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01 Feb 2024	28 Feb 2026	SHEQ Warehouse (Pty) Ltd	Neville
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Commercial Diving Regulations, 2022

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1. Definitions

Defines key terms used in the regulations including types of diving operations, equipment, personnel roles, and technical terminology relevant to commercial diving.

2. Scope of application

2(1) These regulations apply to all diving operations performed in the Republic of South Africa, with certain exceptions. 2(2) Exemptions include:

- Diving operations governed by the Mines and Works Act, 1956
- Recreational and sport diving not performed for commercial gain
- Scientific diving by researchers with appropriate training
- Diving conducted by the South African Police Service, South African National Defence Force, or other law enforcement agencies
- Medical hyperbaric chambers that do not support diving operations

3. Diving operations

3(1) Requires diving operations to be preceded by notification to the provincial chief inspector, except in emergency medical treatment situations. 3(2) Employers must ensure compliance with:

- Classification of diving operations according to depth, mode, environment, and associated hazards
- Implementation of appropriate diving mode when required
- Risk assessment and site-specific plan for each diving operation
- Ensuring divers have required qualifications
- Availability of standby divers when diving



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- Provision of two-way communication between supervisors and divers
- Written emergency procedures
- Medical examination of divers
- Assessment of changes in weather or diving site conditions

4. Medical examination requirements for divers

4(1) Examinations must be conducted by registered occupational medicine practitioners with training in diving medicine. 4(2) Requires medical examinations:

- Initially upon application for diving qualification
- Annually thereafter
- Following any diving-related injuries or illnesses
- Following any illness causing absence of 14 days or more
- After diagnosed decompression sickness affecting the central nervous system

5. Diving team size and responsibilities

5(1) The minimum diving team consists of four competent persons:

- A diving supervisor
- A working diver
- A standby diver
- A diver's tender

5(2) The minimum team for bell diving operations consists of six competent persons:

- A diving supervisor
- Two working divers
- A standby diver
- Two mechanical technical support personnel

5(3) The minimum team for saturation diving operations is determined by risk assessment and operational requirements.

6. Diving supervisor

6(1) Employers must designate in writing a diving supervisor for each diving operation. 6(2) Diving supervisors must:

- Ensure proper planning, risk assessment, and implementation of safe diving procedures
- Ensure all team members are qualified and fit to perform their duties
- Maintain communication with divers
- Ensure proper equipment maintenance
- Keep diving records



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- Conduct emergency drills
- Stop operations when safety is compromised

7. Risk assessment and emergency planning requirements

7(1) Employers must conduct and document risk assessments for all diving operations. 7(2) Risk assessments must consider all factors that could affect diver safety. 7(3) Requires development of a site-specific plan for every diving operation. 7(4) Requires written emergency plan with specific procedures for various diving emergencies. 7(5) Emergency plans must include details of nearest medical facilities, contact numbers, evacuation procedures, and contingency plans.

8. Depth limitations for diving operations

8(1) Restricts specific diving operations to the following maximum depths:

- SCUBA diving: 30 meters
- Surface-supplied diving using air: 50 meters
- Surface-supplied diving using mixed gas: 100 meters
- Surface-supplied diving from a dynamically positioned vessel: 75 meters
- Saturation diving: As specified by approved code of practice

8(2) Any diving operations beyond these limits require prior approval from the provincial chief inspector.

9. Registration of commercial divers

9(1) Applications for registration as a commercial diver must be submitted to the provincial chief inspector. 9(2) Registration requirements include:

- Proof of qualification by accredited organization
- Valid medical certificate of fitness
- Registration fee of R500
- Two passport photographs

9(3) Registration is valid for 24 months. 9(4) Applications for renewal must be made at least 90 days before expiry. 9(5) The chief inspector may cancel or suspend registration for health or disciplinary reasons.

10. Duties of divers

10(1) Divers must:

- Maintain valid medical certificates of fitness
- Comply with all regulations and safety procedures



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- Report any defects in equipment
- Report any illness or injury
- Maintain personal logbooks

10(2) Prohibits diving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs that could affect safety.

10(3) Requires divers to inform supervisors of any physical or psychological condition that could affect diving safety.

