

Compliance with Undersea Medicine Guidelines

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Background

General

1. Health services provided to Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) divers and submariners must be IAW Undersea Medicine Guidelines (UMGs) unless otherwise instructed by the Royal Canadian Navy Surgeon (RCN Surgeon) or their delegated authorities.

Application

2. This Policy applies to all CAF personnel, Department of National Defence (DND) Public Servants, contractors, and sub-contractors who provide health services to CAF divers and submariners.

Authorities

Responsibility for the Provision of Health Services to CAF Divers and Submariners

3. Authority and Responsibility for Diving and Submarine Safety in the CAF rests with the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).

4. The Director of Diving Safety (D Dive S) is responsible to the CDS to formulate, oversee and carry out the CAF Diving Safety Program. This includes diving conducted by all branches of the service.

5. The Commander Royal Canadian Navy (CRCN) is responsible to the CDS to maintain the safe operation of submarines through the Submarine Safety (SUBSAFE) Programme across the full spectrum of DND and CAF operations, at home and abroad.

6. The Surgeon General (Surg Gen) has the responsibility for all clinical decisions made regarding the provision of health services to CAF personnel. In turn, because of the requirements associated with medical certification of divers and submariners, as well as the unique nature of the undersea and hyperbaric environment and its effects, the Surg Gen has assigned the responsibility for establishing medical standards and directing health services for all undersea operators to the RCN Surgeon.

7. The RCN Surgeon (RCN Surg) is the principal Medical Advisor to the Commander RCN and is the Surg Gen's Senior Advisor on Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine. On behalf of the Surg Gen, the RCN Surg advises all branches of the service on the medical aspects of diving safety, and is charged with the development, promulgations, and oversight of medical standards and policies specific to Undersea and Hyperbaric medicine.

8. The Undersea Subcommittee of the Aerospace and Undersea Medicine Board (US-AUMB) serves as an expert clinical advisory board and is charged with providing undersea and hyperbaric medicine advice to the RCN Surg.

Direction

9. The approval for UMGs lies with the RCN Surg, an authority delegated by the Surg Gen. UMGs are a collection of expert clinical practice guidelines designed to optimize the treatment of CAF divers and submariners in a manner compatible with safe and effective undersea operations. UMGs will be released by the RCN Surg or their designate as per standing protocol.

10. As needed, the RCN Surg may call upon the advice of experts to assist in the development of UMGs and related policy. This group of expert advisors may include, among other competent authorities, the following advisory bodies:

- a. Undersea Subcommittee of Aerospace and Undersea Medical Board (US-AUMB);
- b. Diving Occupational Health and Safety Working Group (DOHSWG);
- c. Submarine and Diving Medicine Air Standards Panel. (SDMASP);
- d. Air Quality Working Group (AQWG); and
- e. Submarine Escape Rescue Committee (SERC).

11. The RCN Surg must ensure that UMGs are consistent with CFHS policies and instructions that may be issued by the Surg Gen. The RCN Surg must notify the Surg Gen of any policies or instructions that may require adjustment in the interest of safe

and effective undersea operations. Conversely, UMGs will be reviewed and updates released by RCN Surg or their delegate as required.

12. Routine health services provided to CAF divers and submariners must be in accordance with UMGs at all times. Any deviations from these policies must only be made on a case-by-case basis, and only after consultation with a Consultant in Diving and Submarine Medicine (CDSM), who may in turn consult the US-AUMB. Furthermore, any deviations from policy must be fully documented in the patient chart.

13. Emergency treatment of CAF divers and submariners is exempt from this Policy, but must be IAW relevant best practices, and all other applicable CFHS policies (including but not limited to ref C-D) as per the clinical judgement of the Senior Medical Authority/most qualified Undersea Medicine Clinician, and according to the immediate demands of the situation. Such instances remain subject to the reporting requirements of the Director Diving Safety.

14. All health services provided to CAF divers and submariners, whether routine or emergency, must be subject to periodic review by way of clinical audit for quality assurance purposes.

References

- A. [DAOD 8009-0 Canadian Forces Diving](#)
- B. [DAOD 8009-1 Canadian Forces Diving – Organization and Operating Principals](#)
- C. B-GG-380-000/FP-2 Canadian Armed Forces Diving Manual – Organization and Regulation (english only)
- D. B-GG-380-000/FP-5 Canadian Armed Forces Diving Manual – Hyperbaric Chamber Operation and Treatment Procedures (english only)
- E. [NAVORD 1150-0 Submarine Safety \(SUBSAFE\) Programme – Policy](#)
- F. [NAVORD 1150-1 Submarine Safety \(SUBSAFE\) Programme – Process](#)
- G. Terms of Reference – Royal Canadian Navy Surgeon (english only)
- H. Terms of Reference – Aerospace and Undersea Medical Board (english only)
- I. 3159-1 (D Dive S) 25 Jan 2016 Terms of Reference – Canadian Armed Forces Diving Effectiveness Steering Group (CAFDESG), Annex A
- J. C-29-537-000/MS-001 Air Quality Manual Applicable to Victoria Class