

17. Cavern Discovery

17.1 Introduction

This course is designed to develop the minimum skills and knowledge for guided cavern diving within the limits of light penetration; in addition outlines specific hazards associated with cave diving. The Cavern Discovery course is not intended to provide instruction for cave diving environments. The objective of this course is to allow recreational divers to dive in the cavern environment under direct supervision of an active Cavern Diver Instructor.

17.2 Qualifications of Graduates

Upon successful completion of this course graduates may:

1. Cavern dive under the direct supervision of an active TDI Cavern instructor
2. Enroll in a TDI Cavern Diver Course

17.3 Who May Teach

1. Any active TDI Cavern, Intro to Cave or Cave Instructor may teach this Course:

17.4 Student to Instructor Ratio

Academic

1. Unlimited, so long as adequate facility, supplies and time are provided to ensure comprehensive and complete training of subject matter

Confined Water (swimming pool-like conditions) Optional

1. A maximum of 4 students per active TDI instructor

Cavern

1. A maximum of 2 students per active TDI Instructor are allowed; ratio should be reduced as required due to environmental or operational constraints
2. Daylight zone, i.e. within natural light of the cavern entrance
3. Penetration is limited to 1/3 of a single diving cylinder or “1/6 in double tanks”
4. 61 linear metres / 200 linear feet from the surface
5. 40 metres / 130 feet maximum depth
6. No decompression diving
7. No restrictions; no areas too small for 2 divers to pass side-by-side
8. Safety stops as appropriate or necessary

9. Maintain a continuous guideline
10. Proper cavern diving equipment is used
11. No removal of life support equipment shall be permitted within the overhead environment
12. Neither instructors or participants are allowed to carry or use still, or video, camera during this program. A certified assistant may photograph or video participants.

17.5 Student Prerequisites

1. Minimum age 15 with parental consent
2. Provide proof of certification as an SDI Open Water Scuba Diver or equivalent
3. Provide proof of a minimum of 25 dives

17.6 Course Structure and Duration

Water Execution

1. Instructors shall assess participant's comfort, buoyancy control, and propulsion technique in open water prior to entering the overhead environment
2. One cavern dive

Course Structure

1. TDI allows instructors to structure courses according to the number of students participating and their skill level

Duration

1. The minimum number of classroom and briefing hours is 1 hour
2. Course must be conducted over a minimum of 1 day

17.7 Administrative Requirements

Administrative Tasks:

1. Collect the course fees from all the students
2. Ensure that the students have the required equipment and certifications
3. Communicate the training schedule to the students
4. Have the students complete the:
 - a. *TDI Liability Release and Express Assumption of Risk Form*
 - b. *TDI Medical Statement Form*

Upon successful completion of the course the instructor must:

1. Issue the appropriate TDI certification by submitting the *TDI Diver Registration* Form to TDI Headquarters or registering the students online through member's area of the TDI website

17.8 Required Equipment

Suggested reading materials:

1. *TDI Diving In Overhead Environments* manual

The following equipment is required for each student:

1. Primary cylinder, volume appropriate for planned dive and student gas consumption
2. Regulator with pressure gauge and alternate air source; although not required, it is suggested one regulator be mounted on a hose approximately 2 metres / 7 feet in length
3. Buoyancy compensator device (BCD) with power inflator
4. Exposure suit adequate for cavern environment
5. Mask and fins, NO snorkel
6. Line cutting device
7. Safety reel with a minimum of 37 metres / 125 feet of guideline
8. One primary cavern-diving reel with length appropriate for intended dive (instructor may provide)
9. Two battery powered lights, with burn time suitable for the planned dive time
10. Computer or watch (bottom timer) and depth gauge
11. Slate or wet notes and pencil (recommended)
12. Submersible dive tables or backup dive computer (recommended)
13. Weight system

Instructor must use full cave diving equipment during all water exercises

17.9 Required Subject Areas

The following topics must be covered during this course:

1. Policy for Cavern Diving
2. Gas Matching Procedures and Management to Include Dissimilar Volume
3. Psychological Considerations
4. Equipment Considerations
 - a. Cylinder options
 - b. Regulator options
 - c. Buoyancy compensator device / harness options
 - d. Reel options
 - e. Proper weighting
5. Communication
 - a. Hand signals
 - b. Light signals
 - c. Touch contact signals
6. Swimming Techniques
 - a. Body posture/ trim
 - b. Buoyancy control
 - c. Line following
 - d. Propulsion techniques
7. Physiology
 - a. Breathing techniques
 - b. Stress management
8. Cavern environment
 - a. Geology
 - i. Bottom
 - ii. Ceiling
 - b. Local access requirements
 - c. Land owner relations
9. Cavern Conservation
10. Problem Solving
 - a. Emergency procedures
 - b. Equipment failure
 - c. Silting conditions
11. Accident Analysis
12. Review of Dive Tables and Decompression Theory
13. Cavern Diving Etiquette

17.10 Required Skill Performance and Graduation Requirements

The following land drills must be covered during this course prior to the guided cavern dive(s):

1. How to:
 - a. Properly share air and exit
 - b. Properly follow a guideline
 - c. Touch contact communication

The student must perform the following S-drill and skills during all dives:

1. Demonstrate:
 - a. Adequate pre-dive planning
 - b. Equipment check and equipment matching
 - c. Bubble check
 - d. Specialized propulsion techniques
 - e. Proper buoyancy control
 - f. Proper body posture
 - g. Proper stress analysis (detection and management)
2. Referencing as back-up navigation
3. Anti-silting techniques
4. Simulate a primary light failure, and deploy back up light and follow guideline
5. If diver uses a dual valve system, air/gas valve management

Note: No removal of life support equipment shall be permitted within the overhead environment

In order to complete this course, students must:

1. Perform all land drills and cavern dive requirements safely and efficiently
2. Demonstrate mature, sound judgment concerning dive planning and execution
3. Maintain an appropriate level of awareness and respect for the cavern environment
4. Log all dives