



UH DIVING SAFETY PROGRAM

COVID Advisory #6: Summer and Fall 2020 UH SDQC's Cancelled

June 29, 2020

Upon the unanimous recommendation of the UH Diving Safety Program's Diving Safety Officer, Unit Diving Coordinators and Scientific Diver Trainers, and with the concurrence of the UH Diving Control Board, UH Scientific Diver Qualification Courses (SDQC) scheduled for late Summer and Fall 2020 are cancelled due to risks and uncertainties associated with the ongoing SARS-CoVi2 (SARS2) pandemic in Hawai'i. This includes the intensive SDQC planned in July/August at the Hawaii Institute for Marine Biology and at UH-Hilo, as well as the semester-long Fall SDQC at UH-Manoa.

This reluctant but necessary decision took into account several factors:

- SDQC practical training components are highly interactive, requiring very close personal contact in order to train skills required by AAUS Standards. This is especially true for practice of the emergency response management and rescue components entailing injured diver assists, tows, carries, and extractions. It is the opinion of training staff that current exposure control guidance from training agencies is insufficient to address the increased exposure risks presented by the SARS2-CoVi when performing these skills.
- While Hawai'i's SARS2 public health trends have remained favorable over the spring and early summer, an increase in cases is currently being observed as Hawaii re-opens its economy. With the expected return of many from the mainland in August in anticipation of the UH Fall semester, the situation at that time is expected to be even less certain. This situation may extend well into the Fall semester as our UH community adjusts to the safe behaviors required for the "new normal".
- Local pool facilities for DIT evaluations remain unavailable at present and are likely to remain so until the start of Fall semester.

The prospect for SDQC's in the Spring 2021 SDQC to be revisited during the Fall semester. In the interim, DSP staff on all campuses will work to support completion of training for divers from the Manoa Spring 2020 SDQC, the requalification of previously-trained UH divers, conduct transfer diver qualifications, DIT evaluations, and DFA-Pro refreshers for current divers, as well as being available to support ongoing UH research diving projects as needed. Information on these efforts will be forthcoming, or inquiries can be addressed to uhdsp@hawaii.edu.