is designed for only one person, the instructor must be the donor during this exercise and equipped with a redundant breathing system.

II. Diving Position

SSI's "Comfort through Repetition" in-water training philosophy is student-centered, and gradually increases the complexity of skills as students demonstrate mastery.

New skills are introduced in the shallow water, where the students develop their technique and motor skills. Once they demonstrate comfort and confidence with the skill, they can transition to performing the skill in deeper water, and incorporate more complex buddy team and emergency skills.

a. Kneeling vs. The Diving Position

The position of the student during skill practice and demonstration plays an important role in their progression, in-water comfort, and eventual autonomy. Skills are usually introduced to students who are kneeling and/or negatively buoyant to minimize stress and increase stability. This is an effective technique for the initial skill introduction, but it is not a realistic or natural diving position.

In the Diving Position, the diver's body stays horizontal to the bottom, with their fins and legs extended behind their body. This keeps their mouth and lungs horizontal, which is the optimal position for breathing, and improves streamlining and kicking technique.

Students who are new to the Diving Position may maintain slight contact between fins and the bottom, but the objective of the position is to maintain the Diving Position while neutrally buoyant. This is the desired position for a certified diver, and students should be introduced to the skill as soon as they are ready, so they have sufficient time to practice and master it during pool/confined water training.

SSI strongly encourages instructors to have their students practice all applicable skills in the Diving Position during their pool/confined water training. The decision to transition a student from the kneeling position to the Diving Position is always at the instructor's discretion, and must be based on the student's comfort level and ability to complete the skill.

Water Fitness Evaluations

Student Water Fitness Evaluation

SSI entry-level programs, like Open Water Diver, require the student to complete a water fitness evaluation prior to any open water training. This evaluation can also be used to re-evaluate students before any SSI continuing education program, but it is not required unless specified in the program-specific standards.

Note / Entry-level students must successfully pass all portions of this assessment before participating in any open water training.

I. Overall Comfort in the Water

The goal of this evaluation is to determine your students' baseline comfort level in the water. Some nervousness may be common, but as the course progresses, they should gain confidence in their equipment and in your abilities as an instructor.

II. Swim Assessment

Swim 200 yards without any swim or buoyancy aids, or swim 300 yards using a mask, snorkel and fins. There is no time limit for this exercise, but it must be completed without stopping or standing.

III. Survival Float

Float or tread in water too deep to stand for ten (10) minutes without any swim or buoyancy aids. The student's face must remain clear of the water for the duration of the exercise.

a. Notes

- SSI recommends re-evaluating students if it has been more than six months since their last successful water fitness evaluation.
- You may conduct the water fitness evaluation during any pool or pool/confined water session, but SSI recommends evaluating your students early in the training process to identify any areas of concern.
- Failure of any portion of the evaluation does not constitute failure in the class.
- Allow your students to practice and repeat the evaluation until they are successful.
- Pay close attention to any students that appear uneasy, since they may require additional attention and guidance.

Water Fitness Evaluations

Candidate Water Fitness Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to ensure that SSI Professional candidates have an adequate level of fitness and comfort in the water prior to conducting any SSI training.

I. Tread Water

- Tread water for 15 minutes without using any aids or flotation of any kind.

II. Surface Swim

- Swim 770 yards without stopping within 20 minutes using a mask, fins and a snorkel. If a wetsuit is used, weights must be added to ensure the candidate is neutrally buoyant.

Or

- Swim 400 yards without stopping, and without the use of mask, fins, snorkel or other swim aids.

Note | The 400-yard swim may be conducted as an alternative to the 770-yard assisted swim. It is required by RSTC standards to be completed for the ITC in North America.

III. Underwater Swim

- Swim underwater for 80 feet using a mask and fins.

IV. Diver Rescue

- Perform a full, unconscious-diver-on-the-surface rescue with a total distance of 100 yards within eight (8) minutes. Both parties must use a Total Diving System.

Note | See the Water Fitness Evaluation Form and Criteria for detailed information.

Note | A completed water fitness evaluation is valid for six (6) months.

Experience Programs

Snorkel Diver

I. Intent

The SSI Snorkel Diver program provides a basic introduction to the common equipment and skills needed to snorkel safely.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Snorkel Instructor may conduct the Snorkel Diver program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- There is no minimum age for the Snorkel Diver program.

Note / Students do not need to be proficient swimmers to participate in the Snorkel Diver program. They should be comfortable and able to maintain their buoyancy in water too deep to stand in prior to participating in open water sessions.

IV. Duration

- There is no recommended duration for the Snorkel Diver program.

V. Depth Limitations

- If breath-hold diving is taught during the Snorkel Diver program, do not conduct training deeper than fifteen (15) feet.

Recommendation / If students are interested in breath-hold diving, they should be encouraged to take the SSI Basic Freediver program.

VI. In-Water Ratios

- There is no maximum in-water ratio for this program.
- The student-to-instructor ratio should be set by the individual instructor, based on their ability to effectively supervise and respond to their students' needs.
- Decrease this ratio whenever conditions or logistics require.

VII. Minimum Supervision

- An active status Snorkel Diver Instructor must directly supervise all academic and in-water activities.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all in-water sessions as outlined in the instructor manual for Snorkel Diver in a pool, confined water, or open water environment.

IX. Issuing a Recognition Card

- The Snorkel Diver program is a recognition program only.
- Upon completion, process all students in MySSI so that they may receive their free digital recognition card on the MySSI app.

SSI Explorers

SSI Explorers

I. Intent

The SSI Explorers program provides children with the necessary knowledge and skills to participate in snorkeling, mermaid, freediving, or scuba experiences in a pool or confined water environment.

Note | This is a recognition program. The SSI Professional should focus on the students' safety and enjoyment, avoiding over-teaching.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Explorer Instructor qualified for the applicable category may conduct each part of the SSI Explorers program.

- Blue Oceans Explorer
- Snorkel Explorer
- Mermaid Explorer
- Freediving Explorer
- Scuba Explorer

III. Administrative Requirements

Prior to beginning training, they must complete the:

- Registration Form
- Privacy Policy Form
- Fit To Dive Screening
- Responsible Diver Code
- Assumption of Risk, Liability Release and Hold Harmless Agreement
- Youth Addendum

IV. Prerequisites

Prior to any in-water training:

- Swim 40 feet without any swim or buoyancy aids.

Mermaid Explorer | Freediving Explorer

- Minimum age: 6 years old.

Scuba Explorer

- Minimum age: 8 years old.

V. Recommended Duration

Snorkel Explorer

2 sessions | Recommended hours for completion: 6–8.

Mermaid Explorer

2 sessions | Recommended hours for completion: 6–8.

Freediving Explorer

3 sessions | Recommended hours for completion: 9–12.

Scuba Explorer

4 sessions | Recommended hours for completion: 12–15.

Specialty Explorer

1 session per specialty | Recommended hours for completion: 3–4.

VI. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth: 15 feet.

VII. In-Water Ratios

Snorkel Explorer

- The participant-to-instructor ratio is 6:1.

Mermaid | Freediving Scuba Specialty Explorer

- The participant-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- The ratio may increase to 6:2 with one (1) certified assistant.

VIII. Minimum Supervision

- The Explorer Instructor qualified for the applicable Explorer program must directly supervise all academic and in-water activities.

IX. Proximity

- During all in-water activities, the participants must remain under the direct supervision of the Explorer Instructor so that physical contact can be made at any time.

X. Explorer Specialty Program

a. Snorkel Explorer

Participants who have completed at least the Snorkel Explorer program may complete the following specialty experiences:

- Boat Explorer
- Navigation Explorer
- Night and Limited Visibility Explorer
- Photo and Video Explorer
- Rescue Explorer
- Scooter/DPV Explorer
- Underwater Communication Explorer
- Underwater Model Explorer
- Ecology Explorer

Note / These experiences may also be customized for Mermaid Explorer, Freediving Explorer, and Scuba Explorer.

b. Freediving Explorer

Participants who have completed the Freediving Explorer program may complete the following specialty experiences:

- Monofin Explorer
- No-Fins Explorer

c. Scuba Explorer

Participants who have completed the Scuba Explorer program may complete the following specialty experiences:

- Enriched Air Nitrox Explorer
- Perfect Buoyancy Explorer
- Search and Recovery Explorer

XI. Requirements for Completion

- Complete the academic and in-water requirements for each Explorer program as outlined in the instructor manual.

XII. Sequence

- Snorkel Explorer must be completed prior to any of the other in-water Explorer programs.

XIII. Recognition Cards

- The SSI Explorers program is a recognition program only.
- Upon completion of each Explorer program, process all participants in MySSI so they may receive the applicable recognition card.

SSI Explorers

SSI Explorers Recognition Ratings

I. Intent

SSI recognizes its Explorers when they meet certain levels of training and experience.

Specialty Explorer

II. Requirements For Completion

- Completing two (2) Explorer specialty experiences.

III. Issuing a Recognition Card

- Once all requirements are complete and the participant's profile is updated in MySSI, the Specialty Explorer digital recognition card is automatically issued at no charge.

Advanced Explorer

IV. Requirements For Completion

- Completing four (4) Explorer specialty experiences.

V. Issuing a Recognition Card

- Once all requirements are complete and the participant's is updated in MySSI, the Advanced Explorer digital recognition card is automatically issued at no charge.

Master Explorer

VI. Requirements For Completion

- Complete the Rescue Explorer program and four (4) additional Explorer specialty experiences.

VII. Issuing a Recognition Card

- Once all requirements are complete and the participant's profile is updated in MySSI, the Master Explorer digital recognition card is automatically issued at no charge.

Recreational Scuba

Try Scuba

I. Intent

The SSI Try Scuba program provides students with an introductory scuba experience with an SSI Professional in a pool/confined water environment.

Note | This is a recognition program. The SSI Professional should focus on the students' safety and enjoyment, avoiding over-teaching.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Assistant Instructor may conduct the Try Scuba program.

III. Administrative Requirements

Prior to beginning training, they must complete the:

- Try Scuba Participant Registration Form
- SSI Introductory Fit To Dive Screening and Responsible Diver Code
- SSI Introductory Scuba Assumption of Risk, Liability Release & Hold Harmless Agreement | Where required
- Youth Addendum | Where required

IV. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 8 years old.

V. Duration

- There is no recommended duration for the Try Scuba program.

VI. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet

VII. In-Water Ratios

a. Pool

10 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- Certified assistants cannot be used to increase ratios.

8- and 9-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- The ratio may increase to 6:2 with one (1) certified assistant.

b. Confined Water

10 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- The ratio may increase to 6:2 with one (1) certified assistant.

8- and 9-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 2:1.
- The ratio may increase to 4:2 with one (1) certified assistant.

Note | Each SSI Professional must comply with local regulations and insurance requirements applicable to introductory scuba programs.

VIII. Minimum Supervision

- An active status Assistant Instructor or higher must directly supervise all academic and pool/confined water activities.

IX. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.
- Students must remain under the direct supervision of the instructor so that physical contact can be made at all times during any in-water training.

X. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic and in-water sessions and assessments as outlined in the instructor manual for Try Scuba.
- Skill demonstration and evaluations are only required if the students will continue with the Basic Diver open water training dive.

XI. Issuing a Recognition Card

- Try Scuba is a recognition program only.
- Upon completion, process all students in MySSI so they may receive their digital recognition card.

Recreational Scuba

Basic Diver (ISO 11121)

I. Intent

The SSI Basic Diver program provides students with the necessary skills and knowledge to complete introductory scuba dives with an SSI Open Water Instructor in an open water environment.

Note | This program does not result in an entry-level certification. The instructor should only teach the skills outlined in the Basic Diver Instructor Manual and focus on the students' safety and enjoyment.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Open Water Instructor may conduct the Basic Diver program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

IV. Duration

- There is no recommended duration for the Basic Diver program.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Maximum open water depth limit: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

a. Pool

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- Certified assistants cannot be used to increase ratios.

b. Confined Water and Open Water

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- The ratio may increase to 6:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Minimum Supervision

- An active status Assistant Instructor or higher must directly supervise all academic and pool/confined water activities.
- An active status Open Water Instructor must evaluate all required skills in the pool/confined water prior to any open water activities, and must directly supervise all open water activities.

Note | Any Open Water Instructor may verify completion of the required pool/confined water skills prior to the open water training dive.

VIII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

IX. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions and assessments as outlined in the instructor manual for Basic Diver.
- Complete at least one (1) open water training dive as outlined in the instructor manual for Basic Diver.

X. Issuing a Recognition Card

- Upon completion, process all students in MySSI so they may receive their digital recognition card.
- Basic Divers may dive under the direct supervision of an SSI Open Water Instructor in environments equivalent to their training, and within the recommended depth limits, for six (6) months after completion of the Basic Diver program.
- After six (6) months, the student must retake the Basic Diver program, or register for a Scuba Diver/Open Water Diver program to continue diving.

XI. Credit

- SSI Professionals can count one (1) open water training dive from in the Basic Diver program towards the Scuba Diver or Open Water Diver certification.
- Credit only applies if done within six (6) months of completing the Basic Diver program.
- An open water training dive may only be credited towards the Open Water Diver program if the dive is conducted to a minimum depth of 15 feet for at least 15 minutes.

Entry-Level Programs

Referral Diver

I. Intent

The SSI Referral Diver program provides students with the knowledge and training necessary to dive autonomously with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in a pool/confined water environment equivalent with their training until they can complete their open water training.

A student that completes all the academic sections and pool/confined water sessions for the Open Water Diver program can be issued the Referral Diver digital card with the intent of completing their open water training dives at a later date, and/or with another SSI Training Center.

The digital Referral Diver card is available in the student's MySSI account, and their progress can be viewed by any affiliated SSI Training Center.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Open Water Instructor may conduct the Open Water Diver program and issue Referral Diver certification for any student who does not complete their open water training dives.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 16–20.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet

VI. In-Water Ratios

a. Pool

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

b. Confined Water and Open Water

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

10- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- The ratio may increase to 6:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 8:3 with two (2) certified assistants.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Minimum Supervision

- An active status Assistant Instructor may directly supervise all academic sessions, pool/confined water activities (with the exception of emergency ascent skills), and surface skills during open water training dives under the indirect supervision of an active status Open Water Instructor.
- An active status Open Water Instructor must introduce and directly supervise all emergency ascent skills during in-water training.

a. Equipment

- If dry suits are used during training, the Open Water Instructor directly supervising the program must also be an active status SSI Dry Suit Diving Specialty Instructor.

VIII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

IX. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sections and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.
- Complete an Open Water Diver final exam.
- Complete all pool/confined water sessions and skill evaluations outlined in the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.
- Complete the Student Water Fitness Evaluation outlined in the SSI General Training Standards. Water fitness evaluations must be completed before participating in any open water training dives.

X. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and pool/confined water requirements, including the Student Water Fitness Evaluation and final exam, an Open Water Instructor may issue a digital Referral Diver certification card.
- Certified Referral Divers may dive autonomously with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in a pool environment equivalent with their training.

XI. Upgrades

To upgrade a Referral Diver to Scuba Diver, Indoor Diver or Open Water Diver

- The SSI Professional completing the open water training dives must upgrade the student in MySSI in order for them to receive their digital certification card.
- Open water training dives for all SSI programs must be completed within six (6) months of the last academic or in-water training session.
- If it has been more than six (6) months from the issue date of the Referral Diver certification, a qualified SSI Professional must conduct a re-evaluation (both knowledge and skill review) to determine if the student is sufficiently proficient to continue to the open water training dives.
- If it has been more than 12 months since the student's last in-water session, the student must complete a Scuba Skills Update and retake the Open Water Diver final exam.

Recommendation | If it has been more than six (6) months since a student has completed all Referral Diver training, have the student complete a Scuba Skills Update prior to upgrading.

