

Staying Safe on a VSAG Dive Day

by Lloyd Borrett, VSAG.

The Victorian Sub-Aqua Group (VSAG) takes its motto of “Safety in Diving” seriously. We have certain codes for safe diving, make recommendations to members and boat owners about equipment, plus provide additional safety equipment for member use. But there is only so much VSAG can do. Ultimately, your safety on a VSAG dive day comes down to your attitude and decisions.

Since joining VSAG back in 2006, I’ve always considered it my responsibility to

do everything I can to ensure my safety out on a VSAG dive day. This started with adjusting some elements of my dive gear so as to be more suitable for diving from small boats, plus getting some extra dive kit. But more importantly, I also took it upon myself to learn more about small boat diving, plus many other aspects of diving safely.

Listen to the Safety Briefing

Many of the VSAG boat owners give a **Safety Briefing** before they head out. It’s there for a reason. Even on an airline, passengers are asked to pay attention no matter how frequent a flyer you are, because although the brief appears



Photo: David Reinhard — John Lawler’s boat *Miles Ahead*, 1 August 2012.



Lloyd Borrett gives a boat safety briefing aboard *Raydon*.

consistent, there are subtle differences between each aircraft.

Now compare that fact with the different dive boats you have been on. Things can happen remarkably quickly at sea and being able to remember where the life-jackets are, or even just the O2 kit for a DCI incident, will help you respond quickly and in a controlled manner.

Having listened to the Safety Briefing, it can be helpful to run through in your mind some simple ‘what if’ scenarios so that you better imbed the Safety Briefing in your mind.

Buoyancy Control

Scuba diving has three essential skills: breathing, buoyancy control and surfacing before the gas supply runs out. All other skills are add-ons, although they will make any dive more comfortable and safer. Of the three major skills, breathing will have been mastered prior to scuba

training, and surfacing before the gas supply runs out should be fairly easy to master. **The major skill to learn and keep monitoring is buoyancy control.**

How do you decide if your own buoyancy control is good? Do you sink or ascend if you stop finning? Are you known to kick silt up? Can you ascend a shot line without holding on? Can you hold a 3 or 5 metre stop at the end of the dive, with low cylinder contents?

Here’s a simple test. Swim horizontally at an underwater object. If you breathe in, you should rise slightly, and if you breathe out, you should sink slightly. Do you?

Does it matter? Well, **many diving incidents have deficient buoyancy at their basis.** So yes, it matters!

I record the gear I use and the weight I’m using for **every** dive in my logbook. Thus I can easily lookup what weight I should need for different dive configurations.



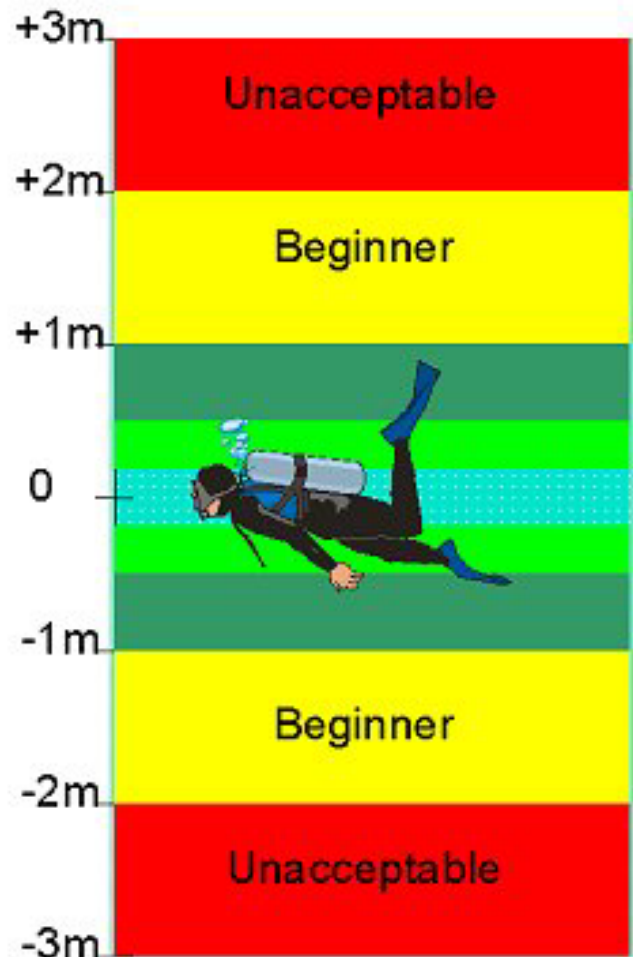
This is a buoyancy control exercise, not meditation. Try it sometime.

