



**Tonto Rim Search and Rescue (TRSAR)
DIVE TEAM
Standard Operating Procedures
P.O. Box 357, Pine, AZ 85544**

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SECTION I. MISSION

The mission of the TRSAR Dive Team is to provide safe, effective, and professional public safety diving operations in support of search, rescue, recovery, evidence collection, and emergency response missions conducted under the authority of the Gila County Sheriff's Office and Tonto Rim Search and Rescue. Operations should prioritize rescuer safety while providing technical underwater capabilities to support public safety incidents within the operational area and during mutual aid assignments.

SECTION II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this SOP is to establish minimum operational, safety, training, certification, and administrative standards for TRSAR Dive Team personnel.

This SOP provides the operational framework for dive operations while referencing the current SAFE Diving Manual as the governing technical and procedural document for detailed dive practices, equipment standards, medical guidance, contamination control, emergency procedures, and operational risk management.

All dive team members shall operate in accordance with:

- The current SAFE Diving Manual
- Applicable OSHA regulations
- Applicable NFPA standards
- Applicable certifying agency standards
- Direction of the Designated Person In Charge (DPIC)

SECTION III. REFERENCES

A. External Certifications

Dive personnel may maintain certifications through recognized agencies including:

- ERDI
- SDI/TDI
- PADI
- NAUI
- SSI
- Other approved equivalent agencies

Minimum operational certifications may include:

- Open Water Diver
- Advanced Open Water Diver
- Rescue Diver

- Dry Suit Diver
- Full Face Mask Diver
- Public Safety Diver
- Dive Tender
- Dive Supervisor
- Emergency Oxygen Administration
- CPR/First Aid

B. Training and Evaluation References

The following documents and standards serve as references for dive operations:

- TRSAR/GCSO SAFE Diving Manual
- OSHA 29 CFR 1910 Subpart T – Commercial Diving Operations
- ERDI Training Manual
- NIMS/ICS principles
- Manufacturer specifications for all diving equipment

SECTION IV. CERTIFICATION LEVELS

A. Dive Team Member: Probationary Diver (Level I)

Role:

Entry-level dive team member participating in training and support functions under direct supervision.

Authorized Activities:

- Participate in training evolutions
- Function as a tender or support member
- Participate in supervised dive operations
- Assist with equipment setup and rehabilitation

Requirements:

- Minimum Open Water certification
- Current CPR and First Aid certification
- Completion of watermanship skills
- Approval by Dive Team Coordinator
- Demonstration of safe operational behavior

B. Dive Team Member: Mission Ready Diver (Level II)

Role:

Qualified operational diver authorized to participate in mission dives and training operations.

Authorized Activities:

- Conduct operational dives
- Conduct search and recovery operations
- Operate in contaminated water conditions as assigned
- Utilize approved search patterns and communications systems

Requirements:

- Advanced Open Water certification
- Rescue Diver certification
- Full Face Mask certification
- Dry Suit certification
- Demonstrated proficiency in:
 - Search patterns

- Communications
- Line tending
- Emergency procedures
- Equipment operations
- Annual watermanship evaluation
- Current CPR, First Aid, and Oxygen Administration certifications

C. Dive Team Member: Dive Supervisor / DPIC (Level III)

Role:

Operational supervisor responsible for management and safety of dive operations.

Authorized Activities:

- Serve as Designated Person In Charge (DPIC)
- Supervise training and mission operations
- Conduct risk assessments
- Approve dive plans and assignments
- Modify operational procedures based on mission needs

Requirements:

- Minimum two years of public safety diving experience
- Demonstrated leadership and operational competency
- Knowledge of:
 - Dive planning
 - Emergency procedures
 - Hazard assessment
 - Contaminated water operations
 - Equipment maintenance
 - Documentation requirements
- Approval by TRSAR leadership and Dive Team Coordinator

SECTION V. CERTIFICATION PROCESS

A. Entry and Training Participation

1. Applicants shall complete a team orientation and evaluation process.
2. Applicants must demonstrate professionalism, teamwork, and operational maturity.
3. Participation in training does not guarantee operational assignment.

B. Initial Certification: Probationary Diver (Level I)

1. Complete minimum certification requirements.
2. Demonstrate safe diving practices.
3. Complete supervised operational evaluations.

C. Secondary Certification: Mission Ready Diver (Level II)

1. Complete required advanced certifications.
2. Demonstrate operational competency.
3. Successfully complete mission readiness evaluation.