Entry-Level Programs

Indoor Diver

I. Intent

The SSI Indoor Diver program provides students with the training necessary to dive autonomously with an equally- or more-qualified buddy, in environments including aquariums and purpose-built artificial diving facilities, to depths equivalent with their training.

Note | The Indoor Diver program must be conducted using the instructor materials, depth limits and ratios of the Open Water Diver program, except that the indoor training dives are conducted in an approved artificial diving facility as defined in the General Training Standards.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Open Water Instructor may conduct the Indoor Diver program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 16-32.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- The first two (2) indoor training dives must be conducted between 15 and 40 feet.
- The remaining indoor training dives must be conducted between 15 and 60 feet.
- The maximum depth for all 10- and 11-year-olds during all training dives is 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

a. Pool

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

b. Confined Water and Indoor Dive Facilities

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

10- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- The ratio may increase to 6:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 8:3 with two (2) certified assistants.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Minimum Supervision

- An active status Assistant Instructor may directly supervise all academic sessions, pool/confined water activities (with the exception of emergency ascent skills), and surface skills during indoor training dives under the indirect supervision of an active status Open Water Instructor.
- An active status Open Water Instructor must introduce and directly supervise all emergency ascent skills during in-water training.
- An active status Open Water Instructor must directly supervise all indoor training dives.
- A certified assistant may directly supervise a maximum of two (2) students during the excursion portion of any indoor training dives after the completion of Indoor Training Dive 2.
- If navigation training is being conducted during Indoor Training Dive 4, the instructor may choose to indirectly supervise these skills.

a. Equipment

- If dry suits are used during training, the Open Water Instructor directly supervising the program must also be an active status SSI Dry Suit Diving Specialty Instructor.

VIII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

IX. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sections and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.
- Complete an Open Water Diver final exam.
- Complete all pool/confined water sessions and skill evaluations outlined in the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.
- Complete the Student Water Fitness Evaluation outlined in the SSI General Training Standards. Water fitness evaluations must be completed before participating in any indoor training dives.
- Complete at least four (4) indoor training dives on scuba, and all skill evaluations outlined in Open Water Training Dives 1-4 of the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.

X. Sequence

- Indoor Training Dive 1 may be conducted prior to completing the academic requirements and pool/confined water requirements for the program. This dive must meet the requirements of the Open Water Training Dive from the Basic Diver program.
- Indoor Training Dive 2 may only be conducted after all requirements and evaluations for Academic Sessions 1-3 and Pool/Confined Water Sessions 2-3 of the instructor manual for Open Water Diver have been met or exceeded.
- Indoor Training Dives 3-4 may only be conducted after all requirements and evaluations for Academic Sessions 1-6 and Pool/Confined Water Sessions 4-6 of the instructor manual for Open Water Diver have been met or exceeded.
- The skills from Pool/Confined Water Session 1 may be combined with any/all in-water training sessions, but must be completed prior to certification.

Recommendation / SSI recommends conducting additional experience or training dives when possible.

XI. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, process the student in MySSI so they can receive the digital certification card.
- Certified Indoor Divers can dive autonomously with an equally- or more-qualified buddy, in environments including aquariums and purpose-built artificial diving facilities and within the recommended depth limits.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as a Junior Indoor Diver and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional or with a certified adult.

Note | After certification, SSI recommends that Junior Indoor Divers ages 10 and 11 dive to depths shallower than 40 feet with a certified adult or dive professional.

XII. Upgrades

- To upgrade to an Open Water Diver certification, an Indoor Diver must complete two (2) additional open water training dives on scuba and the skill evaluations outlined in Open Water Training Dives 1-4 of the instructor manual for Open Water Diver in an open water environment.

Note | All skill evaluations can be combined and performed in one or more of the required dives.

Entry-Level Programs

Scuba Diver (ISO 24801-1)

I. Intent

The SSI Scuba Diver program provides students with the knowledge and training necessary to dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, in environments equivalent with their training and to depths shallower than 40 feet.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Open Water Instructor may conduct the Scuba Diver program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 10-16.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Minimum open water depth limit: 15 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

a. Pool

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

b. Confined Water and Open Water

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

10- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- The ratio may increase to 6:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 8:3 with two (2) certified assistants.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Minimum Supervision

- An active status Assistant Instructor may directly supervise all academic sessions, pool/confined water activities (with the exception of emergency ascent skills), and surface skills during open water training dives under the indirect supervision of an active status Open Water Instructor.
- An active status Open Water Instructor must introduce and directly supervise all emergency ascent skills during in-water training.
- An active status Open Water Instructor must directly supervise all open water training dives.
- A certified assistant may directly supervise a maximum of two (2) students during the excursion portion of any open water training dives after the completion of Open Water Training Dive 2.

a. Equipment

- If dry suits are used during training, the Open Water Instructor directly supervising the program must also be an active status SSI Dry Suit Diving Specialty Instructor.

VIII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

IX. Requirements For Completion

- Complete Academic Sections 1-3 and assessments as outlined in the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.
- Complete a Scuba Diver final exam.
- Complete at least three (3) pool/confined water sessions and the skill evaluations outlined in Pool/Confined Water Sessions 1-3 of the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.
- Complete the Student Water Fitness Evaluation outlined in the SSI General Training Standards. Water fitness evaluations must be completed before participating in any open water training dives.
- Complete at least two (2) open water training dives on scuba and the skill evaluations outlined in Open Water Training Dives 1-2 of the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.

Note / Scuba Divers may conduct the open water training dives in indoor diving facilities as defined in the General Training Standards.

X. Sequence

- Open Water Training Dive 1 may be conducted prior to completing the academic requirements and pool/confined water requirements for the program. This dive must meet the requirements of the Open Water Training Dive from the Basic Diver program.
- Open Water Training Dive 2 may only be conducted after all requirements and evaluations for Academic Sessions 1-3 and Pool/Confined Water Sessions 2-3 of the instructor manual for Open Water Diver have been met or exceeded.
- The skills from Pool/Confined Water Session 1 may be combined with any/all in-water training sessions, but must be completed prior to certification.

Recommendation / SSI recommends conducting additional experience or training dives whenever possible.

XI. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, including a water fitness evaluation and final exam, an Open Water Instructor may issue the Scuba Diver digital certification card.
- Certified Scuba Divers can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional in environments equivalent to their training and to depths shallower than 40 feet.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as a Junior Scuba Diver and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

XII. Upgrades

To upgrade to Open Water diver, a Scuba Diver must

- Complete the remaining requirements and assessments of Academic Sections 4-6 outlined in the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.
- Complete an Open Water Diver final exam with a passing score of at least 80%.
- Complete three (3) additional pool/confined water sessions and the skill evaluations outlined in Pool/Confined Water Sessions 4-6 of the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.
- Complete two (2) additional open water training dives and the skill evaluations outlined in Open Water Training Dives 3 and 4 of the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.

Entry-Level Programs

Open Water Diver (ISO 24801-2)

I. Intent

The SSI Open Water Diver program provides students with the knowledge and training necessary to dive autonomously with an equally- or more-qualified buddy, in environments equivalent with their training and to depths shallower than 60 feet.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Open Water Instructor may conduct the Open Water Diver program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 16-32.
- Minimum total bottom time for open water training dives: 80 minutes.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Minimum open water depth limit: 15 feet.
- Maximum depth limit for Open Water Training Dives 1 and 2: 40 feet.
- Maximum depth limit for all remaining open water training dives: 60 feet.
- Maximum depth limit for 10- and 11-year-olds: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

a. Pool

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

b. Confined Water and Open Water

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

10- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- The ratio may increase to 6:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 8:3 with two (2) certified assistants.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Minimum Supervision

- An active status Assistant Instructor may directly supervise all academic sessions, pool/confined water activities (with the exception of emergency ascent skills), and surface skills during open water training dives under the indirect supervision of an active status Open Water Instructor.
- An active status Open Water Instructor must introduce and directly supervise all emergency ascent skills during in-water training.
- An active status Open Water Instructor must directly supervise all open water training dives.
- A certified assistant may directly supervise a maximum of two (2) students during the excursion portion of any open water training dives after the completion of Open Water Training Dive 2.
- If navigation training is being conducted during Open Water Training Dive 4, the instructor may choose to indirectly supervise these skills.

a. Equipment

- If dry suits are used during training, the Open Water Instructor directly supervising the program must also be an active status SSI Dry Suit Diving Specialty Instructor.

VIII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

IX. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sections and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.
- Complete an Open Water Diver final exam.
- Complete all pool/confined water sessions and skill evaluations outlined in the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.
- Complete the Student Water Fitness Evaluation outlined in the SSI General Training Standards. Water fitness evaluations must be completed before participating in any open water training dives.
- Complete at least four (4) open water training dives on scuba and all of the skill evaluations outlined in instructor manual for Open Water Diver.

Note | Open Water Training Dives 1 and 2 of the Open Water Diver program may be completed in indoor diving facilities as defined in the General Training Standards.

X. Sequence

- Open Water Training Dive 1 may be conducted prior to completing the academic requirements and pool/confined water requirements for the program. This dive must meet the requirements of the Open Water Training Dive from the Basic Diver program.
- Open Water Training Dive 2 may only be conducted after all requirements and evaluations for Academic Sessions 1-3 and Pool/Confined Water Sessions 2-3 of the instructor manual for Open Water Diver have been met or exceeded.
- Open Water Training Dives 3-4 may only be conducted after all requirements and evaluations for Academic Sessions 1-6 and Pool/Confined Water Sessions 4-6 of the instructor manual for Open Water Diver have been met or exceeded.
- The skills from Pool/Confined Water Session 1 may be combined with any/all in-water training sessions, but must be completed prior to certification.

Recommendation | SSI recommends conducting additional experience or training dives when possible.

XI. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, including a water fitness evaluation and final exam, an Open Water Instructor may issue the Open Water Diver digital certification card.
- Certified Open Water Divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as a Junior Open Water Diver and must dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional or with a certified adult in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

Entry-Level Programs

Experienced Diver Test

I. Intent

The Experienced Diver Test is intended for divers that have lost proof of certification, or were trained as a military, commercial, lifeguard or scientific diver. The diver must provide proof of open water diving experience before conducting the Experienced Diver Test.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Open Water Instructor may conduct the Experienced Diver Test.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 15 years old.
- Provide a signed statement describing previous scuba training and experience.
- Provide proof of prior experience and training.

Example / Proof of certification from an agency that no longer exists, a logbook signed or stamped by a dive professional or training center, official letter/credentials from a military, commercial, lifeguard, or scientific diving supervisor.

Recommendation / Encourage the diver to enroll in an Open Water Diver program when they do not have adequate proof of experience, or it has been a prolonged period of time since their last open water dive.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 10-16.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Minimum open water depth limit: 15 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit: 60 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

VII. Minimum Supervision

For the Open Water Diver Experienced Diver Test:

- An active status Assistant Instructor may directly supervise all academic sessions, pool/confined water activities (with the exception of emergency ascent skills), and surface skills during open water training dives under the indirect supervision of an active status Open Water Instructor.
- An active status Open Water Instructor must introduce and directly supervise all emergency ascent skills during in-water training.
- An active status Open Water Instructor must directly supervise all open water training dives.

If the Experienced Diver Test is used to evaluate Diver Stress & Rescue or Dive Guide candidates:

- An active status Specialty Instructor with the applicable instructor certification must directly supervise all academic and in-water activities.

VIII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

IX. Requirements For Completion

a. Open Water Diver

- Complete an Open Water Diver final exam.
- Complete at least one (1) pool/confined water session and skill assessment as outlined in the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.
- Complete the Student Water Fitness Evaluation outlined in the SSI General Training Standards. Water fitness evaluations must be completed before participating in any open water training dives.
- Complete at least two (2) open water training dives on scuba, as outlined in the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.
- Complete all the required skills from Open Water Training Dives 1-4, as outlined in the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.

Note | The Experienced Diver Test can be done separately or integrated with an Open Water Diver program.

b. Diver Stress & Rescue

- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least one (1) pool/confined water session and skill assessment as outlined in the applicable instructor manual.
- Complete the Student Water Fitness Evaluation outlined in the SSI General Training Standards. Water fitness evaluations must be completed before participating in any open water training dives.
- Complete at least two (2) open water training dives on scuba, as outlined in the applicable instructor manual.
- Complete all the required skills from the program, as outlined in the applicable instructor manual.

Note | All skill evaluations can be combined and performed in one or more of the required dives.

c. Dive Guide

- Complete the program's final exam. Minimum passing score: 90%.
- Complete at least one (1) pool/confined water session and skill assessment as outlined in the applicable instructor manual.
- Complete all practical applications as outlined in the instructor manual for Dive Guide.

X. Sequence

- Open water training dives may only be conducted after all academic and pool/confined water requirements have been met or exceeded.

Recommendation | SSI recommends conducting additional experience or specialty training dives when possible.

For the Open Water Diver Experienced Diver Test:

- Snorkel skills are required, but may be combined with pool/confined water sessions and/or open water training dives.

Example | After students have completed two (2) open water training dives and all required skills, have the students plan and execute a dive as buddy teams. The instructor or certified assistant may directly or indirectly supervise this dive.

XI. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, including a water fitness evaluation and final exam, an SSI Professional may issue the appropriate digital certification card.
- The certification will have the certifying instructor's name and SSI number, and qualifies the diver to continue to the next level of the SSI Education System.

Continuing Education Programs

Specialty Program General Standards

I. Non-Diving Specialties

- The Ecology and Diving Knowledge Specialty programs do not have mandatory in-water training. SSI Professionals are encouraged to add in-water training to increase the value of the program.
- Ratios, depth limits, and supervision standards must be followed during all in-water training.

II. Minimum Supervision

- Students younger than 15 years old must be directly supervised by an SSI Professional, or paired with a certified adult, during any in-water training.
- An active status SSI Professional certified to conduct the program may indirectly supervise all academic activities.
- All skill demonstrations and evaluations must be directly supervised by an active status SSI Professional certified to conduct the applicable specialty program.

For all specialty programs with mandatory training dives:

- All mandatory training dives must be directly supervised by an active status SSI Professional certified to conduct the applicable specialty programs.

For specialty programs with optional in-water activities:

- An active status SSI Professional certified to conduct the program must indirectly supervise all in-water activities.

III. Number of Dives

- Specialty programs require a minimum of two (2) dives when in-water training dives are required.
- Some specialty programs require additional pool/confined water sessions and/or open water training dives.
- See the program-specific standard for details.

Recommendation / SSI recommends conducting additional experience or training dives after completing the minimum required dives for the specialty.

IV. Combining Specialty Programs

With other specialty programs:

Specialty programs may be combined, provided that all academic, pool/confined water and open water training requirements for the applicable programs are completed.

- If combining a specialty program with the Open Water Diver program, prior to any SSI Specialty certification, the student must be certified as an Open Water Diver.

Safe diving practices must be followed at all times, and the SSI Training Standards for each Specialty program must be met when combining Specialties.

- If two (2) Specialty programs are combined, a minimum of three (3) open water training dives are required.
- If three (3) Specialty programs are combined, a minimum of four (4) open water training dives are required.
- If four (4) Specialty programs are combined, a minimum of five (5) open water training dives are required.

For the following programs, all of the mandatory pool/confined water sessions and/or open water training dives must be completed as outlined in the applicable program standard:

- Deep Diving
- Diver Stress & Rescue
- Decompression Diving

Recommendation / Specialty programs are intended to provide students with a variety of experiences. Whenever possible, conduct more training dives than the minimum required. Always take student needs, student ability and environmental conditions into consideration when combining specialty programs and their training dives.