Then I check my buoyancy and trim in the water. If I think it's a bit off, I make a mental note to **do a proper buoyancy check at the end of the dive**. With 50 bar left in my cylinder(s) (I'll dump air to achieve this), I want to be neutrally buoyant at 3 metres with no air in my BCD. If that's possible, then my ballast weight is correct for the dive configuration I'm using. Of course, if you're in a dry suit, you also need to have very little air in your dry suit. Just enough to prevent pinching. No more.

I'm steadily getting better at this buoyancy control lark. What I find helps is **setting goals**. I'm getting close to being 100% confident I can maintain a position in the water ± 0.5 metres no matter what happens. Eventually I expect to be able to do better than this and get to ± 0.2 metres, even in very stressful situations where dive buddies are panicking, whilst multitasking (which of course for any bloke is virtually impossible even when on dry land!), gas switching, shutdown drills at a 3 metre stop, mask clearing, and deploying DSMBs. But it's going to be a long process to get there.

First rule is to try to keep breathing normally, instead of falling into the trap of holding your breath when concentrating on a task.

And you need to be progressive. Don't try and maintain your buoyancy within too tight a range at the beginning. Aim



Buoyancy control range chart.

for ± 1 metres at first. Then $\pm 1 - 0.5$ metres, and finally ± 0.2 metres.

Try and get it a bit better on every dive, but don't become obsessive (is it really me saying that). Of course, when you think you have really sussed it, something will happen to shatter your confidence.

Once you think you have a goal sorted, start to task load yourself by checking your gas, or writing on a slate with a reference in sight such as the bottom, or a marker on the shot line, and then moving on to deploying DSMBs.

Make sure your trim is correct. By this I mean adjust your weighting and kit configuration so you can sit totally horizontal in the water and totally stop finning whilst maintaining your buoyancy. It's more difficult that it sounds.

Good buoyancy and trim is so important because a relaxed and comfortable diver is experiencing very much lower stress levels, both physical and psychological. Consequently such a diver is much more able to deal with any unforeseen problems in a logical and methodical way, use less gas, reduce his/her propensity to suffer many diving ailments and enjoy their diving more.

Diving happiness is fine buoyancy control and good trim. After all, one of the attractions for many in diving is the enjoyment of the feeling of weightlessness. The ability to move almost effortlessly in three dimensions once achieved properly, not only makes diving easy, but also allows you to do other things, like take pictures or resolve minor problems, without task loading.

Weighty Issues

I've seen a few VSAG divers who have problems keeping a weight belt on. A suitable weight harness is an effective solution, provided you take into account how it needs to be used when diving from small dive boats.

When I started diving I used a weight harness instead of a weight belt, as I couldn't get a weight belt to stay on my hips. This meant I had to take off my BC before removing the weight harness. Not a problem on a charter boat where you climb out with everything on and take off your BCD while aboard. But a bit of a problem getting back aboard a small dive boat where you take off the BCD in the water. You suddenly become very negatively buoyant and are dragged underwater unless you can tread water strongly. Oops!

While the weight pockets in my first weight harness were able to be ditched in an emergency, this wasn't something you wanted to do at the end of every dive, because putting the weight harness back together was so complicated.

