

University of North Carolina Wilmington
AUTHORIZATION FOR SNORKELING AND FREE DIVING

UNCW recognizes that snorkeling is a valid and effective scientific diving technique. Although snorkeling is less technically complex than other diving methods, there are inherent risks associated with snorkeling which must be considered, including physical and physiological stress of breath-hold diving, pressure-related injuries, dangerous marine life, injury or entanglement. Therefore, the Diving Safety Officer (with oversight from the UNCW Diving Control Board) has been designated the authority to regulate scientific snorkeling and free diving activities conducted under the auspices of the University of NC Wilmington.

To initiate authorization for snorkeling and free diving activity:

- Submit a snorkeling checkout request in writing to the DSO
- Complete the UNCW Participant Information Form* if you don't have one on file with the DSO.
- Hold current certifications in First Aid and CPR*

Snorkeling and Free Diving Checkout

The applicant who is **not a certified diver or a participant in a summer camp (e.g. MarineQuest)** shall successfully perform the following skills in the presence of the DSO or his designee in confined water.

- Surface swim for 100 yards using a purposeful stroke without stopping.
- Swim for a length of 10 yards underwater.
- Tread water for 3 minutes.
- Mask removal/replacement/clearing
- Snorkel clearing
- Use of appropriate surface flotation equipment (if applicable)
- Appropriate use of the buddy system
- Appropriate entry and exits

The DSO or his designee will review with **all** snorkelers:

1. Requirements for a snorkeling plan
2. Responsibilities for swimmer supervision and swim partners
3. Risks associated with snorkel and free dive activities

* Not required for MarineQuest participants

Requirements for Snorkeling and Free Diving Operations

- Minimum equipment shall include mask, fins, snorkel and divers flag. An inflated surface flotation device such as a snorkel vest or buoyancy compensator will be required for snorkelers who did not demonstrate strong swimming skills during the confined water evaluation.
- The team shall consist of a minimum of two qualified individuals. The minimum safety equipment required include a divers flag with float, first aid kit, and a cell phone or VHF radio.
- The divers flag must be prominently displayed at the dive site. Divers must remain within 50' of the dive flag/float.
- The dive leader will provide a surface briefing that reviews the safety plan and any underwater and surface hazards. All snorkelers are to be made aware that any individual that feels uncomfortable about the swim situation may choose not to participate without any repercussions.

For any questions please contact:

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