With entry-level programs:

- Referral Divers may enroll in SSI specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions prior to completing the Open Water Diver certification.
- Open water training dives for any specialty program cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs.
- Students may use nitrox and/or dry suits during the Open Water Diver program as outlined in the applicable specialty program standard.
- The specialty certification may only be issued after the Open Water Diver certification is issued.

V. Credit for Experience Dives

- An SSI Advanced Adventurer or equivalent may count each individual Adventure Dive they complete toward the applicable SSI Specialty program.
- If a student has proof of experience dives corresponding to the SSI Specialty program, at the SSI Professional's discretion they may receive credit for one (1) dive toward that SSI Specialty program.

Note / Proof of experience dives must be logged, verified and signed by a dive professional.

VI. Credit

All specialty certifications qualify for the following SSI Recognition ratings:

- Specialty Diver
- Advanced Open Water Diver
- Master Diver

Continuing Education Programs

Scuba Skills Update

I. Intent

The SSI Scuba Skills Update program provides certified divers with a safe and enjoyable way to refresh and update their skills. It can also provide non-certified Open Water Diver students with another practice session before participating in their open water training dives.

Recommendation / If an Open Water Diver student's last academic or pool/confined water session was more than six (6) months ago, use the Scuba Skills Update program to refresh their skills before they participate in their open water training dives.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Assistant Instructor may conduct the Scuba Skills Update program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have at least one (1) of the following SSI certifications or an equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Open Water Diver
- Junior Open Water Diver

Or

- Be a non-certified Open Water Diver student that has completed all pool/confined water training dives.

IV. Duration

- There is no recommended duration for a Scuba Skills Update.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth: 15 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-Instructor ratio is 6:1.

10- and 11-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Minimum Supervision

- An active status Assistant Instructor must directly supervise all academic and in-water activities.

VIII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

IX. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic and in-water sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Scuba Skills Update.

X. Issuing a Recognition Card

- Upon completion of all academic and pool/confined water requirements, an Assistant Instructor may issue the Scuba Skills Update digital recognition card.

Continuing Education Programs

Advanced Adventurer

I. Intent

The SSI Advanced Adventurer provides certified divers an introduction into five (5) different SSI Specialty programs under the direct supervision of an SSI Professional.

The first open water training dive from the following specialty programs can be counted toward the Advanced Adventurer program:

- Boat Diving
- Deep Diving
- Dry Suit Diving
- Enriched Air Nitrox (EAN)
- Navigation
- Night & Limited Visibility
- Perfect Buoyancy
- Photo & Video
- Scooter/DPV Diving
- Search & Recovery
- Waves, Tides & Currents
- Wreck Diving

Note / This certification program is intended to give new divers a variety of unique diving experiences that will hopefully fuel their passion for diving and dive education.

Note / Adventure Dives are supervised experience dives only, and should not be confused with the Advanced Open Water Diver recognition rating. See: Diver Recognition Ratings.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Open Water Instructor may conduct the Advanced Adventurer program.

The instructor must have direct knowledge of the required equipment and skills for any Adventure Dive they conduct. Required pool/confined water sessions must be completed for all Dedicated Equipment Specialty Adventure Dives.

The QMS Manager of the training center is responsible for verifying that the instructor has the applicable student-level certification or at least five dives in the applicable specialty prior to conducting training.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age for each Adventure Dive is defined in the program-specific standards.
- Minimum age for the Deep Diving Adventure Dive | 12 years old.

Have at least one (1) of the following SSI certifications or an equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Junior Open Water Diver
- Open Water Diver

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 10-15.

Note / This program is designed to be completely focused on practical diving skills. The total number of hours is determined by the individual instructor based on student needs, student ability, and environmental conditions.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Minimum open water depth limit: 15 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-old students during training dives is 60 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-old students during the Deep Diving Adventure Dive is 70 feet.
- Maximum depth limit for 10- and 11-year-olds: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1 if any student uses a dry suit without a dry suit certification.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.

10- and 11-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Minimum Supervision

- An active status SSI Assistant Instructor or higher must directly supervise all in-water activities for Adventure Dives from programs that may be taught by an Assistant Instructor (e.g. Boat Diving and Perfect Buoyancy).
- An active status Open Water Instructor must directly supervise all in-water activities for Adventure Dives from programs that may be taught by an Open Water Instructor (e.g. Deep Diving and Dry Suit Diving).
- A certified assistant may directly supervise no more than four (4) students at a time.

Note | Students younger than 15 years old must be directly supervised by an SSI Dive Professional or paired with a certified adult.

Note | Students who have already completed the Enriched Air Nitrox Adventure Dive may use nitrox mixes up to EAN32 and the no-decompression limits for EAN21 during additional Adventure Dives. They must be directly supervised by a qualified SSI Professional who personally verifies the gas mix, their computer settings, and their dive.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete any academic sessions and assessments as outlined in the instructor manual for Advanced Adventurer.
- Complete at least five (5) different SSI Adventure Dives.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, an Open Water Instructor may issue the Advanced Adventurer digital certification card.
- Certified Advanced Adventurers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as a Junior Advanced Adventurer and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional or with a certified adult in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

X. Credit

- Students may apply the dives completed in their Advanced Adventurer program toward the first training dive of the individual specialty programs.
- The first dive of any qualifying specialty program may also be credited as the applicable Adventure Dive for the Advanced Adventurer program.
- There is no time limit for issuing credit for completed dives.

Continuing Education Programs

Unique Recognition Specialties

I. Intent

SSI Professionals are encouraged to create and teach their own unique recognition programs. These programs are not officially sanctioned by SSI International, and are not valid toward SSI recognition level and ratings.

They are intended to recognize participation in a unique experience or environment, and are not certification programs.

Each program must still meet the minimum required standards for the applicable category of SSI specialty (e.g. Pool/Confined Water or Dedicated Equipment Specialties), and should cover at least the following concepts related to the topic:

- Equipment
- Theory
- Skills
- Safety
- Practical Application

Prior to teaching the program and issuing a recognition card, the SSI Professional must submit an instructor guide, program standard, and proof of experience in the specialty to SSI International for approval.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

- Pool/Confined Water programs: Assistant Instructor
- Open Water programs: Open Water Instructor
- Be authorized by SSI International to conduct the program

III. Student Prerequisites

Minimum age:

- 10 years old if any In-water training is conducted
- 12 years old if the program involves dedicated equipment beyond a recreational Total Diving System unless the program standard states otherwise
- 15 years old if the required training depth is deeper than 60 feet

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

IV. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.

V. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-Instructor ratio is 6:1.

10- and 11-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

Dedicated Equipment Specialties

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.

Overhead Environment Specialties

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 3:1.

VI. Minimum Supervision

- An active status SSI Professional authorized to conduct the program may indirectly supervise all academic activities.
- An active status SSI Professional, authorized to conduct the program, must directly supervise the first mandatory in-water training dive, and may indirectly supervise all additional training dives.
- All skill demonstrations and evaluations must be directly supervised by an active status SSI Professional authorized to conduct the program.

If combining Specialty programs:

- All mandatory training dives must be directly supervised by an active status SSI Professional authorized to conduct the program.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments as outlined in the instructor guide that has been approved by SSI International.
- Complete at least two (2) in-water training sessions if required by the applicable instructor guide.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue a digital recognition card for the applicable program.

Continuing Education Programs

Diver Recognition Ratings

I. Intent

SSI recognizes its divers when they meet certain levels of training and experience.

Note | This should not be confused with the Unique Recognition programs that SSI Training Centers and SSI Professionals may apply for and conduct with students.

II. Issuing a Recognition Card

- The number of dives must be entered in the student's MySSI profile.
- Once all requirements are complete and the student's profile is updated in MySSI, the applicable digital recognition card is automatically issued at no charge.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be issued a Junior Diver rating in the applicable category.

III. Specialty Diver

a. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have at least one (1) of the following SSI certifications or an equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Open Water Diver
- Junior Open Water Diver

Note | Only one (1) specialty from another recognized training agency can be credited toward the Specialty Diver rating. All non-SSI certifications must be entered into MySSI by the SSI Training Center for the student to receive credit.

b. Requirements For Completion

- Complete two (2) SSI Specialty or XR-level programs.
- Log 12 open water dives.

IV. Advanced Open Water Diver

a. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have at least one (1) of the following SSI certifications or an equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Open Water Diver
- Junior Open Water Diver

Note | Only two (2) specialties from another recognized training agency may be credited toward the Advanced Open Water Diver rating. All non-SSI certifications must be entered into MySSI by the SSI Training Center for the student to receive credit.

b. Requirements For Completion

- Complete four (4) SSI Specialty or XR-level programs.
- Log 24 open water dives.

V. Master Diver

a. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 12 years old.

Have at least one (1) of the following SSI certifications or an equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Open Water Diver
- Junior Open Water Diver

b. Requirements For Completion

- Complete the SSI Diver Stress & Rescue program or its equivalent, and four (4) additional SSI Specialty or XR-level programs.
- Log 50 open water dives.

Note | Only two (2) specialties from another recognized training agency may be credited toward the Master Diver rating. All non-SSI certifications must be entered into MySSI by the SSI Training Center for the student to receive credit.

VI. Marine Guide

a. Student Prerequisites

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Dive Guide

b. Requirements For Completion

- Complete the Marine Ecology, Blue Oceans, and two (2) additional SSI Ecology Specialty programs.

Note | The specialty programs should be appropriate for the region where the Marine Guide will dive.

VII. Century 100 Diver/Bronze 200 Diver/Silver 300 Diver/Gold 500 Diver/Platinum 1000 Diver

a. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have at least one (1) of the following SSI certifications or an equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Open Water Diver
- Junior Open Water Diver

b. Requirements For Completion

- For Century Diver - provide proof to an SSI Training Center of 100 logged open water dives.
- For Bronze Diver - provide proof to an SSI Training Center of 200 logged open water dives.
- For Silver Diver - provide proof to an SSI Training Center of 300 logged open water dives.
- For Gold Diver - provide proof to an SSI Training Center of 500 logged open water dives.
- For Platinum Diver - provide proof to an SSI Training Center of 1000 logged open water dives.

VIII. Platinum Pro 5000 Diver

a. Student Prerequisites

To qualify as a Platinum Pro 5000 Diver, the diver must:

- Provide proof to an SSI Training Center of 5,000 logged open water dives.

Or

- Provide proof to an SSI Training Center of 2,500 logged open water dives.
- Have ten (10) or more years of professional experience in the dive industry.
- Have made a significant contribution to the dive industry.

Diving Knowledge Specialties

Altitude Diving

I. Intent

The SSI Altitude Diving program provides students with basic knowledge and skills needed to safely dive at elevations above 1,000 feet.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Altitude Diving Specialty Instructor may conduct the Altitude Diving Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Or

- Diving Knowledge Specialty programs may be combined with an Open Water Diver program.

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 3-6.

V. Depth Limitations

If in-water training is conducted:

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 10- and 11-year-olds: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-Instructor ratio is 6:1.

10- and 11-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Altitude Diving.
- Complete the program's final exam.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

Diving Knowledge Specialties

Computer Diving

I. Intent

The SSI Computer Diving program provides in-depth and detailed information on the safe use of a dive computer.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Computer Diving Specialty Instructor may conduct the Computer Diving Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Or

- Diving Knowledge Specialty programs may be combined with an Open Water Diver program.

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 3–6.

V. Depth Limitations

If in-water training is conducted:

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 10- and 11-year-olds: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-Instructor ratio is 6:1.

10- and 11-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Computer Diving.
- Complete the program's final exam.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

Diving Knowledge Specialties

Ecology Specialty Programs

I. Intent

The SSI Ecology Specialty programs provides students with basic knowledge and skills needed to identify various species of marine organisms and explains their role in the ocean's ecosystems.

a. Ecology Specialties

- Coral Identification
- Fish Identification
- Manta Ray Ecology
- Marine Invertebrate Ecology
- Marine Ecology
- Marine Mammal Ecology
- Sea Turtle Ecology
- Shark Ecology

Note | These programs do not have mandatory in-water training requirements. SSI Professionals are encouraged to add in-water training to increase the value of the program. If in-water training is conducted, the standards must be followed based on the type of activity (scuba, snorkel, freedive).

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status SSI Professional with the applicable certification may conduct the Ecology Specialty programs.

III. Student Prerequisites

If in-water training is conducted:

Snorkel students

- Minimum age: 6 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Snorkel Diver

Scuba students

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Note | Students may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the entry-level program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 3-6.

V. Depth Limitations

If in-water training is conducted:

Snorkel students

- Maximum open water depth limit: 15 feet.

Scuba students

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 10- and 11-year-olds: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-Instructor ratio is 6:1.

10- and 11-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

Snorkel students

6- to 9-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the applicable instructor manual.
- Complete the program's final exam.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

Diving Knowledge Specialties

Enriched Air Nitrox (EAN) 32 and 40 (ISO 11107)

I. Intent

The SSI Enriched Air Nitrox programs provide students with basic knowledge and skills needed to safely dive using breathing gas with enriched gas mixtures.

There are two possible certifications for this program:

- Enriched Air Nitrox 32
- Enriched Air Nitrox 40 (ISO 11107)

Note / The Enriched Air Nitrox 32 certification qualifies the diver to use gas mixtures up to and including EAN32. The SSI Training Center that provides the diver's breathing gas is solely responsible for gas analysis.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Enriched Air Nitrox Specialty Instructor may conduct the Enriched Air Nitrox Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Or

- Diving Knowledge Specialty programs may be combined with an Open Water Diver program.

Note / SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 3-6.

V. Depth Limitations

If in-water training is conducted:

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 10- and 11-year-olds: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-Instructor ratio is 6:1.

10- and 11-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion**a. Enriched Air Nitrox 32**

- Complete Academic Sessions 1-3 as outlined in the instructor manual for Enriched Air Nitrox.
- Complete the program's final exam.

b. Enriched Air Nitrox 40

- Complete all Academic Sessions as outlined in the instructor manual for Enriched Air Nitrox.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete the practical application session outlined in the instructor manual for Enriched Air Nitrox.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.
- Certified Enriched Air Nitrox 32 divers must have the percent of oxygen in their breathing gas verified by a dive professional prior to every dive.

X. Credit

- Students may earn either Enriched Air Nitrox certification in combination with the Open Water Diver certification by completing all the required academic and practical application sessions from the Enriched Air Nitrox program during their Open Water Diver training.
- Students may use nitrox during the in-water training portion of the Open Water Diver program once they have completed the academic and practical application sessions outlined in the instructor manual for Enriched Air Nitrox.
- The instructor who directly supervises the students during training must be an active status Enriched Air Nitrox Specialty Instructor.

Diving Knowledge Specialties

Equipment Techniques

I. Intent

The SSI Equipment Techniques program provides students with basic knowledge and skills needed to select equipment that meet their diving goals and needs, and how to clean, maintain, and store their equipment.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Equipment Techniques Specialty Instructor may conduct the Equipment Techniques Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Or

- Diving Knowledge Specialty programs may be combined with an Open Water Diver program.

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 3-6.

V. Depth Limitations

If in-water training is conducted:

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 10- and 11-year-olds: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-Instructor ratio is 6:1.

10- and 11-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Equipment Techniques.
- Complete the program's final exam.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

Diving Knowledge Specialties

Science Of Diving

I. Intent

The SSI Science of Diving program provides students with an in-depth study of diving physics, diving physiology, decompression theory, the aquatic environment, and diving equipment.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Science of Diving Specialty Instructor may conduct the Science of Diving Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Or

- Diving Knowledge Specialty programs may be combined with an Open Water Diver program.

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 8-12.

V. Depth Limitations

If in-water training is conducted:

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 10- and 11-year-olds: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-Instructor ratio is 6:1.