The simple solution was to add integrated weight pockets to my BCD and transfer enough of the weight to the integrated weight pockets. I could remove these weight pockets and pass them up. Then with my BCD off, the weight I had left in my weight harness was now such that I could still be buoyant on the surface. I then removed my weight harness and passed it up, before climbing aboard.

When my partner Cheryl Lees started diving, I found her a weight harness where it was possible to remove the two weight pockets of the weight harness and pass them up. And when my old weight



Lloyd Borrett's custom weight harness based on Apeks weight pockets.

harness finally needed to be replaced, I sourced Apeks removable weight pockets and had a weight harness made up by Oceansuits in Hallam to my own design. It's a beaut!

It's common practise these days for divers to put some of their weights into integrated pockets in their BCD. But if you consider the safety of the poor VSAG member aboard the dive boat, **it's good to be able to easily remove those weight pockets and pass them up.** After all, it's already tough enough hauling a wet BCD and cylinder out of the water while hanging over the side of a small dive boat. The added strain of integrated weights could give someone a serious back injury. So please configure and use your weight options with this in mind.

Of course, **divers should not wear weight belts when in the dive boat unless preparing to dive,** or wearing an appropriate buoyancy aid that will compensate for the additional weight.

Shed the Lead

Unfortunately a common factor in many dive incidents is that the diver was alive and on the surface following an incident but then has tragically sunk again. The simple removal of the weight belt can secure a person on the surface whilst waiting for further assistance and significantly reduce the number of these incidents becoming fatal accidents.

Underwater, the consequences of weight belt release in an emergency may be more serious because of the reduced ability to control the ascent. But it's a fact that ditching a weight belt will ensure a



Diver on the left having ditched his weight belt sits significantly higher in the water than his dive buddy.

return to the surface, where further rescue assistance can be provided. Many people would still be alive today if they had followed this simple action. DCI can be treated and the surface provides an unlimited supply of breathing gas, which may be preferable to the alternative.

Like all things in diving, **the skill of ditching weight does require some practice** to ensure that the weights are released clear of the body. All VSAG divers could benefit from occasional practice in controlled conditions in shallow (no more than chest depth) water.

Extra Weight

There are times when we add extra weight during the course of a dive that may have implications that we have not previously considered.

Marine Life: Collecting scallops, abalone and crayfish over a period of time on a dive means you may not appreciate how much additional weight they actually add until the time comes to ascend. Firstly,

avoid the temptation to attach the bag to yourself, as in an emergency it may be impossible to ditch quickly enough. Or at the very least, make sure you use a large clip and are totally practiced in removing it quickly. Secondly, carefully consider using a separate source of buoyancy for the catch bag to ensure you do not have to compensate for the additional weight. The simple action of attaching your DSMB to the bag before deployment should ensure its safe ascent to the surface and leave you free to concentrate on your own ascent.

Treasure: Few divers these days set out to deliberately recover artefacts from wrecks. If they do, then typically they go



Have a lift bag with you and practice using it.

prepared with suitable lifting bags. However, if you are tempted by an impromptu find and don't have the requisite bag, then the principles above still apply. Alternatively, if the find is too large to be raised on a DSMB then you might be safer marking the location with the DSMB line and returning when properly equipped to recover it.

Equipment: Carrying increasing amounts of equipment for particular dives can result in significant changes in your buoyancy characteristics. It's essential that you compensate for these changes.

Buoyancy Aids

We all know that the law requires us to wear a Type 1 personal flotation device (PFD) when boating in an area of heightened risk, like crossing the rip. (Yes, even though we're wearing a wetsuit or dry suit!)

There are a wide range of PFDs to choose from and the best ones aren't cheap. Boat owners have to have one for each person on board. They typically get good ones for themselves, and cheap ones for everyone else. The cheap ones provided for you to use are typically hard to get into and out of, plus uncomfortable. Such PFDs typically only meet the minimum safety requirements.

