



## Hiring a diver

*Hiring someone to dive for you? A low bid may end up costing more than you realize.*

It's tempting to pay the lowest price when you need a quick dive job done. After all, you could sure use the extra money for something else. But cutting costs by cutting corners when diving can be a fatal mistake.

As with any investment, you should protect yourself against loss in every way possible. When hiring a contractor, remember that divers employed in British Columbia must comply with the requirements of Part 24 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation. Responsibility for compliance applies to you as the employer of the divers, and to the owner of the dive site.

You should also check that the diver or company is registered with WorkSafeBC to protect yourself against liability if an accident occurs. You are responsible for ensuring that your dive contractor meets WorkSafeBC requirements.

### Diving competency

Occupational divers must meet the requirements of *CSA Standard Z275.4-97, Competency Standard for Diving Operations*. Documentation for each certification must be available at the dive site.

Divers, dive supervisors, and diver's tenders must be qualified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), dive accident management, and oxygen therapy. Documentation for those qualifications must be available at the dive site.

Occupational divers must be certified by WorkSafeBC as medically fit to dive. Medical certification must be available at the dive site.

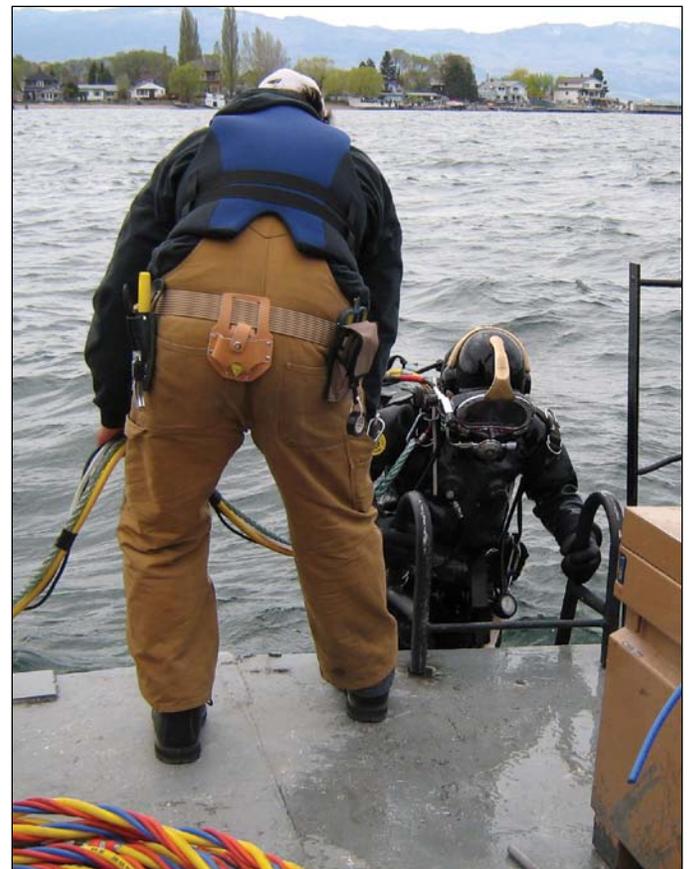
**Note:** Recreational certifications such as PADI or NAUI are not acceptable for occupational diving in B.C.

### Minimum crew

A minimum crew of three must be present at each diving operation and must include at least two divers and a dive supervisor/diver's tender. A larger crew may be required, depending on the depth, equipment usage, degree of hazard, and other conditions.

### Notice of project (NOP) for diving activity

Employers must submit an NOP for diving activity or notify WorkSafeBC by telephone at least 24 hours before starting some diving operations. Refer to section 24.9 of the Regulation for specific requirements.



### Self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (scuba) restrictions

Restrictions apply to the use of scuba for occupational diving. Scuba cannot be used for underwater construction, demolition, salvage and recovery, jetting, blasting, welding or cutting, penetrations, or any situation where the diver is exposed to a hazard such as differentials of pressure, excessive flows, confined spaces, contaminated environments, or entrapment. If scuba is not allowed, surface-supplied diving equipment must be used instead.

## Depth restrictions

Scuba must be limited to a depth of 40 m (130 ft.), and the use of air as a respirable medium is restricted to 50 m (165 ft.). Beyond 50 m, divers must breathe mixed gases and have documented approval on-site from WorkSafeBC to use such gases.

## Standby diver

A standby diver must be on the dive site at all times and available to help when diving operations are in progress. The standby diver must be able to enter the water within one minute.

## Finding the right contractor

Finding a competent and reliable contractor with qualified divers is your first step in a successful diving project. Do not hire uncertified divers who operate door to door. They can be extremely persuasive and frequently target vulnerable boat or home owners. In most cases, the work is done poorly, leaving you facing another bill to have the work done properly.

The more time you spend checking backgrounds and references of possible contractors, the more likely that your job will go smoothly and be done right. If the person or business you hire does not meet the legal requirements, you could be liable for the costs associated with any injuries as well as the costs of delays.

## Am I an employer?

Many boat or home owners don't realize that, under law, they may have to register and pay for workers' compensation coverage when they hire someone to work on their boat or home as an employee (as opposed to hiring a contractor). The reason for this is that if someone you hire gets injured on the job, the costs can be extremely expensive.

## Getting a clearance letter

Many contractors are already registered with WorkSafeBC. If this is the case with your contractor, you may not need to be registered as well. However, you should check the contractor or firm's WorkSafeBC record to protect yourself against liability for unpaid premiums or workers' compensation costs related to your project. Follow these steps:

1. Ask the contractor or firm for their WorkSafeBC account number.
2. Get a clearance letter from WorkSafeBC. This only takes a couple of minutes. Visit [WorkSafeBC.com](http://WorkSafeBC.com) and under "Insurance" click "Get a clearance letter."
3. Follow the prompts on the screen. WorkSafeBC will e-mail you a clearance letter that will confirm whether the contractor is registered with WorkSafeBC and if the contractor's premiums are up to date.

Be sure to check the contractor's record at least twice: before hiring them and then again before making your final payment. If you don't have Internet access, contact the Clearance Section at 604 244-6380 or toll-free at 1 888 922-2768. You can receive a letter by fax or mail.

## What to do if your contractor is not registered

Contact the Employer and Small Business Centre at 604 244-6181 or toll-free at 1 888 922-2768. Our representatives will help you determine who needs to be registered with WorkSafeBC — you or your contractor. You can also find information about registration requirements at [WorkSafeBC.com](http://WorkSafeBC.com). Under "Insurance" click "Register for coverage."

## Owner's responsibility

An owner who contracts a diving company to work at a site must provide the company with the information necessary to control hazards. The owner must also ensure that diving activities are coordinated.

For more information, call WorkSafeBC at 604 276-3100 or toll-free 1 888 621-7233, and ask for the diving coordinator.



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