10- and 11-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Science of Diving.
- Complete the program's final exam.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

Pool/Confined Water Specialties

Perfect Buoyancy

I. Intent

The SSI Perfect Buoyancy program provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to improve their diving position and buoyancy control, and to safely minimize their breathing gas consumption.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Perfect Buoyancy Specialty Instructor may conduct the Perfect Buoyancy Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 5-10.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 10- and 11-year-olds: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-Instructor ratio is 6:1.

10- and 11-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Perfect Buoyancy.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least two (2) in-water training sessions as outlined in the instructor manual for Perfect Buoyancy.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

X. Credit

- Students may earn the Perfect Buoyancy certification in combination with the Open Water Diver certification by completing all the required academic and pool/confined water sessions from the Perfect Buoyancy program during their Open Water Diver training.
- The instructor who directly supervises the students during training must be an active status Perfect Buoyancy Specialty Instructor.

Pool/Confined Water Specialties

Photo & Video

I. Intent

The SSI Photo and Video program provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to safely dive while using an underwater camera.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Photo and Video Specialty Instructor may conduct the Photo and Video Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 5-10.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 10- and 11-year-olds: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-Instructor ratio is 6:1.

10- and 11-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Photo and Video.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least two (2) in-water training sessions as outlined in the instructor manual for Photo and Video.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

Open Water Specialties

Boat Diving

I. Intent

The SSI Boat Diving program provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to safely conduct open water dives from a variety of boats, including small personal craft and liveaboards.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Boat Diving Specialty Instructor may conduct the Boat Diving Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 5-10.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 10- and 11-year-olds: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-Instructor ratio is 6:1.

10- and 11-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Boat Diving.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least two (2) open water training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for Boat Diving.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

Open Water Specialties

Deep Diving

I. Intent

The SSI Deep Diving program provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to safely conduct open water dives to depths between 60 and 130 feet.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Deep Diving Specialty Instructor may conduct the Deep Diving Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 15 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 10-15.

V. Depth Limitations

Open water training dives:

- Dive 1: 60 to 100 feet
- Dive 2: 80 to 100 feet
- Dive 3: 100 to 130 feet

VI. In-Water Ratios

Dives shallower than 100 feet

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

Dives deeper than 100 feet

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- Certified assistants cannot be used to increase ratios.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Deep Diving.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least three (3) open water training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for Deep Diving.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.

Open Water Specialties

Diver Stress & Rescue

I. Intent

The SSI Diver Stress & Rescue program provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to identify stress, prevent incidents, and manage common emergency situations encountered by recreational divers.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Diver Stress & Rescue Specialty Instructor may conduct the Diver Stress & Rescue Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 12 years old.
- Be physically capable of completing the required skills.
- Have proof of current O₂ Provider, First Aid and CPR training within two (2) years prior to issuing a certification card.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 10-15.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum open water depth limit | 60 feet.

Skills

- Maximum open water depth limit | Rescuing an Unconscious Diver 30 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-Instructor ratio is 6:1.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Diver Stress & Rescue.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least three (3) pool/confined water sessions as outlined in the instructor manual for Diver Stress & Rescue.
- Complete at least three (3) open water training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for Diver Stress & Rescue.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

X. Upgrades

- Junior Diver Stress & Rescue certifications can be upgraded to the Diver Stress & Rescue certification once the student turns 15 years old.
- SSI recommends conducting a complete Diver Stress & Rescue skill circuit before issuing the upgrade.

Open Water Specialties

Navigation

I. Intent

The SSI Navigation program provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to safely navigate underwater using both natural and compass navigation techniques.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Navigation Specialty Instructor may conduct the Navigation Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 5-10.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 10- and 11-year-olds: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-Instructor ratio is 6:1.

10- and 11-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Navigation.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least two (2) open water training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for Navigation.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

Open Water Specialties

Night & Limited Visibility

I. Intent

The SSI Night and Limited Visibility program provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to safely and comfortably dive at night or in limited visibility conditions.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Night and Limited Visibility Specialty Instructor may conduct the Night and Limited Visibility Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 5-10.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 10- and 11-year-olds: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-Instructor ratio is 6:1.

10- and 11-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Night and Limited Visibility.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least two (2) open water training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for Night and Limited Visibility.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

Open Water Specialties

Waves, Tides & Currents

I. Intent

The SSI Waves, Tides and Currents program provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to safely dive in a variety of dynamic open water environments.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Waves, Tides and Currents Specialty Instructor may conduct the Waves, Tides and Currents Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 5-10.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 10- and 11-year-olds: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-Instructor ratio is 6:1.

10- and 11-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Waves, Tides and Currents.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least two (2) open water training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for Waves, Tides and Currents.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

Open Water Specialties

Wreck Diving

I. Intent

The SSI Wreck Diving program provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to safely conduct non-penetration dives around wrecks and artificial reefs.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Wreck Diving Specialty Instructor may conduct the Wreck Diving Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 5-10.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 10- and 11-year-olds: 40 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

15 years and older:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

12- through 14-years old:

- The student-to-Instructor ratio is 6:1.

10- and 11-years old:

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.
- No more than two (2) participants per instructor or certified assistant may be under the age of 12, and none of the remaining participants may be under the age of 15.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Wreck Diving.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least two (2) open water training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for Wreck Diving.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

X. Upgrade

To upgrade to the SSI Advanced Wreck Diving certification, a student must:

- Be at least 15 years old.
- Have logged at least 24 open water dives.
- Complete at least one (1) dry land session as outlined in the instructor manual for Wreck Diving.
- Complete at least two (2) additional open water training dives including all the skills outlined in Open Water Training Dives 3 and 4 of the instructor manual for Wreck Diving.

Note / See Overhead Environment Specialties>Advanced Wreck Diving for a detailed description of the Advanced Wreck Diving program.

Note / See XR Overhead Programs>Extended Range Wreck Diving for a detailed description of the Extended Range Wreck Diving program.

Dedicated Equipment Specialties

Decompression Diving

I. Intent

The SSI Decompression Diving program provides divers with the training necessary to:

- Independently plan and conduct decompression dives in a recreational or sidemount Total Diving System,
- To a maximum depth of 130 feet,
- Using a breathing gas with a maximum optimized nitrox blend of 40%,
- For a maximum accumulated decompression time of 15 minutes based on a back gas profile,
- With an equally- or more-qualified dive buddy.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

- An active status Decompression Diving Instructor may conduct the Decompression Diving Specialty program.

Equipment Configurations

- They may use a Sidemount Total Diving System as outlined in the SSI Training Standards if they have the Extended Range Sidemount Instructor certification.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 16 years old.

Have logged at least:

- 24 total dives

Have the following SSI certifications or an equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Deep Diving
- Enriched Air Nitrox 40

For students using a sidemount configuration (in addition to the above):

Have the following SSI certifications or an equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Recreational Sidemount Diving

Note / SSI recommends students earn the Science of Diving certification prior to beginning this program.

IV. Duration

Recommended hours for completion: 15–20.

V. Minimum Equipment

Students participating in this program must use at least one of the following equipment configurations:

- A complete recreational Total Diving System as outlined in the Recreational Scuba General Training Standards with appropriate D-rings for stage cylinder attachment.
- A complete Sidemount Total Diving System.

Including:

- A single stage cylinder (minimum volume 40 cuft.) with a delivery system and submersible pressure gauge.

VI. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 40 feet.
- Maximum depth limit for Open Water Training Dives 1 through 3: 130 feet.
- At least one (1) dive must be to a depth of at least 100 feet.

VII. Minimum Supervision

- An active status SSI Professional certified to conduct the program must directly supervise all academic and in-water activities.

If combining Specialty programs:

- All training dives are required as outlined in the Decompression Diving instructor manual.

VIII. In-Water Ratios

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.

IX. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

X. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Decompression Diving.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Independently create a full dive plan using dive planning software.
- Complete at least one (1) pool/confined water session as outlined in the instructor manual for Decompression Diving.
- Complete at least three (3) open water training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for Decompression Diving.

a. Notes

- Open Water Training Dive 1 must be planned within the no-decompression limits of the student's dive computer or dive planning software.
- Actual staged decompression training must be conducted on Open Water Training Dives 2 and 3.
- The total time for all required decompression stops on the back gas profile must not exceed 15 minutes per dive.
- Divers may carry a decompression mixture of up to 40% oxygen.

XI. Sequence

- Pool/Confined Water Session 1 may only be conducted after the student successfully completes the equipment configuration session.
- Open Water Training Dive 1 may only be conducted after the student successfully completes Pool/Confined Water Session 1.
- Open Water Training Dives 2 and 3 may only be conducted after the student successfully completes all academic sessions and Open Water Training Dive 1.

XII. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.

Dedicated Equipment Specialties

Dry Suit Diving

I. Intent

The SSI Dry Suit Diving program provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to safely and comfortably dive with a dry suit.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Dry Suit Diving Specialty Instructor may conduct the Dry Suit Diving Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 10 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 10-15.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 10- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Dry Suit Diving.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least one (1) pool/confined water session as outlined in the instructor manual for Dry Suit Diving.
- Complete at least two (2) open water training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for Dry Suit Diving.

IX. Sequence

- A pool/confined water training session is mandatory prior to any training dives in open water.
- The purpose of this session is to assess the general skill level of the student, and to train them in the use of the specialty equipment prior to any open water training.

X. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

XI. Credit

- Students may earn the Dry Suit Diving certification in combination with the Open Water Diver certification by completing at least one pool/confined water session and two open water training dives from the Open Water Diver program while wearing a dry suit.
- They must also complete all the pool/confined water and open water requirements for the Dry Suit Diving program prior to certification.
- The instructor who directly supervises the students during the dry suit training dives must be an active status Dry Suit Diving Specialty Instructor.

Dedicated Equipment Specialties

Full Face Mask Diving

I. Intent

The SSI Full Face Mask Diving program provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to safely dive using a full face mask and underwater communication systems in environments and to depths equivalent with their training and the equipment manufacturer's specifications.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Full Face Mask Diving Specialty Instructor may conduct the Full Face Mask Diving Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 12 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 10–15.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Full Face Mask Diving.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least one (1) pool/confined water session as outlined in the instructor manual for Full Face Mask Diving.
- Complete at least two (2) open water training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for Full Face Mask Diving.

IX. Sequence

- A pool/confined water training session is mandatory prior to any training dives in open water.
- The purpose of this session is to assess the general skill level of the student, and to train them in the use of the specialty equipment prior to any open water training.

X. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

Dedicated Equipment Specialties

Independent Diving

I. Intent

The SSI Independent Diving program provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to safely and comfortably dive without a designated dive buddy using redundant gas supplies.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Independent Diving Specialty Instructor may conduct the Independent Diving Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 18 years old.
- Have logged at least 75 open water dives totaling 50 hours or more.

Have the following SSI certifications, an equivalent from a recognized training agency, or provide proof of experience by showing at least five (5) logged experience dives in each of the following areas:

- Deep Diving
- Navigation
- Night & Limited Visibility

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Diver Stress & Rescue

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 10-15.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Independent Diving.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least one (1) pool/confined water session as outlined in the instructor manual for Independent Diving.
- Complete at least three (3) open water training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for Independent Diving.

IX. Sequence

- A pool/confined water training session is mandatory prior to any training dives in open water.
- The purpose of this session is to assess the general skill level of the student, and to train them in the use of the specialty equipment prior to any open water training.

X. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI Independent Diving divers can dive with or without a designated buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.

Dedicated Equipment Specialties

Scooter/DPV Diving

I. Intent

The SSI Scooter/DPV Diving program provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to safely and comfortably dive with a scooter or diver propulsion vehicle (DPV).

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Scooter/DPV Diving Specialty Instructor may conduct the Scooter/DPV Diving Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 12 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 10-15.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Scooter/DPV Diving.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least one (1) pool/confined water session as outlined in the instructor manual for Scooter/DPV Diving.
- Complete at least two (2) open water training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for Scooter/DPV Diving.

IX. Sequence

- A pool/confined water training session is mandatory prior to any training dives in open water.
- The purpose of this session is to assess the general skill level of the student, and to train them in the use of the specialty equipment prior to any open water training.

X. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

Dedicated Equipment Specialties

Search & Recovery

I. Intent

The SSI Search and Recovery program provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to safely and comfortably perform basic search and recovery dives for small objects.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Search and Recovery Specialty Instructor may conduct the Search and Recovery Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 12 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 10-15.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Search and Recovery.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least one (1) pool/confined water session as outlined in the instructor manual for Search and Recovery.
- Complete at least two (2) open water training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for Search and Recovery.

IX. Sequence

- A pool/confined water training session is mandatory prior to any training dives in open water.
- The purpose of this session is to assess the general skill level of the student, and to train them in the use of the specialty equipment prior to any open water training.

X. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

Dedicated Equipment Specialties

Recreational Sidemount Diving

I. Intent

The SSI Recreational Sidemount Diving program provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to safely and comfortably dive with a single- or two-cylinder sidemount equipment configuration.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Recreational Sidemount Diving Specialty Instructor may conduct the Recreational Sidemount Diving Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 12 years old.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Referral Diver

Note | SSI Referral Divers may enroll in SSI Specialty programs and complete all academic and pool/confined water sessions. Open water training dives for all specialties cannot be combined with open water training dives for entry-level programs, and must be conducted after completion of all in-water training for the Open Water Diver program.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 10-15.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit for 12- to 14-year-olds: 60 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for the Sidemount Diving program.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least one (1) pool/confined water session as outlined in the instructor manual for the Sidemount Diving program.
- Complete at least three (3) open water training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for the Sidemount Diving program.

IX. Sequence

- A pool/confined water training session is mandatory prior to any training dives in open water.
- The purpose of this session is to assess the general skill level of the student, and to train them in the use of the specialty equipment prior to any open water training.

X. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as an SSI Junior Diver in the applicable program, and can dive under the direct supervision of a dive professional, or with a certified adult, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.

Overhead Environment Specialties

Advanced Wreck Diving

I. Intent

The SSI Advanced Wreck Diving program provides divers with the training necessary to independently plan and conduct limited penetration, no-decompression dives within the daylight zone, to a maximum depth of 100 feet or linear distance of 130 feet, and using specialized overhead environment equipment and procedures, with an equally- or more-qualified buddy.

Note / These programs are no-decompression, limited penetration programs only. For more advanced overhead environment programs, please see XR Program Standards>XR Overhead Programs.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Advanced Wreck Diving Specialty Instructor may conduct the Advanced Wreck Diving Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 15 years old.

Have logged at least:

- 24 open water dives

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Open Water Diver

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 10-15.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- The maximum linear distance is 130 feet, or the maximum certification depth of the diver, whichever is shallower.

VI. In-Water Ratios

a. Open Water

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.

b. Overhead Environments

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 3:1.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Wreck Diving.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least one (1) dry land session as outlined in the instructor manual for Wreck Diving.
- Complete at least four (4) open water training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for Wreck Diving.

IX. Sequence

- A dry land session is mandatory prior to any training dives in overhead environments.
- The purpose of this session is to assess the general skill level of the student, and to train them in the use of the specialty equipment prior to entering an overhead environment.

X. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.

XI. Credit

To upgrade a student with the SSI Wreck Diving certification to the Advanced Wreck Diving certification:

- Complete at least one (1) dry land session as outlined in the instructor manual for Wreck Diving.
- Complete at least two (2) additional open water training dives including all the skills outlined in Open Water Training Dives 3 and 4 of the instructor manual for Wreck Diving.

Overhead Environment Specialties

Cavern Diving

I. Intent

The SSI Cavern/Cenote Diving program provides divers with the training necessary to independently plan and conduct limited penetration, no-decompression dives in natural environments, to a maximum depth of 100 feet or linear distance of 130 feet, and using specialized overhead environment equipment and procedures, with an equally- or more-qualified buddy.