I value my life, so I made sure I got a good PFD for myself. I take it on VSAG



Stormy Life Vest Plus 180N is a multi-fit Personal Flotation Device.

dive days with me. I decided an inflatable one would be best and got a **Stormy Life Vest**. It's compact and easy to get on and off. I typically put it on before getting on board the boat and take it off before my first dive. I highly recommend you get something similar. I know most VSAG boat owners would appreciate you doing this as well.

When diving in winter it's nice to be able to put something warm on over your wetsuit between dives. So I got myself a **Stormy Life Jacket**, which is also a Type 1 PFD. It's a comfortable all-weather long sleeve jacket, which can be inflated when required as a PFD. Warmth and safety in one bit of kit.

Many dry suits, both membrane and neoprene types, are often considered to provide adequate buoyancy for the wearer if

Check the Weather and Tide Conditions

Always check the weather forecast and tide conditions before you set off on a VSAG dive day. Don't rely on the Dive Captain, Boat Captain or other divers for this. Be prepared to change your plans, or cancel the dive day, if you think the forecast is unfavourable, regardless of what anyone else says.

If you know what the tidal streams and swell conditions are, you'll be able to make better decisions about your dive.

There are links on the VSAG web site on the 'Diving Conditions' page to relevant web pages which enable you to look up this information. Plus we publish the tidal streams at the heads for the coming three months in each edition of Fathoms.

Delayed Surface Marker Buoy (DSMB)

VSAG rules require each of us carries a safety sausage, or DSMB, on all dives. Well I for one consider a tall DSMB and good reel as mandatory, and consider most safety sausages as barely adequate in Victorian diving conditions.

How often do you shoot your DSMB? I must admit that when I began diving I would avoid doing this if at all possible. I'd let my dive buddy shoot instead. But in an emergency, you're going to want to be able to use your DSMB and reel with-

out thinking. Once I realised the error of my ways I made sure I was able to.

I then became very aware of the deficiencies of the reel I already had and those reels I purchased when seeking a better solution. Eventually I came across the **Kent Tooling Diving Products ratchet reels**. These reels work brilliantly and are so much easier to use. They're not cheap, but are a quality product, built to last.

Later, when I started doing some technical diving, I began to appreciate the use of a good SMB and reel setup even more. I switched to a Buddy self-sealing, self-inflating DSMB which has a mini-cylinder, and also set Cheryl up with one when she started diving. These are just so much easier to use than conventional DSMBs.

Deployment is done by simply unfurling the DSMB and cracking open the mini-



Kent Tooling Diving Products ratchet reel.

cylinder. This negates the need for you to risk entanglement or free-flow when deploying a DSMB. It's just so cool, and results in a full stiffy every time.

I now deploy my DSMB on almost every dive, unless I'm on a drift line or coming up the shot line. I've also switched from a reel with 15 metres of line, to one with enough line that I should be able to always deploy from the bottom (75 metres of line for me, 45 metres for Cheryl) as I find it's easier and safer to do it from on the bottom than mid-water.

My DSMBs are marked with my name using **SOLAS radar reflective DSMB stickers** from DiveSigns in the UK. This is just a simple little extra safety item.

I want to make sure those on the surface know I'm coming up and where I am, especially when we're at busy dive sites, or ones where there's lots of boat traffic. Plus it makes the ascent easier and helps my dive buddy and me to stay together.

If I'm with a novice dive buddy, I'll deploy my DSMB and then pass the reel to my buddy. I find they become more relaxed and maintain better buoyancy control when they have the use of the reel and DSMB. I then just stay on station with them.

A deployed DSMB gives me the opportunity to send a message to the dive boat. I can attach a slate with a message written on it to the top eyelet of the DSMB.



AP Valves Buddy self-inflating DSMB with personal SOLAS sticker.

Of course you've got a message slate ready for this purpose, haven't you? On a night dive I can also attach a strobe to the top eyelet of the DSMB.

In some dive locations in the world, plus in more advanced diving, it's common practise for divers to have two DSMBs. A red coloured one for normal use, and a second yellow one with the word 'emergency' printed along it. The yellow DSMB is an emergency signal, to be responded to by sending down a cylinder of gas, or a rescue diver, or both.

