



3. General Specialty Standards

These following standards apply to all SDI Diver Specialties.

3.1 Administrative

Instructors must ensure that all students complete the following forms, for each and every course and specialty the student participates in. They are:

1. *SDI Liability Release and Express Assumption of Risk Form**
2. *SDI Medical Statement Form (unless specifically not required in a non-diving course standard)*

If a student answers yes to any question in the medical statement form, under the section marked “Have you ever had a history of or do you currently have,” the student must provide written permission from a licensed physician before participating in confined or open water training or any course or specialty training. A physician-signed medical is valid for up to 12 months with no change in medical condition unless a longer valid term is indicated on a specific medical form.

3. *SDI Diver Registration Form* or preferably register the student online in the member’s section of the SDI website; upon completion of the specified program
4. *SDI Diver Training Record*; must be kept for a minimum of *seven* years

***Note:** The SDI Solo Diver Specialty requires a separate waiver specific for solo diving activities; see the SDI Solo Diver Standard for the specifics

3.2 Accidents

Hopefully a member will never have to do this; if a member were involved in an accident or simply witnessed an accident, the *SDI Accident Report* Form must be completed, by the member/witness, and faxed to SDI Headquarters immediately after the accident occurred. Please refer to the SDI Standards, Part 1, section 6.4.8.

3.3 Definitions

Assistant or Assisted by = A person who is assisting a primary and certified instructor, IT staff instructor or instructor trainer for a course that they, the “assistant”, is not certified to teach. Assistants can be used for the purposes of additional supervision and to increase ratios where standards and environmental conditions allow. Assistants listed on registrations will receive experience credits for courses they have assisted with only if listed on the initial registration form.

Co-Teach or 2nd Instructor = A person who is certified to teach the course taking place and is working together with an also certified instructor, IT staff instructor or instructor trainer. The 2nd instructor will receive equal credit for the course if listed on the initial registration form.

Student Prerequisites = conditions that must be met by students prior to beginning a course. These cannot be completed during the course unless specifically outlined in the standard. Conditions listed here cannot be waived by the instructor. Written standards waivers for prerequisites may be issued by the HQ training department depending on the course, dive site, and the specific prior experience of course participants.

3.4 Equipment

A personal dive computer (PDC) must be used during all confined and open water training sessions, during SDI courses.

3.5 Confined Water Training

Confined water training must be conducted in a swimming pool or a confined body of water with the following conditions:

1. A minimum of approximately 3 metres / 10 feet of visibility
2. Calm surface conditions
3. Easy access to depths that allow students to stand with their head above water
4. Depths that allow skills, as defined in the confined water lesson guide, to be adequately demonstrated
5. Equipment appropriate for the training site
6. Confined water training sites other than pools, must be approved by SDI Headquarters

3.6 Open Water Training

The instructor, with the following considerations, must carefully choose an open water training site:

1. Body of water similar to the regional diving conditions (ocean, lake, etc)
2. Swimming pools are not considered an open water environment
3. Water clarity
4. Temperature above and below the water
5. Weather conditions
6. Water access
7. Equipment adequate for the conditions
8. Thermal protection appropriate for the conditions
9. No dives are to require a decompression stop
10. A complete briefing that includes:
 - a. The dive site
 - b. Water conditions
 - c. Skills to be performed
 - d. Entry/Exit to be used
 - e. Emergency procedures
11. A complete debriefing that includes:
 - a. Performance of divers as a whole
 - b. Areas that need improvement
 - c. Environmental observations
 - d. Question and answers

3.7 Student – Minimum Equipment Requirements

The students must have the following equipment:

1. Mask, fins and snorkel
2. Buoyancy compensator device (BCD) with a low-pressure power inflator
3. Regulator with submersible pressure gauge
4. Alternate air source
5. Weight system
6. Personal dive computer (PDC)
7. Exposure suit adequate for the training conditions
8. Compressed gas cylinder
9. Compass; during navigation skills
10. Knife or cutting device
11. Rescue signal

Note: Students wearing air integrated hose-less computers are not required to carry a submersible pressure gauge.

3.8 Instructor – Minimum Equipment Requirements

Unless otherwise noted, the minimum equipment requirements for training by an instructor, assistant instructor and divemaster is as follows:

1. Mask, fins, and snorkel
2. Buoyancy compensator device (BCD) with a low-pressure power inflator
3. Regulator with submersible pressure gauge
4. Alternate air source
5. Weight system
6. Personal dive computer (PDC)
7. Exposure suit adequate for the training conditions
8. Compressed gas cylinder
9. Compass
10. Cutting device
11. Rescue signal
12. A dive flag must be carried in accordance with local laws or regulations for all open water locations

Note: Instructors wearing air integrated hose-less computers are not required to carry a submersible pressure gauge.