Note / These programs are no-decompression, limited penetration programs only. For more advanced overhead environment programs, please see XR Program Standards>XR Overhead Programs.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Cavern/Cenote Diving Specialty Instructor may conduct the Cavern/Cenote Diving Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 15 years old.

Have logged at least:

- 24 open water dives

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Open Water Diver

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 10-15.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- The maximum linear distance is 130 feet, or the maximum certification depth of the diver, whichever is shallower.

VI. In-Water Ratios

a. Pool/Confined Water

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.

b. Overhead Environments

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 3:1.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least one (1) pool/confined water session.
- Complete at least two (2) open water training dives.

IX. Sequence

- A pool/confined water session is mandatory prior to any training dives in overhead environments.
- The purpose of this session is to assess the general skill level of the student, and to train them in the use of the specialty equipment prior to entering an overhead environment.

X. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.

Overhead Environment Specialties

Ice Diving

I. Intent

The SSI Ice Diving program provides divers with the training necessary to independently plan and conduct limited penetration, no-decompression dives underneath a layer of ice, to a maximum depth of 100 feet or linear distance of 130 feet, and using specialized overhead environment equipment and procedures, with an equally- or more-qualified buddy.

Note | These programs are no-decompression, limited penetration programs only. For more advanced overhead environment programs, please see XR Program Standards>XR Overhead Programs.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Ice Diving Specialty Instructor may conduct the Ice Diving Specialty program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 18 years old.

Have logged at least:

- 24 open water dives

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Open Water Diver

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 10-15.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum open water depth limit: 100 feet.
- The maximum linear distance is 130 feet, or the maximum certification depth of the diver, whichever is shallower.

VI. In-Water Ratios

a. Pool/Confined Water

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.

b. Overhead Environments

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 3:1.

VII. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Ice Diving.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least one (1) dry land session.

Complete one (1) of the following:

- Complete at least one (1) pool/confined water session as outlined in the instructor manual for Ice Diving.
- Complete at least one (1) open water training dive as outlined in the instructor manual for Ice Diving.

Complete the following:

- Complete at least two (2) overhead environment training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for Ice Diving.

IX. Sequence

- A pool/confined water session is mandatory prior to any training dives in ice overhead environments.
- The purpose of this session is to assess the general skill level of the student, and to train them in the use of the specialty equipment prior to entering an overhead environment.

X. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and in-water requirements, the SSI Professional may issue the program's digital certification card.
- Certified SSI divers can dive with an equally- or more-qualified buddy in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of their certifications.

Professional Programs

Snorkel Instructor (ISO 13970)

I. Intent

The SSI Snorkel Instructor program provides candidates with the knowledge and training necessary to conduct entry-level snorkeling programs in a safe and enjoyable manner.

Active status Professional Dive Guides are automatically certified as Snorkel Instructors. This program can also be used by an active status SSI Training Center to train non-diving Snorkel Instructors.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Open Water Instructor may conduct the Snorkel Instructor program.

III. Candidate Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 18 years old.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 6-10.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Maximum open water depth limit: 30 feet.

VI. In-Water Ratios

- The candidate-to-instructor ratio is at the discretion of the instructor.

VII. Supervision

- An active status Open Water Instructor must directly supervise all academic, pool/confined water, and open water activities.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete and pass all requirements and evaluations listed in the instructor manual for Snorkel Instructor.
- Complete the Candidate Water Fitness Evaluation as outlined in the SSI General Training Standards.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of training, upload the candidate's training record with all required documentation into the MySSI System or send it to the responsible SSI Service Center.
- The candidate will be certified as an SSI Snorkel Instructor.

X. Active Status Qualifications

Active status SSI Snorkel Instructors may teach, supervise and issue recognition cards for the following program:

- Snorkel Diver

Active status SSI Snorkel Instructors may also:

- Guide snorkelers on excursions in open water environments.

Professional Programs

SSI Explorer Instructor

I. Intent

The SSI Explorer Instructor Online Upgrade provides qualified SSI Professionals with the knowledge and experience necessary to conduct the SSI Explorers program.

II. Candidate Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 18 years old.

Have the following active status SSI certifications (no equivalency permitted):

- Snorkel Instructor to qualify for Snorkel Explorer Instructor
- Mermaid Instructor to qualify for Mermaid Explorer Instructor
- Basic Freediving Instructor to qualify for Freediving Explorer Instructor
- Assistant Instructor to qualify for Scuba Explorer Instructor

III. Certification

Complete the Explorer Online Upgrade.

Once all requirements are met, the candidate will be automatically issued the applicable Explorer Instructor certification(s) and may conduct all applicable Explorer specialty experiences.

Note / Some SSI Service Centers may have additional requirements for working with minors that must be completed before issuing the recognition card. Contact the responsible SSI Service Center for more information.

IV. Active Status Qualifications

Active status Explorer Instructors may teach, supervise, and issue recognition cards for the following programs:

Snorkel Explorer Instructor

- Snorkel Explorer

Mermaid Explorer Instructor

- Snorkel Explorer
- Mermaid Explorer

Freediving Explorer Instructor

- Snorkel Explorer
- Freediving Explorer

Scuba Explorer Instructor

- Snorkel Explorer
- Scuba Explorer

Professional Programs

Ecology Specialty Instructor

I. Intent

The SSI Specialty Instructor program provides candidates with the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to conduct SSI Specialty programs.

There are three ways to become certified to teach SSI Specialty programs:

- Specialty Instructor Seminar
- Co-Teaching
- Verification/Application (not available for Divemasters)

II. Administrative Requirements

Prior to certification, candidates must have completed a Specialty Instructor Training Completion Record.

III. Candidate Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 18 years old.

Have the following active status SSI certifications (no equivalency permitted):

- Divemaster

IV. Certification

Once all requirements are met, verify that the candidate's training record and required documentation are complete, and process the candidate's certification in MySSI.

If the verification application method is used:

Upload the candidate's training record with all required documentation into the MySSI System or send it to the responsible SSI Service Center.

The candidate will be certified as a Specialty Instructor.

V. Active Status Qualifications

Active status SSI Professionals may qualify to teach the Ecology Specialty programs.

- Coral Identification
- Fish Identification
- Manta Ray Ecology
- Marine Invertebrate Ecology
- Marine Ecology
- Marine Mammal Ecology
- Sea Turtle Ecology
- Shark Ecology

Certification Methods

I. Seminar

a. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Assistant Instructor Trainer, certified as an instructor in the applicable specialty, may conduct the seminar.

b. Requirements For Completion

- Successfully complete the Specialty Instructor Seminar as outlined in the instructor manual for the Specialty Instructor program.

Note | No proof of logged dives is required for this method.

II. Co-Teaching

a. Minimum Instructor Rating

The candidate may co-teach the applicable specialty program with an active status Specialty Instructor who is certified to teach that specialty.

- The lead instructor must have issued a minimum of five (5) certifications in the applicable program before they can co-teach.

b. Requirements For Completion

- Successfully co-teach at least one complete specialty program as outlined in the instructor manual for the Specialty Instructor program.
- Have at least ten (10) logged dives in the applicable specialty.
- Have the Training Center QMS Manager of the affiliated SSI Training Center sign off the Specialty Instructor Training Completion Record.

III. Verification Application

a. Minimum Instructor Rating

Assistant Instructors may apply for the applicable specialty program.

b. Requirements For Completion

- Complete the applicable student materials, including digital learning, review questions and final exam, or provide proof of an equivalent certification.
- Have the Training Center QMS Manager of the affiliated SSI Training Center sign off the Specialty Instructor Training Completion Record.

Note | The responsible SSI Service Center may have additional completion requirements based on local laws and regulations.

Recreational Scuba Dive Guide (ISO 24801-3)

I. Intent

The SSI Dive Guide program provides candidates with the knowledge and training necessary to supervise and guide certified divers on recreational scuba dives.

Note / Upon completion of the Dive Guide program, candidates may receive a professional or non-professional certification.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Dive Guide Instructor may conduct the Dive Guide program.

III. Candidate Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 15 years old (Must be 18 years old to be certified as an active status Professional Dive Guide).
- Have logged at least 40 open water dives totaling 25 hours or more.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Diver Stress & Rescue

Have the following SSI certifications, an equivalent from a recognized training agency, or provide proof of experience by showing at least five (5) logged experience dives in each of the following areas:

- Deep Diving | Deeper than 100 feet
- Navigation
- Night & Limited Visibility

Note / The candidate is not required to be certified in the applicable specialty if they provide proof of the experience dives and the instructor can verify the candidate's ability to exhibit mastery of the skills required by the specialty.

Recommendation / SSI recommends all SSI Dive Professional candidates become certified in Enriched Air Nitrox 40.

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 35-45.

V. Depth Limitations

- Minimum open water depth limit: 15 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit: 130 feet.

VI. Minimum Supervision

- An active status SSI Dive Guide Instructor must directly supervise all academic, pool/confined water, and open water activities.

VII. Requirements For Completion

- Log at least 50 open water dives totaling 32 hours or more.
- Pass all requirements and evaluations listed in the instructor manual for Dive Guide.
- Complete the Candidate Water Fitness Evaluation as outlined in the SSI General Training Standards.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete at least two (2) open water training dives as outlined in the instructor manual for Dive Guide.

VIII. Certification

- Upon completion of this program, candidates receive the Dive Guide rating.
- Upon completion of training, upload the candidate's training record with all required documentation into the MySSI System or send it to the responsible SSI Service Center.
- Dive Guides can dive autonomously with a group of certified divers in a non-commercial capacity, in environments and to a depth equivalent with their training.

IX. Active Status Qualifications

Dive Guides may guide certified divers on recreational scuba dives.

Active status Professional Dive Guides may also:

- Teach, supervise and issue recognition cards for the SSI Snorkel Diver program.
- Qualify for the SSI Divemaster rating after completing the SSI Science of Diving Specialty program.

Dive Guides Must Not:

- Conduct, teach or assist in any SSI training programs for non-certified divers.

Recreational Scuba Divemaster

I. Intent

The SSI Divemaster rating recognizes candidates that have the knowledge and training necessary to perform the duties of a certified assistant. These duties including assisting SSI Instructors with conducting entry-level and continuing education scuba training programs.

II. Candidate Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 18 years old.
- Have logged at least 60 open water dives totaling 40 hours or more.

Have the following SSI certifications (no equivalency permitted):

- Science Of Diving

Have the following active status SSI certifications (no equivalency permitted):

- Professional Dive Guide

III. Active Status Qualifications

In addition to the duties performed by an active status Professional Dive Guide, active status Divemasters may:

- Act as a certified assistant for all SSI recreational scuba programs.
- Assist during open water training dives by taking no more than two (2) students at a time on excursion dives.
- Qualify as a Training Specialist for the SSI Ecology Specialty programs.
- Enroll in an SSI Instructor Training Course.

Recreational Scuba Instructor Training Course

I. Intent

The SSI Instructor Training Course provides candidates with the knowledge and training necessary to organize and conduct entry-level scuba training courses. It is also intended to prepare candidates to successfully complete an Instructor Evaluation.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Instructor Trainer may conduct the Instructor Training Course.

III. Candidate Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 18 years old.
- Have logged at least 75 open water dives totaling 50 hours or more.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Enriched Air Nitrox 40

Have the following active status SSI certifications or an equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Divemaster

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 72-85.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Minimum open water depth limit: 15 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit: 130 feet.

VI. Minimum Supervision

- An active status Instructor Trainer must directly supervise all academic, pool/confined water, and open water activities.

VII. Requirements For Completion

- Log at least 100 open water dives totaling 65 hours or more.
- Read and complete all sections, including reviews and assessments, from the Instructor Training Course digital learning.
- Complete all academic sessions as outlined in the instructor manual for the Instructor Training Course.
- Complete the Candidate Water Fitness Evaluation as outlined in the SSI General Training Standards if it has been more than six months since the candidate has been evaluated.
- Pass all requirements and evaluations as outlined in the instructor manual for the Instructor Training Course.

VIII. Certification

- Upon completion of training, upload the candidate's training record with all required documentation into the MySSI System or send it to the responsible SSI Service Center.
- Upon completion of the Instructor Training Course, candidates may participate in an Instructor Evaluation. The Instructor Evaluation must be conducted within six (6) months of the completion of the Instructor Training Course.
- If it has been more than six (6) months, an Instructor Trainer will need to conduct a reevaluation to determine if the candidate still has proficient knowledge and skills before attending an Instructor Evaluation.

Scheduling an Instructor Evaluation:

An active status Instructor Trainer (IT) must register the candidate(s) for an Instructor Evaluation (IE) in MySSI at least six (6) weeks in prior to the scheduled Instructor Evaluation start date.

If the registration is completed less than six (6) weeks prior to the start date, or the Instructor Evaluation (IE) is requested for fewer than four (4) candidates, the Instructor Evaluation cannot be guaranteed.

Recreational Scuba

Assistant Instructor (ISO 24802-1)

I. Intent

The SSI Assistant Instructor program provides candidates with the knowledge and training necessary to perform the duties of an assistant instructor.

These duties including conducting entry-level scuba training under the supervision of an Open Water Instructor, and independently conducting Scuba Skills Updates, Try Scuba, and Perfect Buoyancy programs.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Assistant Instructor Trainer may conduct the Assistant Instructor program.

III. Candidate Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 18 years old.
- Have logged at least 60 open water dives totaling 40 hours or more.

Have the following active status SSI certifications or an equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Divemaster

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 35-42.

V. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet

VI. Minimum Supervision

- An active status Assistant Instructor Trainer must directly supervise all academic sessions and in-water activities.

VII. Requirements For Completion

- Log at least 75 open water dives totaling 50 hours or more.
- Read and complete Sections 1-6, including reviews and assessments, of the Instructor Training Course digital learning.
- Complete Academic Sessions 1-6 as outlined in the instructor manual for the Instructor Training Course.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete the Candidate Water Fitness Evaluation as outlined in the SSI General Training Standards if it has been more than six months since the candidate has been evaluated.
- Pass all requirements and evaluations for Practical Application Sessions 1-7 as outlined in the instructor manual for the Instructor Training Course.

VIII. Certification

- Upon completion of training, upload the candidate's training record with all required documentation into the MySSI System or send it to the responsible SSI Service Center.
- Candidate will be certified as an SSI Assistant Instructor.

IX. Active Status Qualifications

In addition to the programs taught by active status Professional Dive Guides, active status Assistant Instructors may teach, supervise, and issue recognition or certification cards for the following programs after completing the Assistant Instructor Training Course:

- Try Scuba
- Scuba Skills Update
- Perfect Buoyancy

In addition to the duties performed by an SSI Divemaster, active status Assistant Instructors may also:

- Teach the Open Water Diver academic and pool/confined water sessions under the indirect supervision of an active status Open Water Instructor.
- Directly supervise and evaluate surface skills during open water training dives for the Open Water Diver program under the indirect supervision of an active status Open Water Instructor.
- Qualify to become a Specialty Instructor for some SSI Specialty programs.
- Enroll in an Instructor Training Course.
- Complete the SSI Explorer Instructor Online Upgrade.

Assistant Instructors must not:

- Issue Open Water Diver certifications.
- Independently conduct open water training dives for entry-level scuba training.
- Teach any emergency ascent skills.

Emergency ascent skills

- Emergency Swimming Ascent
- Emergency Buoyant Ascent
- Gas-Sharing Ascent
- Rescuing an Unconscious Diver

Recreational Scuba

Instructor Evaluation (ISO 24802-2) | Open Water Instructor

I. Intent

The SSI Instructor Evaluation assesses the knowledge and skills necessary to organize and conduct entry-level scuba training courses and the specialty programs taught by SSI Open Water Instructors.

Scheduling an Instructor Evaluation:

An active status Instructor Trainer (IT) must register the candidate(s) for an Instructor Evaluation (IE) in MySSI at least six (6) weeks in prior to the scheduled Instructor Evaluation start date.