I confuse those in dive boats that know about this distinction because my DSMBs are red on one side and yellow on the other (each colour works better in certain conditions). It's something I should fix, and something you should keep in mind when purchasing a good first DSMB, or a second emergency one.

A deployed DSMB also gives the dive boat a way to signal to me to come up faster, if required in a suitable dangerous situation. I can then plan my ascent accordingly and even skip the safety stop.

“What!” I hear you exclaim. “Skip a safety stop?”

Well yes. Just as there are times and situations when planned mandatory decompression stops are not a good or even safe idea, then there have to be times when 'safety stops' represent the less safe option.

Situations where there is a danger from shipping and the boat needs you back on board quickly, or it's impossible to maintain a consistent depth because of buoyancy problems, or in 'low gas' situations, it is often better to be safe and secure on the surface. Certainly, where sea conditions are such that a heavy swell means a significant risk of frequent pressure changes adding a decompression risk and control of buoyancy is difficult, then a direct ascent may be much safer.

Keep Your Mask On!

I've noticed an increasing tendency for some VSAG divers to remove their masks in the water. Some do it even at the beginning of a dive, others on surfacing after the dive.

Once fitted during your kit up, **keep your mask in place and a regulator in your mouth whenever possible.** This way you won't get an unexpected eye, or mouth, full of water. With your mask on at the beginning of the dive, you're ready to spot the shot line or buoy line.

At the end of the dive my regulator comes out of my mouth only when I have my BCD off and I'm helping to get it back aboard the dive boat. My mask stays on. Thus I can see if needed to look down through the water for my kit removal, or to help a buddy with kit removal.

My mask doesn't come off until I'm back aboard the dive boat. By following the same routine at all times, it becomes natural and second nature to keep my mask in place.



Keep your mask on!

Marine Licence

One thing that sometimes restricts VSAG's diving operations is the limited number of divers with recreational marine licences. So as to be more useful, I got my boat licence shortly after joining VSAG and I strongly recommend you do so too.

The master of the dive boat is an essential and integral part of any dive day involving boats. In nautical terms the master is deemed "Master before God" and their authority overrides that of the dive captain on the day with regard to the safety of the boat and its passengers.

By getting your boat licence you'll be able to legally master the dive boat while the boat owner takes a dive. Thus you can now be easily assigned to any of the dive boats. But more importantly, in an emergency, you'll better understand what to do.

Rather than just reading the *Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook* and taking the licence test, I'd recommend going and doing one of the boat licence courses. You'll learn a lot more than just what is required to pass the licence test.

Most VSAG private dive boat owners are more than happy to help you to develop your practical boat handling skills, once you have your licence.

Dive Alert

So you've surfaced from your dive and can see the dive boat, but they're looking the other way. (This seems to happen more often than we'd like to think!) Having a **Dive Alert Plus** fitted on your BCD inflator hose means that with one push of a button you can cause it to emit a loud piercing blast that can get you noticed from very long distances — reportedly up to 1.6 km away.

Plus the Dive Alert Plus is a great little underwater signalling device that makes a loud racket that can be heard by your dive buddy, even if wearing a hood. In underwater H2O mode, it makes a quaking duck type sound.



Dive Alert Plus signalling device.

Some charter and live-aboard operators make having one of these devices a mandatory part of your dive equipment. So please consider getting one. At the very least, have a whistle attached to your BCD, or stowed in a pocket.

VHF Marine Radio

Something you should do is to get your *Marine Radio Operator's Certificate of Proficiency (MROCP)*. Then you'll be licenced to use the boat's marine radio, and in an emergency you'll know what to do. It could save someone's life.

You only really need the VHF certificate of proficiency, but for the little extra effort involved, you may as well get the full MF/HF and VHF one. A group of VSAG and BSAC divers got together and did the course over a couple of evenings a few years back.