11. Diving equipment

11(1) Equipment requirements include:

- Compliance with national or international standards
- Regular maintenance, testing, and certification
- Pre-dive checks and verification
- Written records of maintenance

11(2) All diving operations must have appropriate emergency and first aid equipment. 11(3) Equipment must be appropriate for the diving mode and environmental conditions.

12. Standby divers

12(1) Standby divers must be:

- Qualified for the diving mode in use
- Dressed and ready to enter the water
- Positioned to reach the working diver within one minute
- Able to render assistance to working divers

12(2) Standby divers may not engage in tasks that would prevent immediate response to emergencies.

13. Hazardous diving conditions

13(1) Additional safety measures are required when diving in potentially hazardous conditions. 13(2) Diving in contaminated water requires:

- Appropriate equipment to prevent contamination exposure
- Decontamination procedures for equipment and personnel
- Environmental monitoring when necessary

13(3) Diving near underwater obstructions requires appropriate safety measures. 13(4) Diving in areas with ship movement requires notification to vessel traffic services. 13(5) Cold water diving requires appropriate thermal protection.



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14. Compression chambers

14(1) A compression chamber must be available within two hours of diving operations deeper than 10 meters. 14(2) A compression chamber must be on-site for diving operations:

- Deeper than 50 meters
- Requiring decompression stops longer than 20 minutes
- In remote locations
- Where evacuation to medical facilities would exceed two hours

14(3) Compression chambers must meet specific technical requirements. 14(4) Chambers must be operated by qualified personnel.

15. Records and logbooks

15(1) Employers must maintain diving operation records for at least 10 years. 15(2) Diving supervisors must record details of each diving operation. 15(3) Each diver must maintain a personal logbook. 15(4) Logbook entries must include detailed information about each dive. 15(5) Equipment maintenance records must be kept for the lifetime of the equipment.

16. Underwater diving operations

16(1) Diving operations from vessels require specific safety measures. 16(2) Diving from dynamically positioned vessels requires additional safety procedures. 16(3) All lifts and underwater construction activities require appropriate planning and supervision. 16(4) Underwater welding and cutting operations require special safety procedures.

17. High-pressure diving operations

17(1) Additional requirements for diving operations deeper than 50 meters. 17(2) Mixed gas diving operations require specific equipment and procedures. 17(3) Saturation diving operations must comply with internationally recognized standards.

18. Specialized diving operations

18(1) Requirements for specialized diving techniques such as bell diving. 18(2) Procedures for diving in contaminated environments. 18(3) Requirements for diver lockout operations from submersibles.

19. Scientific and archaeological diving

19(1) Scientific and archaeological diving operations conducted for commercial gain must comply with these regulations. 19(2) Scientific diving teams must include appropriate



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scientific and diving personnel. 19(3) Archaeological diving operations must comply with relevant heritage legislation.

20. Offenses and penalties

20(1) Any person who contravenes these regulations is guilty of an offense. 20(2) Penalties include fines or imprisonment for up to 12 months. 20(3) Continued non-compliance may result in additional penalties.

21. Appeals

21(1) Any person aggrieved by a decision of an inspector may appeal to the chief inspector. 21(2) Appeals against decisions of the chief inspector may be made to the Labour Court.

22. Exemptions

The chief inspector may grant exemptions from any provision of these regulations under specific conditions.

23. Codes of practice

23(1) The chief inspector may approve codes of practice for commercial diving operations. 23(2) Approved codes must be published in the Government Gazette. 23(3) Compliance with approved codes is deemed compliance with these regulations.

24. Technical committees

The chief inspector may establish technical committees to advise on matters related to commercial diving.

25. Document authenticity

All documents issued under these regulations must bear the official stamp of the Department of Employment and Labour.

26. Transitional arrangements

26(1) Existing registrations remain valid until their expiry date. 26(2) Documents issued under previous regulations remain valid for 12 months. 26(3) Applications submitted before the commencement of these regulations will be processed under the previous regulations.

27. Incorporation of standards

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National and international diving standards incorporated by reference into these regulations.

28. Repeal

The Diving Regulations, 2009, published under Government Notice No. R. 41 in Government Gazette No. 32907 of 29 January 2010, are hereby repealed.

29. Short title and commencement

These Regulations are called the Commercial Diving Regulations, 2022, and commence on the date of publication in the Government Gazette.