If the registration is completed less than six (6) prior to the start date, or the Instructor Evaluation (IE) is requested for fewer than four (4) candidates, the Instructor Evaluation cannot be guaranteed.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Instructor Certifier may conduct the Instructor Evaluation (IE), provided that they do not have a direct involvement with the candidates training during their Instructor Training Course.

The Instructor Certifier is appointed by an SSI Area Office or SSI Service Center in writing.

III. Candidate Prerequisites

- Must have passed an Instructor Training Course, or have completed an Instructor Crossover program.
- Be an Open Water Diver or higher for at least six (6) months prior to starting the Instructor Evaluation.

Note | Please see Dive Professional Programs>Dive Professional Crossover Standards for a detailed description of requirements for participation in an SSI Dive Professional Crossover.

IV. Ratios

- The candidate-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 16:2 with an Instructor Certifier.

Note | An Instructor Trainer may assist with the Instructor Evaluation as part of their own training without affecting ratios.

V. Minimum Supervision

- An active status Instructor Certifier must directly supervise all academic and in-water activities.

VI. Requirements For Completion

- Pass all requirements and evaluations listed in the instructor manual for the Instructor Evaluation.
- Complete the program's final exam.

VII. Certification

- Upon completion of training, upload the candidate's training record with all required documentation into the MySSI System or send it to the responsible SSI Service Center.
- Candidate will be certified as an SSI Open Water Instructor.

VIII. Active Status Qualifications

In addition to the programs taught by active status Assistant Instructors, active status Open Water Instructors may teach, supervise, and issue certifications for the following programs after completing the Instructor Evaluation:

- Basic Diver
- Referral Diver
- Indoor Diver
- Scuba Diver
- Open Water Diver
- Experienced Diver Test
- Advanced Adventurer
- Diver Stress & Rescue
- Enriched Air Nitrox
- Dive Guide

Recreational Scuba Specialty Instructor

I. Intent

The SSI Specialty Instructor program provides candidates with the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to conduct SSI Specialty programs.

There are three ways to become certified to teach SSI Specialty programs:

- Specialty Instructor Seminar
- Co-Teaching
- Verification/Application (not available for Divemasters)

II. Administrative Requirements

Prior to certification, candidates must have completed a Specialty Instructor Training Completion Record.

III. Candidate Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 18 years old.

Have the following active status SSI certifications (no equivalency permitted):

- Assistant Instructor

a. Ecology Specialty Training Specialist

- Minimum age: 18 years old.

Have the following active status SSI certifications (no equivalency permitted):

- Divemaster

IV. Certification

Once all requirements are met, verify that the candidate's training record and required documentation are complete, and process the candidate's certification in MySSI.

If the verification application method is used:

Upload the candidate's training record with all required documentation into the MySSI System or send it to the responsible SSI Service Center.

The candidate will be certified as a Specialty Instructor.

V. Active Status Qualifications

Active status Divemasters may qualify as Training Specialists to teach the Ecology Specialty programs.

In addition to the Ecology Specialty programs, Assistant Instructors may also qualify to teach the following specialty programs:

- Altitude Diving
- Boat Diving
- Computer Diving
- Equipment Techniques
- Navigation
- Perfect Buoyancy
- Photo & Video
- Science Of Diving
- Waves, Tides & Currents

Open Water Instructors may qualify to teach any SSI Specialty program.

Certification Methods

I. Seminar

a. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Assistant Instructor Trainer, certified as an instructor in the applicable specialty, may conduct the seminar.

b. Requirements For Completion

- Successfully complete the Specialty Instructor Seminar as outlined in the instructor manual for the Specialty Instructor program.

Note | No proof of logged dives is required for this method.

II. Co-Teaching

a. Minimum Instructor Rating

The candidate may co-teach the applicable specialty program with an active status Specialty Instructor who is certified to teach that specialty.

b. Requirements For Completion

- Successfully co-teach at least one complete specialty program as outlined in the instructor manual for the Specialty Instructor program.
- Have at least ten (10) logged dives in the applicable specialty.
- Have the Training Center QMS Manager of the affiliated SSI Training Center sign off the Specialty Instructor Training Completion Record.

Note | The lead instructor must have issued a minimum of five (5) certifications in the applicable program before they can co-teach.

III. Verification Application

a. Minimum Instructor Rating

Assistant Instructors may apply for the applicable specialty program.

b. Requirements For Completion

- Have at least 20 logged dives in the applicable specialty, or, for non-diving specialties, provide proof of experience (Example | manufacturer's technician certificate for Equipment Techniques).
- Complete the applicable student materials, including digital learning, review questions and final exam, or provide proof of an equivalent certification.
- Have the Training Center QMS Manager of the affiliated SSI Training Center sign off the Specialty Instructor Training Completion Record.

Note | The responsible SSI Service Center may have additional completion requirements based on local laws and regulations.

c. SSI Recreational Overhead Environment Programs

SSI Professionals may only use the verification application method to apply for recreational SSI Overhead Environment Specialty Instructor certifications if they:

- Provide proof of an equivalent instructor certification from a recognized training agency.
- Provide proof of at least 20 logged dives in the applicable specialty.

Recreational Scuba

Advanced Open Water Instructor

I. Intent

The SSI Advanced Open Water Instructor rating recognizes instructors for their efforts to develop their professional diving career, and their achievements in promoting continuing education programs.

II. Candidate Prerequisites

- Have an active status SSI Open Water Instructor certification.
- Have at least four (4) SSI Specialty Instructor certifications, including Diver Stress & Rescue.
- Have issued at least 15 Specialty and/or Advanced Adventurer certifications.

III. Requirements For Completion

Once the prerequisites are updated in the candidate's MySSI profile, a free Advanced Open Water Instructor digital recognition card is automatically issued at no charge.

Recreational Scuba

Decompression Diving Instructor

I. Intent

There are two ways to become certified to teach the Decompression Diving program:

- Specialty Instructor Seminar
- Co-Teaching

II. Candidate Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 18 years old.

Have the following active status SSI certifications or an equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Deep Diving Instructor
- Enriched Air Nitrox Instructor
- Science of Diving Instructor

III. Materials And Equipment

- Recreational or Sidemount Total Diving System and a single stage cylinder (minimum 40 cu ft)
- Tools for fitting, rigging and adjusting equipment
- Oxygen analyzer
- Tape and pen for marking cylinders
- Emergency oxygen, first aid and communications equipment
- Descent/ascent lines
- DPS program
- Cue cards or wetnotes

IV. In-Water Ratios

- The candidate-to-instructor ratio is 4:1.

V. Requirements For Completion

- Complete the Specialty Instructor Seminar or co-teaching requirements as outlined in the instructor manual for the Specialty Instructor Seminar.

a. Specialty Instructor Seminar

In addition to the requirements outlined in the instructor manual for the Specialty Instructor seminar, candidates must also demonstrate:

- The ability to plan and conduct Open Water Training Dive 3 as outlined in the instructor manual for Decompression Diving.

VI. Upgrade

An active status Extended Range Nitrox Instructor or higher can automatically gain the Decompression Diving Instructor rating by completing the free digital online upgrade.

Recreational Scuba

Divemaster Instructor

I. Intent

The SSI Divemaster Instructor rating recognizes instructors for their efforts to develop their professional diving career, and their achievements in promoting continuing education programs.

II. Candidate Prerequisites

Have the following active status SSI certifications or an equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Advanced Open Water Instructor
- Science of Diving Instructor

Have issued at least 30 certifications including:

- 15 Open Water Diver
- 3 Diver Stress & Rescue
- 3 Dive Guide
- 3 Science of Diving
- 6 Advanced Adventurer and/or additional specialty program

The candidate may also apply completed Try Scuba, Basic Diver, Referral Diver, and Scuba Diver programs toward the minimum requirements for Open Water Diver certifications.

- Twelve (12) Try Scuba recognitions are equivalent to one (1) Open Water Diver certification
- Six (6) Basic Diver certifications are equivalent to one (1) Open Water Diver certification
- Two (2) Referral Diver certifications are equivalent to one (1) Open Water Diver certification
- Two (2) Scuba Diver certifications are equivalent to one (1) Open Water Diver certification

III. Requirements For Completion

Once the prerequisites are updated in the candidate's MySSI profile, a free Divemaster Instructor digital recognition card is automatically issued at no charge.

IV. Active Status Qualifications

In addition to the duties performed by an active status Advanced Open Water Instructor, active status Divemaster Instructors may:

- Conduct the Divemaster Crossover program for candidates from other recognized scuba training agencies.
- Enroll in an Assistant Instructor Trainer program.

Recreational Scuba

Assistant Instructor Trainer/Dive Control Specialist

I. Intent

The SSI Assistant Instructor Trainer Seminar provides candidates with the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to certify Assistant Instructors, and to assist in teaching the Instructor Training Course.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Instructor Trainer may conduct the Assistant Instructor Trainer Seminar.

III. Candidate Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 18 years old.

Have the following active status SSI certifications or an equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Divemaster Instructor

Have issued at least 45 certifications including:

- 30 Open Water Diver
- 3 Diver Stress & Rescue
- 3 Dive Guide
- 3 Science of Diving
- 6 Advanced Adventurer and/or additional specialty program

The candidate may also apply completed Try Scuba, Basic Diver, Referral Diver, and Scuba Diver programs toward the minimum requirements for Open Water Diver certifications.

- Twelve (12) Try Scuba recognitions are equivalent to one (1) Open Water Diver certification
- Six (6) Basic Diver certifications are equivalent to one (1) Open Water Diver certification
- Two (2) Referral Diver certifications are equivalent to one (1) Open Water Diver certification
- Two (2) Scuba Diver certifications are equivalent to one (1) Open Water Diver certification
- An Open Water Diver upgrade from Referral Diver counts as one (1) Open Water Diver certification

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 30-45.

V. Minimum Supervision

- An active status Instructor Trainer must directly supervise all academic and in-water activities.

VI. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academics sessions as outlined in the instructor manual for the Assistant Instructor Trainer Seminar.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete the Candidate Water Fitness Evaluation as outlined in the SSI General Training Standards.
- Complete and pass all requirements and evaluations listed in the instructor manual for the Assistant Instructor Trainer Seminar.

VII. Certification

- Upon completion of training, upload the candidate's training record with all required documentation into the MySSI System or send it to the responsible SSI Service Center.
- The candidate will be certified as an Assistant Instructor Trainer.

VIII. Active Status Requirements

- Attend all applicable mandatory updates scheduled by SSI International.

IX. Active Status Qualifications

In addition to the programs taught by active status Divemaster Instructors, active status Assistant Instructor Trainers may teach, supervise and issue certifications for the following programs:

- Assistant Instructor
- Specialty Instructor Seminar (if they have the applicable Specialty Instructor certification)
- Dive Professional Crossover (up to the Assistant Instructor level)

Active status Assistant Instructor Trainers may also:

- Assist an Instructor Trainer in conducting all SSI Instructor-level programs.

Recreational Scuba

Master Instructor

I. Candidate Prerequisites

- Have logged at least 250 dives.
- Train primarily SSI programs at all dive professional levels.
- Certifications from other recognized agencies will apply to the certification requirements.

Have the following active status SSI certifications (no equivalency permitted):

- Assistant Instructor Trainer/Dive Control Specialist

Have issued at least 150 certifications including:

- 75 Open Water Diver
- 50 Specialty and/or Advanced Adventurer
- 15 Diver Stress & Rescue
- 5 Dive Guide
- 5 Assistant Instructors

The candidate may also apply completed Try Scuba, Basic Diver, Referral Diver, and Scuba Diver programs toward the minimum requirements for Open Water Diver certifications.

- Twelve (12) Try Scuba recognitions are equivalent to one (1) Open Water Diver certification
- Six (6) Basic Diver certifications are equivalent to one (1) Open Water Diver certification
- Two (2) Referral Diver certifications are equivalent to one (1) Open Water Diver certification
- Two (2) Scuba Diver certifications are equivalent to one (1) Open Water Diver certification

II. Requirements For Completion

Once the prerequisites are updated in the candidate's MySSI profile, a free Master Instructor digital recognition card is automatically issued at no charge.

III. Active Status Qualifications

In addition to the duties performed by an active status Assistant Instructor Trainer, active status Master Instructors may:

- Apply to enroll in an Instructor Trainer Seminar.

Recreational Scuba

Instructor Trainer

I. Intent

The SSI Instructor Trainer Seminar provides candidates with the knowledge and training necessary to organize and conduct SSI Instructor-level scuba training courses.

Note | Instructor Trainer Seminars are conducted by SSI Service Centers, and candidates are selected through an application process.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status International Training Director may conduct the Instructor Trainer Seminar.

III. Candidate Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 21 years old.
- Provide written proof of having assisted with at least one (1) ITC and one (1) Instructor Crossover program with an active status Instructor Trainer.
- Have no QMS Cases that result in a compliance action in the previous twelve (12) months.

Have the following active status SSI certifications or an equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Open Water Instructor | for the two (2) years prior to registering for the Instructor Trainer Seminar
- Master Instructor

Have issued at least:

- 20 recreational-level SSI certifications
- 5 professional-level SSI certifications

IV. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 70-80.

V. Depth Limitations

- Minimum open water depth limit: 15 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit: 130 feet.

VI. Ratios

- The candidate-to-instructor ratio is 6:1.
- The ratio may increase to 12:2 with an International Training Director or Instructor Certifier (requires written approval from the SSI International).

Note | An Instructor Trainer or Instructor Certifier may assist with the Instructor Trainer Seminar as part of their own training without affecting ratios.

VII. Minimum Supervision

- An active status International Training Director must directly supervise all academic, pool/confined water and open water activities.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sessions as outlined in the instructor manual for the Instructor Trainer Seminar.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Complete the Candidate Water Fitness Evaluation as outlined in the SSI General Training Standards.
- Pass all requirements and evaluations listed in the instructor manual for the Instructor Trainer Seminar.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of training, upload the candidate's training record with all required documentation into the MySSI System or send it to the responsible SSI Service Center.
- The candidate will be certified as an Instructor Trainer.

X. Upgrade

a. SCR Extended Range Instructor Trainer

Have the following active status SSI certifications (no equivalency permitted):

- SCR Extended Range Instructor

Have issued at least:

- 15 total SCR certifications on the applicable unit
- 10 SCR Extended Range certifications

XI. Active Status Requirements

- Exclusively use the SSI Total Teaching System for all recreational levels and issue only SSI certifications. Only those programs that SSI does not provide materials for can be conducted through another agency.
- Exemplify the SSI philosophy and display competence in applying the SSI Business System.
- Attend all mandatory SSI Instructor Trainer updates scheduled by SSI International.
- Conduct at least one (1) complete Instructor Training Course every 24 months. Or, if SSI International offers a mandatory update, complete at least one (1) within 24 months.
- If this time period is exceeded, they may extend their active status Instructor Trainer certification by attending a remedial training session coordinated by SSI International and an International Training Director. They will remain in retired status until the remedial training session is completed.
- Instructor Trainers will be held responsible for the quality of education. If a significant number of their candidates fail the Instructor Evaluation because of non-performance, the Instructor Trainer may be required to re-attend another Instructor Trainer Seminar or revert to the Master Instructor rating.

XII. Active Status Qualifications

In addition to the programs taught by active status Assistant Instructor Trainers, active status Instructor Trainers may:

- Conduct the Instructor Training Course.
- Conduct Dive Professional Crossover programs up to the Master Instructor level.
- Assist an Instructor Certifier in conducting all SSI Instructor Evaluation programs.

Recreational Scuba

Instructor Certifier

I. Intent

The SSI Instructor Certifier Seminar provides candidates with the knowledge and training necessary to organize and conduct Instructor Evaluations.

a. Special Considerations

The Instructor Certifier certification is unique to SSI, and will only be issued at the responsible SSI Service Center's discretion.