It also helps to communicate out on the water in poor conditions if you've learnt the phonetic alphabet — Alpha, Bravo, Charlie... etc. **A slightly higher pitch than normal in your voice will sound clearer over the radio.**

I've been out on small boats a few times where the boat's marine radio has failed. So a few years back I purchased a small handheld Icom IC-M33 VHF marine radio that is fully submersible and floats. It has been proven to be a valuable addition to my dive kit on a number of occasions.

Nautilus Lifeline

You may have heard about this great new diving safety device. It's a combined DSC capable VHF radio and GPS for divers in a compact, waterproof (130 metres) enclosure, not much larger than a smartphone. I liked the concept so much I purchased one as soon as they became available in Australia.

This compact device goes underwater with you. When back on the surface, it can function as a VHF marine radio on a pre-set channel, so that you can have two-way contact with the dive boat.

If the dive boat can't see you, you can ask the unit to show your GPS position



Nautilus Lifeline two-way VHF marine radio and GPS locator.

and then you can relay this information to the dive boat using the radio. Or you can put out a call on channel 16, the international hail and distress channel.

Finally, you can initiate a Digital Selective Calling (DSC) transmission of distress, sending and displaying an emergency message and your GPS coordinates on other vessels' marine radios within about a 15 kilometre radius.

Some live-aboard operators are now making sure each dive buddy pair has a Nautilus Lifeline. For VSAG dive days, the VHF radio of this unit can also become a backup handheld marine radio when set to the club channel 73.

VSAG is currently in the process of getting five of these Nautilus Lifeline units for use on club dive days.

Personal Locator Beacons

When small, compact Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) based on the 406 MHz digital system became available I bought one. It goes into a dive canister (which cost as much as the PLB) and is worn on my BCD waist belt. I've never had to use it, and now with a Nautilus Lifeline available, I'm even less likely to. But I'll be glad to have this extra safety device should it ever be necessary. It's capable of guiding the rescue services to within 50 metres of my position, anywhere in the world.



GME's Accusat MT410G Pocket Pro+ Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) with integrated GPS .

Of course having a PLB is a top of the range solution. Plus using a PLB close to shore in the bay is perhaps a bit unnecessary. **A low tech signalling solution would be an old CD to use as a reflector.** The best advice is to have more than one solution and to try and ensure that they are appropriate for different conditions or environments and are relevant to where you are.

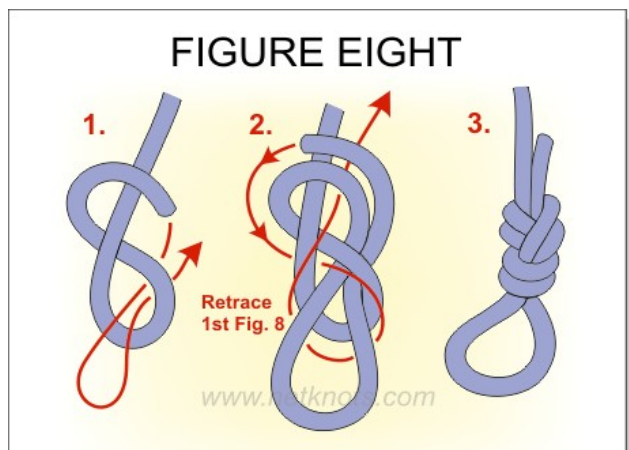
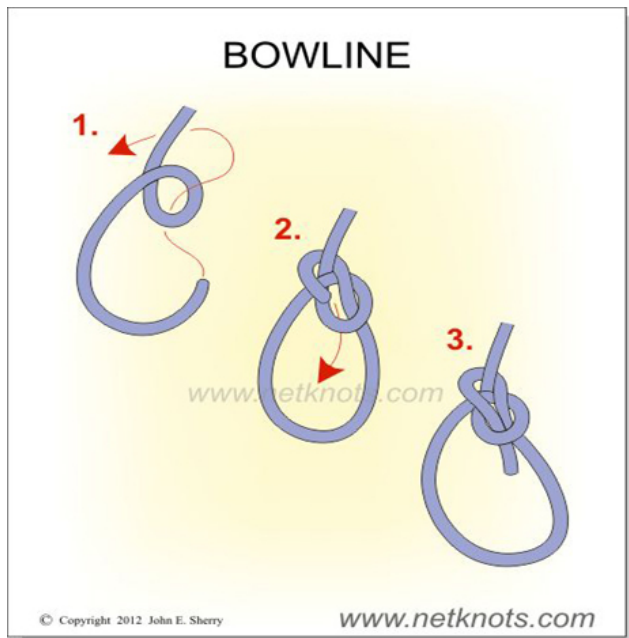
A further consideration is to ensure that those who might be required to look for you are aware of the type of location aids you are carrying and other identification details (hood, suit and jacket colour etc.).