D. Advanced Certification: Dive Supervisor / DPIC (Level III)

1. Demonstrate advanced operational leadership.
2. Complete supervisory evaluations.

3. Receive approval from team leadership.

SECTION VI. SAFETY STANDARDS

Safety is the highest operational priority during all dive operations.

Operational Safety Requirements

1. All dive operations shall comply with the SAFE Diving Manual.
2. A minimum dive team staffing shall be maintained during operation dives when possible, of:
 - Primary Diver
 - Tender
 - Safety Diver
 - Safety Diver Tender
3. A designated DPIC shall supervise all dive operations.
4. A Dive Safety Officer may be assigned for training or complex operations.
5. Dive personnel retain the authority to refuse unsafe operations.
6. Diving operations shall cease when:
 - Communications are lost
 - Environmental conditions become unsafe
 - PPE integrity is compromised
 - Air emergencies occur
 - Any team member identifies unsafe conditions
7. Hazard assessments shall be completed prior to all dive operations.
8. Water contamination levels shall be evaluated, and appropriate PPE selected.
9. Mixed gas and hookah diving operations are prohibited unless specifically approved through a separate operational policy.
10. Scuba diving operations shall not exceed:
 - 100 feet depth
 - No-decompression limits
 - Currents exceeding 1.5 knots
11. Divers shall maintain a minimum reserve pressure of 500 PSI upon surfacing.
12. Operational two-way communications shall be utilized whenever possible.
13. All divers shall carry a minimum of two cutting devices.
14. Emergency oxygen and first aid equipment shall be immediately available at all dive scenes.

SECTION VII. DIVE OPERATIONS

A. Pre-Dive Operations

Prior to dive operations:

1. A pre-dive briefing shall be conducted.
2. Dive assignments shall be established.
3. Hazard assessments shall be completed.
4. Equipment inspections shall be completed.
5. Emergency procedures shall be reviewed.
6. Diver's health and fitness shall be confirmed.
7. Dive plans and search patterns shall be established.

B. Dive Operations

During dive operations:

1. Divers shall remain continuously tended.
2. Dive profiles shall be tracked and documented.
3. Communications shall be maintained.
4. Safety divers shall remain immediately available.
5. DPIC shall monitor operational conditions continuously.

C. Post-Dive Operations

Following dive operations:

1. Divers shall complete post-dive medical and equipment evaluations.
2. Contaminated equipment shall be decontaminated appropriately.
3. Damaged equipment shall be removed from service.
4. Dive documentation shall be completed.
5. Post-incident briefings shall be conducted.

SECTION VIII. EQUIPMENT STANDARDS

1. All dive equipment shall be maintained in accordance with manufacturer specifications.
2. Equipment inspections and maintenance shall be documented.
3. Only approved and serviceable equipment shall be utilized.
4. Regulators, cylinders, compressors, hoses, and gauges shall be inspected and tested at required intervals.
5. Breathing air shall meet Grade E breathing air standards.
6. All divers shall utilize standardized equipment configurations whenever practical.

SECTION IX. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

1. All personnel shall participate in regular training.
2. Training shall include:
 - Search patterns
 - Communications
 - Rescue procedures
 - Contaminated water operations
 - Rigging and recovery
 - Emergency procedures
3. Annual watermanship evaluations shall be completed.
4. Retraining shall occur whenever deficiencies are identified.
5. All training shall be documented.

SECTION X. MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Divers shall maintain current medical clearance for diving activities.
2. Medical evaluations shall comply with recognized diving medical standards.
3. Divers shall immediately report injuries, illnesses, or medical conditions affecting dive safety.
4. Diving after illness, injury, medication use, or exposure incidents may require medical clearance prior to return to operations.

SECTION XI. RECORDKEEPING

The following records shall be maintained:

- Diver certifications

- Medical clearances
- Training records
- Dive logs
- Equipment maintenance records
- Compressor and air quality records
- Incident and injury documentation

Records shall be maintained in accordance with applicable OSHA and agency requirements.

SECTION XII. OPERATIONAL AUTHORITY

The Designated Person In Charge (DPIC) has authority over all operational dive activities during training and mission operations. The DPIC may modify operational procedures when necessary to safely conduct search and rescue missions, provided such deviations are reasonable, justified by operational necessity, and prioritize responder safety.

SECTION XIII. REVIEW CYCLE

This SOP shall be reviewed every two (2) years or as operational needs dictate.

The SAFE Diving Manual shall remain the governing technical reference for all dive operations and may be updated independently of this SOP.

Approved by: TRSAR Board of Directors

Effective Date: 05/13/2026

Review Cycle: Every two (2) years