Note: Cylinder capacities used in the SDI Standards are based on manufacturer values or generalized conversions and are NOT exact conversions from metric to imperial due to variance in cylinder volume and working pressures. If you use metric cylinders, please use the metric size cylinder listed; likewise, if you use imperial cylinders, please use the imperial size cylinder listed, I.E. 3 litres / 18 cubic ft.

3.9 Temporary Certification Cards

Temporary cards are available for purchase from SDI and can be issued after all performance requirements and administrative requirements are met. The temporary cards are valid for 30 days from the signing and must be signed within 10 days of the course completion.

3.10 Qualification Procedures for Teaching a Specialty Course

To qualify to teach a specialty, the instructor must:

1. An active teaching SDI Instructor
2. Provide proof of 25 logged dives in the specialty being applied for

3. Complete the *SDI Specialty Instructor upgrade* form, agree to use the latest approved SDI Specialty outlines, and provide dive history relevant to the specialty course requested

OR

1. Provide proof of 10 logged dives in the specialty being applied for
2. Complete the relevant SDI Specialty Instructor Course with an SDI Instructor Trainer qualified as an instructor in that specialty
3. Complete the *SDI Specialty Instructor upgrade* form and agree to use the latest approved SDI Specialty outlines

Note:

1. Some courses such as VIP courses do require a specific instructor course be taken before the instructor may actually teach the course – reference Part 4 of the SDI Standards for such instructor courses
2. In order to be an instructor for the SDI Solo Diver Specialty Course, the instructor must:
 - a. Minimum age 21
 - b. Have 1 year teaching experience
 - c. Have certified 50 or more students at various diver levels
 - d. This rating may be obtained by administrative upgrade, or by completing a course with an SDI Solo Diver Instructor Trainer but the prerequisites must be met either way
3. Assistant instructors and Non-Diving Specialty Instructors must complete all specialty instructor courses with a qualified SDI Instructor Trainer

3.11 Combining Specialties

With the exception of SDI Deep Diver and SDI Computer Diver, *none* of the SDI Specialties may be combined into one program. An instructor may teach more than one specialty per day, but the courses must be taught separately.

Altitude, Boat, Computer Nitrox, Dry Suit, and Shore/Beach Divers specialties may be combined with an SDI Open Water Diver course. No other specialty course may be combined with the SDI Open Water Scuba Diver course. The student must complete an academic review and receive the appropriate pool/confined water training prior to open water training. To receive both the SDI Open Water Scuba Diver certification and the additional specialty certification, the student must complete 5 total scuba dives.

3.12 Procedure for Creating a Unique Specialty

Instructors often create their own specialties and wish to have a certification issued by SDI. The procedures for getting a unique specialty approved are as follows.

The instructor must:

1. Be an active teaching SDI Instructor
2. Provide proof of 25 dives in the specialty being applied for
3. Complete the *SDI Specialty Instructor upgrade* form
4. Submit an outline, in the same format as the core SDI Specialties, for approval by SDI Headquarters
5. SDI Headquarters must approve the outline before the course can be taught

3.13 Upgrading from SDI Junior certification to full SDI certification

This procedure is for divers who were initially certified with the Junior designation and are now eligible to upgrade to the full certification without age related restrictions.

Upgrade Requirements

1. Provide verification of initial certification: certification card or formal verification letter on agency letterhead
2. Provide verification of diving activity in the last 12 months: logbook or personal dive computer download*
3. Divers who are under the age of 18 must provide letter of approval to upgrade signed by parent or legal guardian

*If recent diving activity cannot be produced, diver will be directed to their nearest SDI Dive Center or equivalent to complete the Inactive Diver / Refresher program with an active Instructor.

Upon successful completion of the SDI Inactive Diver/Refresher program or equivalent, active Instructors must: provide a signed letter of update completion or signed log book entry for Junior diver to submit to SDI World Headquarters or Regional Office.

Processing Procedure – Contact SDI World Headquarters or Regional Office. Submit appropriate documentation in accordance with upgrade requirements. After providing all required items and purchasing new certification card, certification to be issued and credential sent to student.