Finally, if you find yourself in a problematic situation, careful planning of when to deploy certain location aids can help achieve success. Delaying the use of a strobe until night is starting to fall ensures you preserved battery life until a time when it would prove most effective.

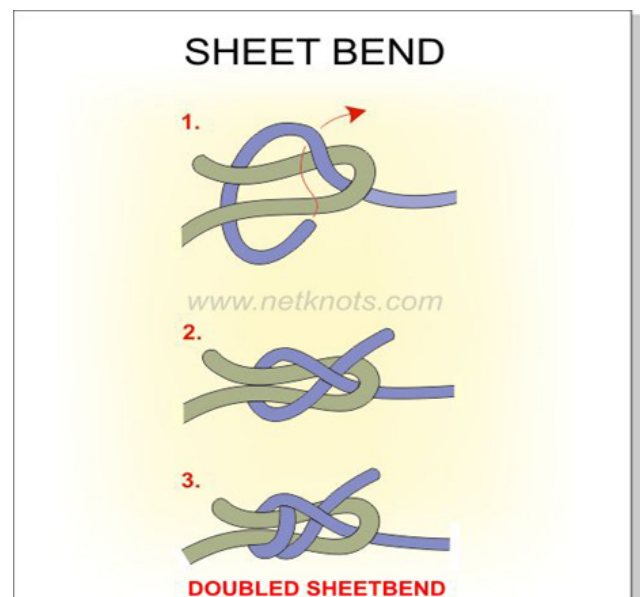
Working With Ropes

Ropes have many purposes on small boats. It's extremely useful if you know the relatively small selection of ways to tie rope likely to be used on a dive boat. Ways of tying ropes can be subdivided into knots, bends and hitches. So buy a book, or go online, and then learn the following.

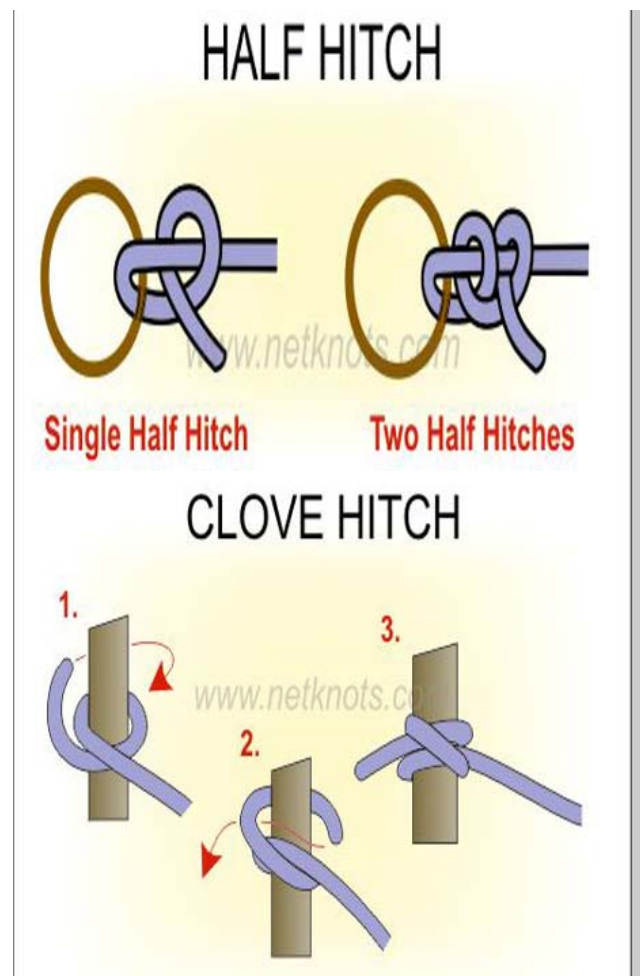
Knots (ways of forming a noose, a fixed loop, or stopper in the end of a line): Bowline, Reef knot and Figure-of-eight knot.

