



Diving Medical Policy

BSAC London No 1

While diving is a relaxing activity most of the time, we are prone to carry heavy equipment and might have to perform high-strain exercise in case of an emergency, when handling gear, diving in a current, or climbing back into the boat. Even without strenuous exercise, being fit is the best way to avoid diving illnesses which increase in likelihood with age. It is therefore vital that club members are up for the task and dive managers can rely on the club to ensure that members signing up for dive trips are medically fit to dive.

While the UK used to have a mandatory annual diving medical until the early 2000s, this is no longer the case and currently there is no national recommendation on the subject. BSAC has no recommendation either and the only direct statements from UK sources on diving medicals for recreational diving can be found directly from healthcare providers who put additional requirements on when in-person medical evaluations are necessary. Below are [Recommendations from various sources](#) including UK sources as well as DAN, the World Underwater Federation CMAS, peer countries (Germany and France), and diving medicine research societies.

Based on the recommendation given in the UK as well as the recommendations given by internationally acclaimed research institutions on the age ranges and intervals for in-person diving medical evaluations, we expect club members to follow the recommendation below.

Condition	Dive Medical Procedure
Asymptomatic divers under 60 years of age	BSAC Self-Declaration Form, regular Dive Medical Evaluations are encouraged
Asymptomatic divers aged 60 to 69	Dive Medical Evaluation every 2 years
Asymptomatic divers aged 70 and above	Dive Medical Evaluation annually
Divers with history of diving related illnesses such as DCI	Dive Medical Evaluation after incident, then following doctor's advice or procedures as outlined above

Recommendations from various sources

BSAC HQ

BSAC has no recommendations for diving medicals other than an interview with a doctor at [DDRC Healthcare](#). In the associated [blog post](#), they reference:

Age	Interval for a face-to-face dive medical
60-65 years	5 yearly
65-70 years	3 yearly
70-75 years	2 yearly
75+ years	Annually

DDRC Healthcare

DDRC Healthcare is a Plymouth-based specialist in diving medicine, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, and medical training. They make no direct statement about diving medicals other than:

“If you are aged over 60 [...] you will require an in-person sports diver medical.”

UKDMC

The UK Diving Medical Committee makes no recommendation.

CMAS Europe

CMAS is the World Underwater Federation which represents underwater activities in underwater sport and underwater sciences, and oversees an international system of recreational snorkel and scuba diver training and recognition. Almost all countries have national CMAS member federations and BSAC was a founding member of CMAS.

While CMAS Europe does not set any intervals for diving medicals, they are giving [recommendations on risk factors](#). In particular

“Relative Risk refers to a moderate increase in risk, which in some instances may be acceptable. To make a decision as to whether diving is contraindicated for this category of medical problems, physicians must base their judgment on an assessment of the individual candidate.”

These include:

“risk factors such as age >45 years, hypertension, smoking, elevated cholesterol and a positive family history may indicate investigation for coronary artery disease”

And their recommendation is:

“Asymptomatic candidates over 45 years of age with risk factors for coronary artery disease should undergo evaluation by a physician.”

Divers Alert Network

The Divers Alert Network (DAN) is a non-profit organization that provides expert medical advice to divers, conducts research into diving medical conditions and risk factors, provides diver safety and medical training, and is a world-leading diving insurance provider. DAN has published their Guidelines for Lifelong Medical Fitness to Dive which include the [Schedule for Lifelong Medical Fitness to Dive Evaluation](#). Many professional diving organizations in the [World Recreational SCUBA Training Council](#) directly implement the DAN recommendations.

Who	When	What
Candidates for Entry Level or continuous education training	Pre-participation	Self-Declaration Form
Healthy Divers	Annually	Self-Declaration Form
Asymptomatic divers with two or more risk factors (smoking or vaping, high blood pressure, obesity, high cholesterol, family history of heart disease or premature death, lack of exercise)	Every 5 years	Diving Medical Evaluation
Healthy divers > 45 years of age		
Pre-existing conditions of heart, lungs, blood, metabolism, neuro-psychiatric conditions, or any other condition that affects the ability to exercise or effectively dive without assistance	Annually	Diving Medical Evaluation
Healthy divers > 65 years of age		
Acute illness	After regaining before-illness exercise capacity, before returning to diving	Self-Declaration Form

GTÜM

The “Deutsche Gesellschaft für Tauch- und Überdruckmedizin e. V.” [GTÜM] (engl. German Society of Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine) is a non-profit organization conducting medical research about safety in diving and hyperbaric medicine. They publish recommendations on fitness to dive standards for physicians and advise the German, Austrian, and Swiss CMAS member federations on diving medical intervals. In particular, they have authored the Fitness to Dive Checklist (Gentner Verlag, Stuttgart 2014, ISBN 978-3-87247-747-7). Their [recommendations](#) on diving medicals have been implemented by the [German CMAS member federation](#).

Age	Interval
Between 16 and 39 years old	Diving Medical Evaluation every 3 years (recently reduced from every 2 years)
15 or younger 40 and older	Annual Diving Medical Evaluation

SPUMS

The South Pacific Underwater Medicine Society [SPUMS] have published their [Guidelines on Medical Risk Assessment for Recreational Diving](#) which

“recommends that divers should be re-assessed at intervals of no more than five years after the age of 45, even in the absence of other health issues.”

France

The [French law mandates](#) for everyone to hold a medical certificate no older than a year to be able to dive with any diving organization or dive operator (that excludes diving on your own, possibly with friends, outside of any organization – which is not regulated by that law). The only exception is for discovery dives, which do not have any such requirement.