In addition to any regional requirements, the following requirements must be met:

- The Service Center determines that there is a need for an Instructor Certifier
- The Service Center determines that the candidate is appropriate for the certification
- The candidate assists with at least one (1) complete Instructor Trainer Seminar
- The candidate assists with at least two (2) complete Instructor Evaluations, conducted by an experienced active status Instructor Certifier, as determined by the Service Center
- The candidate organizes and conducts at least one (1) complete Instructor Evaluation under direct supervision of an International Training Director, and with the approval of the Service Center

Note / Any requests for waivers or deviations from these requirements must be approved in writing by SSI International.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status International Training Director may conduct the Instructor Certifier Seminar.

III. Candidate Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 21 years old.
- Have no QMS Cases that result in a compliance action in the previous twelve (12) months.
- Have issued at least 15 SSI Instructor Training Course or Open Water Instructor certifications.

Have the following active status SSI certifications (no equivalency permitted):

- Instructor Trainer

Note / Instructor Certifier Seminars are approved by SSI Service Centers, and candidates are selected through an application process.

IV. Minimum Supervision

- An active status International Training Director must directly supervise all activities.

V. Requirements For Completion

- Satisfactorily complete all requirements as determined by an International Training Director and the responsible SSI Service Center.

VI. Certification

- Upon completion of training, upload the candidate's training record with all required documentation into the MySSI System or send it to the responsible SSI Service Center.
- The candidate will be certified as an Instructor Certifier.

VII. Active Status Requirements

- Exclusively use the SSI Total Teaching System for all recreational levels and issue only SSI certifications. Only those programs that SSI does not provide materials for can be conducted through another agency.
- Exemplify the SSI philosophy and display competence in applying the SSI Business System.
- Attend all mandatory SSI Instructor Trainer/Instructor Certifier updates scheduled by SSI International.
- Conduct at least one (1) complete Instructor Training Course every 24 months. Or, if SSI International offers a mandatory update, complete at least one (1) within 24 months.
- If this time period is exceeded, they may extend their active status Instructor Certifier certification by attending a remedial training session coordinated by SSI International and an International Training Director. They will remain in retired status until the remedial training session is completed.
- Instructor Certifiers that act in the role of Instructor Trainer will be held responsible for the quality of education. If a significant number of their candidates fail the Instructor Evaluation because of non-performance, the Instructor Certifier may be required to re-attend another Instructor Trainer Seminar or revert to the Master Instructor rating.

VIII. Active Status Qualifications

In addition to the programs taught by active status Instructor Trainers, active status Instructor Certifiers may teach, supervise and issue certifications for the following programs:

- Instructor Evaluations after approval is given by the responsible SSI Service Center.

Instructor Certifiers Must Not:

- Conduct Instructor Evaluations without prior approval of the responsible SSI Service Center.
- Evaluate Instructor candidates who they have personally trained during an Instructor Training Course.

Recreational Scuba

Dive Professional Crossover

I. Intent

The SSI Dive Professional Crossover program provides an orientation to SSI philosophies and procedures to dive professionals from other scuba training agencies.

It provides the knowledge and skills needed to conduct SSI programs equivalent to their existing qualifications in a safe and enjoyable manner.

a. Professionals from Recognized Training Agencies

Dive Professionals certified by any SSI-recognized training agency or federation may attend an SSI Dive Professional Crossover program.

b. Professionals from Non-Recognized Training Agencies

Divemaster candidates certified by a non-SSI recognized training agency or federation must successfully complete an SSI Experienced Diver Test to obtain a non-professional Dive Guide certification. After earning that certification, they can enter active status as an SSI Professional, and earn the Divemaster recognition rating after completing the SSI Science of Diving program.

Assistant Instructor-level candidates certified by a non-SSI recognized agency or federation must complete the entire SSI Dive Professional Crossover.

Open Water Instructor-level or higher candidates certified by a non-SSI recognized agency or federation may attend an SSI Professional Crossover, but cannot be certified without attending an additional Instructor Evaluation to evaluate their SSI Professional-level knowledge and skill assessment. An active status SSI Instructor Certifier may conduct both the Professional Crossover and the Instructor Evaluation for the candidate.

Note | It is at the discretion of the SSI Service Center to determine whether additional training or evaluation (e.g. completing a full SSI Instructor Evaluation), is required prior to issuing an equivalent SSI professional-level certification.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

- An active status Divemaster Instructor may conduct the Divemaster Professional Crossover.
- An active status Assistant Instructor Trainer may conduct the Assistant Instructor Crossover.
- An active status Instructor Trainer may conduct all Dive Professional Crossover programs.

III. Candidate Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 18 years old.
- Must have held an equivalent certification from a recognized training agency.
- Must meet the minimum certification requirements for the certification being crossed over.
- If a crossover candidate has been inactive with another agency for greater than five (5) years, they must follow the Returning to Active Status standards.
- The candidate should not be currently involved in a quality compliance case with another training agency. If they are part of an active quality compliance case, they must disclose all information about the case with SSI prior to attending the crossover.
- Any candidate who has been expelled from another training agency is automatically disqualified from attending an SSI Professional Crossover.

Note | If the candidate does not inform SSI of their role in an active quality compliance case, is placed in expelled status by another training agency after completing the SSI Professional Crossover, or does not inform SSI of their previous expelled status with another agency, SSI may decertify the candidate or even place them in expelled status as well.

IV. Depth Limitations

- Minimum open water depth limit: 15 feet.
- Maximum open water depth limit: 130 feet.

V. In-Water Ratios

- The candidate-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant.
- The ratio may increase to 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

VI. Minimum Supervision

- The SSI Professional conducting the Dive Professional Crossover must directly supervise all academic and in-water activities.

VII. Requirements For Completion

- Pass all requirements and evaluations listed in the instructor manual for the SSI Professional Crossover.
- Complete the program's final exam.

Note / A written or oral exam may be used if the digital final exam is not available in the student's language.

VIII. Certification

- Upon completion of training, upload the candidate's training record with all required documentation into the MySSI System or send it to the responsible SSI Service Center.
- Candidate will be certified as an SSI Professional at the appropriate level.

Recognition Ratings

Professional Recognition Ratings

I. Intent

SSI recognizes its Dive Professionals when they meet certain levels of training and experience.

- Century Instructor
- Bronze Instructor
- Silver 300 Instructor
- Gold 500 Instructor
- Platinum 1000 Instructor
- Platinum Pro 5000 Instructor

II. Requirements For Completion

- For Century Instructor – Provide proof of 100 Experience Points as outlined in MySSI.
- For Bronze Instructor - Provide proof of 200 Experience Points as outlined in MySSI.
- For Silver 300 Instructor – Provide proof of 300 Experience Points as outlined in MySSI.
- For Gold 500 Instructor – Provide proof of 500 Experience Points as outlined in MySSI.
- For Platinum 1000 Instructor – Provide proof of 1000 Experience Points as outlined in MySSI.
- For Platinum Pro 5000 Instructor – Provide proof for 5000 Experience Points as outlined in MySSI.

Note / No additional training beyond Assistant Instructor is needed to achieve the Platinum Pro 5000 rating.

III. Issuing a Recognition Card

- Once all requirements are complete and the candidate's profile is updated in MySSI, the digital recognition card is automatically issued at no charge.

Classified Diving Programs

Student-Level Programs

Classified Diving

I. Intent

The SSI Classified Diving program provides students with limited mobility with the adaptive training necessary to dive with one or more Classified Dive Buddies, and/or a Classified Dive Professional depending on their abilities, in environments and to depths equivalent with their training.

Upon successful completion of the Classified Diving program, students will earn a Classified Diving Level 1, 2, or 3 certification depending on their ability to independently perform skills, and to assist a buddy in need.

II. Terminology

Classified Diver

- An entry-level student completing the SSI Open Water Diver program that requires a classification level based on this standard.

Classified Dive Buddy

- A diver who has completed the Classified Dive Buddy certification, and is authorized to assist the Classified Diver.

Classified Dive Professional

- Any active status SSI Divemaster or higher who has completed the Classified Buddy or Classified Diving Instructor program.

Classified Diving Instructor

- Any active status SSI Open Water Instructor or higher who is authorized to teach all aspects of the Classified Diving and Classified Dive Buddy programs.

Classified Diving Instructor Trainer

- Any active status SSI Instructor Trainer who is authorized to teach all aspects of the Classified Diving, Classified Dive Buddy, and Classified Diving Instructor programs.

III. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Classified Diving Instructor may conduct the Classified Diving program.

IV. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 12 years old.

V. Additional Student Equipment

In addition to the equipment listed in the General Training Standards, students must also have:

- Dive computer

VI. Duration

- Recommended hours for completion: 16-32.

VII. Depth Limitations

- Maximum pool/confined water depth limit: 15 feet
- Minimum open water depth limit: 15 feet.
- Maximum depth limit for Open Water Training Dives 1 and 2: 40 feet.
- Maximum depth limit for all remaining training dives: 60 feet.

VIII. In-Water Ratios

a. Pool/Confined Water

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 1:1, with one (1) Classified Diving student and one (1) Classified Diving Instructor
- The ratio may increase to 2:1:1, two (2) Classified Diving students and one (1) Classified Diving Instructor, with the addition of one (1) certified Classified Dive Buddy or Classified Dive Buddy student
- The ratio may increase to 3:1:2, three (3) Classified Diving students and one (1) Classified Diving Instructor, with the addition of two (2) certified Classified Dive Buddies or Classified Dive Buddy students

Classified Diving pool/confined water sessions may be combined with Open Water Diver pool/confined water sessions if the following requirements are met:

- An active status SSI Divemaster or higher, with a Level 3 Classified Dive Buddy certification, acts as a certified assistant
- The maximum student-to-instructor ratios for both the Open Water Diver program and the Classified Diving program are not exceeded

b. Open Water

The Classified Diving Instructor must determine the appropriate classification level for the student once they complete the pool/confined water sessions.

The open water student-to-instructor ratio is determined by the student's classification level.

- Level 1: the student-to-instructor ratio is 2:1:2, with two (2) Classified Diving students, one (1) Classified Diving Instructor, and two (2) certified Classified Dive Buddies
- Levels 2 and 3: the student-to-instructor ratio is 1:1:2, with one (1) Classified Diving student, one (1) Classified Diving Instructor, and two (2) certified Classified Dive Buddies

IX. Minimum Supervision

- An active status Classified Diving Instructor or higher must directly supervise all academic and in-water activities.

X. Proximity

- During in-water skill evaluations, the students must remain under direct supervision of the SSI Professional so that physical contact can be made at any time.

XI. Requirements For Completion

- Complete all academic sections and assessments outlined in the instructor manual for Open Water Diver.
- Complete an Open Water Diver final exam with a passing score of at least 80%.
- Complete the pool/confined water sessions and the skill evaluations outlined in the instructor manual for Open Water Diver as appropriate for the student's classification level.
- Complete at least four (4) open water-training dives on scuba and all the skill evaluations outlined in the Open Water Diver Instructor Manual as appropriate for the student's classification level.

For Classified Diving Level 1 only:

- Complete the Student Water Fitness Evaluation outlined in the SSI Training Standards. Water fitness evaluations must be completed before participating in any open water training dives.

XII. Assistance For Skills

a. Level 1 4 or more Scuba Dives

Level 1 students may complete the following skills with assistance from a Classified Dive Buddy or a Classified Dive Professional:

- Entries
- Exits
- Buoyancy Check | Total Diving System
- Removing and Replacing the Scuba Unit | Surface
- Removing and Replacing the Weight System | Surface

Note / Students must be able to independently demonstrate proper operation of a quick-release weight system.

b. Level 2

Level 2 students may also complete the following skills with assistance from a Classified Dive Buddy or Classified Dive Professional:

- Disconnect/Reconnect an Inflator Hose
- Air Sharing Exercises
- Emergency Swimming Ascent
- Emergency Buoyant Ascent
- Delayed Surface Marker Buoy Deployment | Surface

c. Level 3

Level 3 students may also complete the following skills with assistance from a Classified Dive Buddy or Classified Dive Professional:

- Regulator Retrieval
- Mask Clearing
- Mask Removal and Replacement
- Controlled Descent

XIII. Sequence

- The open water training dives may only be conducted after all requirements and evaluations for the Academic Sections and Pool/Confined Water Sessions of the instructor manual for Open Water Diver have been met or exceeded.
- Snorkeling skills are only required for Classified Diving Level 1, and may be combined with the pool/confined/water sessions, and/or the open water training dives.

Recommendation / SSI recommends conducting additional experience or training dives when possible.

XIV. Dives Per Day

SSI recommends limiting the number of training dives in a 24-hour period based on the classification level of the student.

XV. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic requirements, in-water requirements, and final exam, a Classified Diving Instructor or higher may issue the Classified Diving digital certification card.
- Certified Classified Divers can dive with a Classified Dive Buddy or Buddies, in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits.
- Students younger than 15 years old will be certified as a Junior Classified Diver.
- Divers with a Classified Diving Level 1 certification must dive with at least one (1) Classified Dive Buddy.
- Divers with a Classified Diving Level 2 certification must dive with at least two (2) Classified Dive Buddies.
- Divers with a Classified Diving Level 3 certification must dive with at least two (2) Classified Dive Buddies and one (1) Classified Dive Professional.

XVI. Reclassification

a. To a Higher Level

SSI Classified Divers may require reclassification due to progressive disease, other injury or mishap, or other conditions.

- SSI recommends that Classified Divers re-assess their abilities and classification at least once every two years, or if there is any concern about their abilities to independently complete the skills from the Open Water Diver program.
- If necessary, a Classified Diving Instructor should re-evaluate the student's abilities, and a new certification card must be issued with the appropriate classification level.

b. To a Lower Level

Classified Divers may be reclassified to a lower level if they are able to complete the skill requirements for that level.

- In this event, the diver must complete at least one pool/confined water session and at least one open water session.
- Each session must include a complete review of the skills applicable to the new classification level.
- A Classified Diving Instructor must evaluate the diver's skills, and issue a new certification card if they meet the requirements.

c. To Open Water Diver

If a diver is reclassified as an Open Water Diver, they must complete at least one pool/confined water session and at least four open water training dives to demonstrate that they can complete all of the skill requirements of the Open Water Diver program.

Student-Level Programs

Classified Dive Buddy

I. Intent

The SSI Classified Dive Buddy program provides students with the training necessary to dive with a Classified Diver in environments and to depths equivalent with their training.

Note | A Classified Dive Professional is any active status Divemaster (or equivalent) or higher with the Classified Dive Buddy certification.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status Classified Diving Instructor may conduct the Classified Dive Buddy program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 18 years old.
- Have proof of current First Aid and CPR training within two (2) years prior to issuing a certification card.

Have the following SSI certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency:

- Diver Stress & Rescue

IV. In-Water Ratios

- The student-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.

V. Minimum Supervision

- An active status Classified Diving Instructor or higher must directly supervise all academic and in-water activities.

VI. Requirements For Completion

- Complete the pool/confined water sessions and the skill evaluations outlined in the instructor manual for Classified Diving.
- Complete the program's final exam.
- Demonstrate the ability to adequately assist a Classified Diver with the skills from the Open Water Diver program, based on the diver's classification level, as outlined in the instructor manual for the Classified Diving program.

VII. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic requirements, in-water requirements, and final exam, a Classified Diving Instructor may issue the Classified Dive Buddy digital certification card.
- Certified Classified Dive Buddies can dive with Classified Divers in environments equivalent to their training and within the recommended depth limits of the Classified Diver.
- An active status SSI Divemaster or higher with the Classified Dive Buddy certification is considered a Classified Dive Professional, and may act as a certified assistant for all Classified Diving and Classified Dive Buddy programs.

