



Safety Bulletin EM 385-1-1

Mobile District Safety and Occupational Health Office

Bulletin 53-09

Diving Operations – Standby Divers

The 15 September 2008 Safety Manual (yellow book) is now in effect for most new contracts and government operations. Please note the changes for diving operations as stated below.

30.B.03 A standby diver will be provided whenever a diver(s) is in the water to serve as immediate emergency assistance to the primary diver(s). Untethered SCUBA divers, working in “buddy” pairs, shall have one standby at the surface for each pair. A standby will deploy only after the dive supervisor assesses the situation and instructs him/ her to do so.

a. The standby diver shall be fully equipped to dive and readily available the entire time the diver is in the water. The standby shall don all specific gear (suits, harnesses, and equipment) they will wear/use and test all for proper operation before the primary diver leaves the surface. All gear shall be maintained operational and ready for immediate use for the duration of the dive. If any of the tested gear is exchanged or replaced during the dive, it shall be donned and tested by the standby.

b. The standby diver shall be dressed appropriately for the water and air temperature and remain fully suited up with helmet/ mask ready for immediate donning from the time the primary diver leaves the surface until reaching the work area/ working depth. At that point, the standby may remove the portions of his or her gear needed to prevent heat/cold stress and prevent fatigue. If the AHA identifies a need for the standby to remain fully dressed to deploy, it will address measures that will be taken to control these hazards (i.e., standby in water at surface). Any gear that has been removed must be maintained ready for immediate donning and use, accessible to the standby at the entry to the water.

c. If configuration of the surface staging area prevents safe, immediate entry of the standby into the water, the standby diver will be placed in the water fully dressed prior to the primary diver leaving the surface, and remain at the surface ready for deployment if needed.