Professional Programs

Classified Diving Instructor

I. Intent

The SSI Classified Diving Instructor program provides candidates with the knowledge and training necessary to organize and conduct entry-level scuba training programs for Classified Diving students and Classified Dive Buddies.

II. Minimum Required Instructor Rating

An active status Classified Diving Instructor Trainer may conduct the Classified Diving Instructor Seminar or Crossover program.

An active status Classified Diving Instructor may use the co-teaching method to complete the certification requirements.

III. Candidate Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 18 years old.

Have the following active status SSI certification:

- Assistant Instructor

Note / If using the co-teaching method, the candidate must also be an SSI Classified Dive Buddy.

IV. Duration

Recommended hours for completion: 12-16.

The number of classes, hours and sessions per day are set by the individual instructor, based on the candidate's needs, ability and local water conditions.

V. In-Water Ratios

- The candidate-to-instructor ratio is 8:1.
- The ratio may increase to 10:2 with one (1) certified assistant or 12:3 with two (2) certified assistants.

VI. Minimum Supervision

An active status Classified Diving Instructor Trainer must directly supervise all academic and pool/confined water activities.

VII. Requirements For Completion

a. Classified Diving Instructor Seminar

- Complete and pass all requirements and evaluations listed in the instructor manual for the Classified Diving program.
- Complete the Candidate Water Fitness Evaluation as outlined in the SSI Training Standards.
- Complete the program's final exam.

b. Co-Teaching Method

- Review the entire instructor manual for the Classified Diving program and any additional media or training aids used to conduct Classified Diving training.
- Teach at least two (2) complete Classified Diving programs under the direct supervision of an active status Classified Diving Instructor. The candidate should assist the instructor during all parts of the first program, and act as lead instructor during the second program.
- Teach at least one (1) complete Classified Dive Buddy program under the direct supervision of an active status Classified Diving Instructor.
- Complete an application form, signed by the certifying instructor and the Training Center QMS Manager.

c. Crossover Method

- Review the entire instructor manual for the Classified Diving program and any additional media or training aids used to conduct Classified Diving training. This review must be conducted with the certifying Classified Diving Instructor Trainer.
- Participate in a Classified Diving Instructor Seminar or co-teach at least one (1) Classified Diving or Classified Dive Buddy program with an active status Classified Diving Instructor.
- Complete an application form, signed by the certifying Instructor Trainer.

VIII. Certification

- Upon completion of training, upload the candidate's training record with all required documentation into the MySSI System or send it to the responsible SSI Service Center.
- Candidates with the Open Water Instructor rating or higher will be certified as a Classified Diving Instructor.
- Assistant Instructors will be certified as Classified Dive Buddies, and may act as certified assistants during Classified Diving and Classified Dive Buddy programs.

IX. Upgrades

- Active status Assistant Instructors will be automatically upgraded to the Classified Diving Instructor after they earn the Open Water Instructor certification.

X. Active Status Qualifications

In addition to the programs taught by active status Open Water Instructors, active status Classified Diving Instructors may conduct:

- The Classified Diving and Classified Dive Buddy programs

Professional Programs

Classified Diving Instructor Trainer

I. Intent

The SSI Classified Diving Instructor Trainer certification allows qualified SSI Professionals to teach and issue certifications for the Classified Diving Instructor program.

II. Candidate Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 21 years old.
- Have no QMS Cases that result in a compliance action in the previous twelve (12) months.

Have the following active status SSI certifications (no equivalency permitted):

- Assistant Instructor Trainer/Dive Control Specialist
- Classified Diving Instructor

Have issued at least:

- Five (5) Classified Diving or Classified Dive Buddy certifications or equivalent from a recognized training agency

III. Certification

- Upon completion of training, upload the candidate's training record with all required documentation into the MySSI System or send it to the responsible SSI Service Center.
- The candidate will be certified as a Classified Diving Instructor Trainer.

IV. Active Status Requirements

- Exclusively use the SSI Total Teaching System for all Classified Diving training programs and issue only SSI certifications. Only those programs that SSI does not provide materials for can be conducted through another agency.
- Exemplify the SSI philosophy and display competence in applying the SSI Business System.
- Conduct at least one (1) complete Classified Diving Instructor Seminar or Crossover every 24 months. If this time period is exceeded, the Classified Diving Instructor Trainer may attend a remedial training session or maintain inactive status until remedial training is complete.
- Attend all mandatory SSI Dive Professional updates.

V. Active Status Qualifications

In addition to the programs taught by active status Assistant Instructor Trainers, active status Classified Diving Instructor Trainers may:

- Conduct the Classified Diving Instructor Seminar or Crossover
- Conduct the Classified Diving and Classified Dive Buddy programs

React Right Programs

Student-Level Programs

React Right

I. Intent

The SSI React Right program provides students with the knowledge and training to act as a first responder and provide first aid and CPR, administer oxygen and/or provide Automated External Defibrillator (AED) support in a medical emergency.

Each portion of the React Right program (First Aid and CPR, Oxygen Provider, and AED Provider) may be taught individually or in any combination of the three sections.

II. Minimum Instructor Rating

An active status React Right Instructor may conduct the React Right program.

III. Student Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 12 years old.

IV. Duration

Recommended hours for completion: 8-12.

- First Aid and CPR: 5 hours
- AED Provider: 1 hour
- Oxygen Provider: 2 hours

V. Materials And Equipment

- React Right students must train using current and appropriate first aid and CPR, oxygen administration and AED equipment.

VI. Ratios

- There is no maximum student-to-instructor ratio for the React Right program.
- The instructor must have sufficient training aids available and the ability to control and supervise all of the program's participants.

VII. Minimum Supervision

- An active status React Right Instructor must directly supervise all academic and practical training sessions.

VIII. Requirements For Completion

- Complete academic and practical training scenarios as outlined in the instructor manual for React Right for the portions of the program they are completing.
- Complete a React Right final exam with a passing score for each of the portions of the program they are completing.

IX. Certification

- Upon completion of all academic and practical training scenario requirements, an SSI React Right Instructor may issue the program's digital certification card.
- SSI React Right certification qualifies the holder to act as a first responder in medical emergencies similar to their training for a period of two years after the certification is issued.
- Certified React Right divers may use the React Right certification to fulfill the prerequisites for the SSI Diver Stress & Rescue certification, and all SSI professional training programs.

X. Credit

Students with a certification from a recognized training agency may upgrade to the React Right certification by:

- Purchasing the React Right digital learning.
- Completing a React Right Update for each applicable certification.
- Completing a final exam for each applicable certification.

React Right Programs

React Right Update Procedure

I. Intent

The initial React Right certification is valid for two years from the certification date. By participating in the React Right Update, students can extend their certification for an additional two years.

Students with CPR, First Aid, AED Provider, or Oxygen Provider certifications from another agency can participate in a React Right Update and receive an equivalent React Right certification.

II. Student Prerequisites

- Have an SSI React Right certification or equivalent certification from a recognized training agency.
- Have access to the React Right digital learning.

III. Requirements For Completion

- The update must be at least two (2) hours long, and must include at least one (1) complete skill circuit for each applicable certification as outlined in the instructor manual for React Right .
- Complete a final exam for each applicable certification.

IV. Certification

- Upon completion of the React Right Update, the responsible SSI Training Center must process the student in MySSI using the "Upgrade Certification" feature.
- The student will receive the digital certification card for the portions of the React Right program they have completed.

React Right Professional Programs

React Right Instructor

There are two ways to become certified to teach the React Right program:

- Specialty Instructor Seminar
- Co-Teaching

Note | Non-SSI Professionals may only become a React Right Instructor by completing the Specialty Instructor Seminar.

I. Minimum Instructor Rating

a. Seminar

- An active status Assistant Instructor Trainer, certified as a React Right Specialty Instructor, may conduct the seminar.

b. Co-Teaching

- The candidate may co-teach the applicable specialty program with an active status React Right Specialty Instructor.

II. Candidate Prerequisites

- Minimum age: 18 years old.

III. Materials And Equipment

- React Right Instructor candidates must train using current and appropriate first aid and CPR, oxygen administration, and AED equipment.

IV. Ratios

- There is no maximum candidate-to-instructor ratio for the React Right Instructor Seminar.
- The instructor must have sufficient training aids available and the ability to control and supervise all of the candidates at all times.

V. Requirements For Completion

- Complete the Specialty Instructor Seminar or co-teaching requirements as outlined in the instructor manual for the Specialty Instructor Seminar.
- Complete a React Right final exam with a passing score for each of the portions of the program they are completing.
- Active status and current first aid and CPR, oxygen provider, and AED provider instructors with a recognized training agency may submit an application for an equivalent React Right Instructor certification.

VI. Active Status Requirements

- Teach a minimum of one (1) React Right program every 24 months.

Note | There is no additional charge for React Right when renewing SSI Professional annual dues.

VII. React Right Instructor Update

If more than 24 months elapse, the React Right Instructor certification will become inactive.

The instructor may return to active status by co-teaching at least one complete React Right program or by completing a React Right Specialty Instructor Seminar.

Appendix

Equivalency Charts

I. Student Programs

a. Entry Level Scuba Programs

Recognized Training Agencies and Federations

ISO	RSTC	SSI	PADI	SDI	NAUI	CMAS	RAID
ISO 11121 Introductory Training Dive	Introductory Open Water Experience	Basic Diver	Discover Scuba Diving				
ISO 24801-1 Supervised Diver	Supervised Diver	Scuba Diver	Scuba Diver	Supervised Diver	No Equivalence	No Equivalence	No Equivalence
ISO 24801-2 Autonomous Diver	Open Water Diver	Open Water Diver	Open Water Diver	Open Water Scuba Diver	Scuba Diver	One Star Diver	Open Water 20

b. Scuba Specialty Programs

Recognized Training Agencies and Federations

ISO	RSTC	SSI	PADI	SDI	NAUI	CMAS	RAID
		Advanced Adventurer	Advanced Open Water	Advanced Adventure	Advanced Scuba Diver	One Star Diver	No Equivalence
	Entry Level Rescue Diver	Diver Stress & Rescue	Rescue Diver	Rescue Diver	Scuba Rescue Diver	Two Star Diver	No Equivalence
		Advanced Open Water Diver	No Equivalence	Advanced Diver	Master Scuba Diver	Two Star Diver	No Equivalence
		Master Diver	Master Scuba Diver	Master Scuba Diver	No Equivalence	Three Star Diver	No Equivalence

II. Professional Programs

Recognized Training Agencies and Federations

ISO	RSTC	SSI	PADI	SDI	NAUI	CMAS	RAID
ISO24801-3 Dive Leader	Recreational Dive Supervisor	Dive Guide	Divemaster	Divemaster	Divemaster	Three Star Diver	RAID Dive Master
		Divemaster					
ISO24802-1 Instructor Level 1	Recreational Assistant Instructor	Assistant Instructor	Assistant Instructor	Assistant Instructor	Assistant Instructor	Assistant Instructor	
ISO24802-2 Instructor Level 2	Recreational Scuba Instructor	Open Water Instructor	Open Water Scuba Instructor	Open Water Scuba Diver Instructor	Instructor	One Star Instructor	RAID Open Circuit Instructor
		Advanced Open Water Instructor	Master Scuba Diver Trainer			Two Star Instructor	
		Divemaster Instructor					
		Assistant Instructor Trainer	Staff Instructor	IT Staff Instructor			
	Recreational Scuba Instructor Trainer	Instructor Trainer	Course Director	Instructor Trainer	Instructor Trainer	Instructor Trainer	

Scuba Change Log

Changes Effective November 22, 2023

I. General Training Standards

a. Privacy Forms and Training Records

- Edited requirements for the Diver Medical Participant Questionnaire to clarify when a signed Physician's Approval to Dive form is required.

b. Program Duration and Time Limits

- Information about the number of classes, hours, and sessions has moved from each Professional Standard to the General Training Standards.

c. Specialized Equipment

- Added additional clarification for the requirements for using a dry suit.

d. Conducting SSI Programs

- The description of Indoor Diving has changed to include outdoor artificial diving facilities that meet this definition.

e. Training Environments and Depth Limits

- Added clarification about the recommended depth limit for Junior Divers.

f. Water Fitness Evaluations

- All Water Fitness Evaluations have moved to the General Training Standards.

II. Experience Programs

a. Try Scuba

- Updated administrative requirements.

III. Entry-Level Programs

- Student Water Fitness Evaluation moved to the General Training Standards.
- Equivalency charts moved to the appendix.

a. Indoor Diver

- Updated intent.
- Updated certification.

IV. Continuing Education Programs

a. Diver Recognition Ratings

- Relocated Marine Guide and added student prerequisites.

b. Ecology Specialty Programs

- Marine Invertebrate Ecology added to the list of available Ecology specialty programs.

c. Computer Diving

- Added new program standard.

d. Full Face Mask Diving

- Moved to Dedicated Equipment Specialties.
- Updated intent.
- Updated duration.
- Updated depth limitations.
- Updated ratios.
- Updated requirements for completion.
- Updated sequence.

V. Professional Programs

- Candidate Water Fitness Evaluation moved to the General Training Standards.

a. Ecology Specialty Instructor

- New standard added.

b. Instructor Evaluation

- Updated ratios.

c. Specialty instructor

- Updated intent.
- Updated certification.

d. Decompression Diving Instructor

- Added clarification text on upgrades for XR Instructors.

e. Instructor Trainer

- Updated ratios.
- Added text on SCR Instructor Trainer upgrades.

f. Recognition Ratings

- Moved Marine Guide into the diver-level recognition section.

VI. Classified Diving Programs

- Have moved to their own section.

a. Classified Diving

- Updated terminology.

b. Classified Diving Instructor

- Updated candidate prerequisites.

VII. React Right Programs

- Have moved to their own section.

a. React Right Instructor

- Added clarification text about how non-SSI Professionals can complete training.
- Updated candidate prerequisites.
- Added text on minimum instructor rating.

VIII. Appendix

- Equivalency charts added.
- Most recent change log added.

Changes Effective 16 May, 2023

I. General Training Standards

a. Privacy Forms and Training Records

- Added clarification about the documents required to be uploaded for professional level training.

b. Certification Procedures

- Added clarification text about who is the certifying instructor.
- Added clarification text about uploading documents when processing professional certifications.
- Added clarification text about uploading documents into the MySSI System.

c. Returning to Active Status

- Added clarification text about uploading documents into the MySSI System.

d. Using Certified Assistants

- Added requirement for being a certified assistant during specialty programs.

e. Supervision

- Updated maximum depth for emergency ascent skills.

f. Equipment Definitions

- Added clarification text about removable weights.

g. Conducting SSI Programs

- Added clarification text about diving with dry suits.
- Added clarification text about certified assistants.
- Added clarification text about dry suit requirements in cold water.

II. Scuba Experience Programs

a. SSI Explorers

- Changed maximum pool/confined water depth limit.

III. Scuba Specialty Programs

a. Deep Diving

- Updated maximum depths.

b. Ice Diving

- Changed requirements for completion.

c. Unique Recognition Specialties

- Added clarification text about the minimum age for dedicated equipment programs.

IV. Dive Professional Programs

a. Snorkel Instructor

- Updated active status qualifications.

b. Dive Guide

- Clarification of deep experience dives.

c. Assistant Instructor

- Updated active status qualifications.

d. Instructor Evaluation

- Updated active status qualifications.

e. Divemaster Instructor

- Updated candidate prerequisites.

f. Specialty Instructor

- Added clarification text about who can co-teach.

g. React Right Instructor

- Added clarification text about how non SSI Professionals can complete training.
- Updated candidate prerequisites.

h. Assistant Instructor Trainer/Dive Control Specialist

- Updated candidate prerequisites.

i. Master Instructor

- Updated candidate prerequisites.