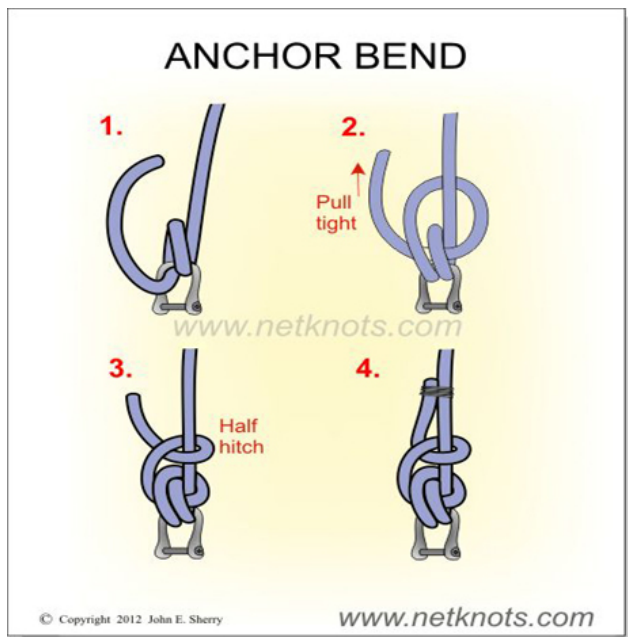


Bends (ways of tying two lines together): Sheet bend and Double sheet bend.

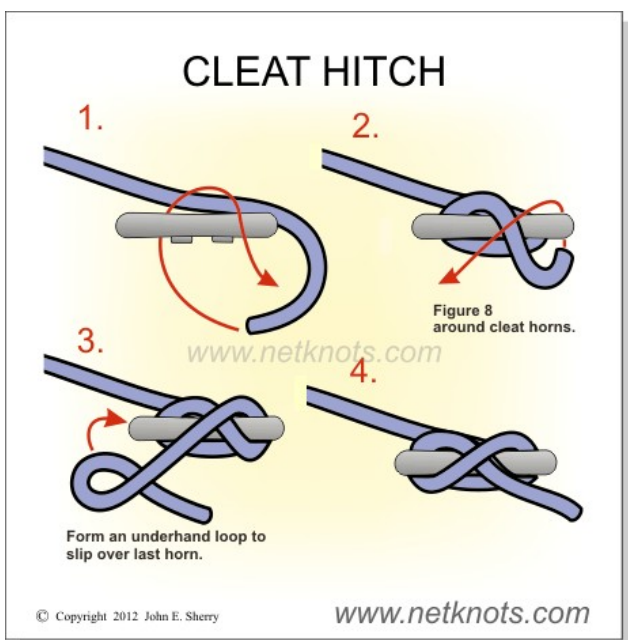


Hitches (ways to secure a line to a ring or post): Two half-hitches, Round turn and two half-hitches, clove hitch, anchor bend.





Dive boats often have cleats for tying off lines. Belaying means making a line fast by winding it around a cleat. So learn how to do this properly, finishing with a locking turn.



It is simple bits of knowledge like this that makes you much safer out on the water, and much more useful in an emergency.

Rope Knife

Also, please remember that ropes on dive boats, and the shot lines and buoy lines we deploy, come with inherent entanglement risks. Is your dive knife up to the task of cutting them quickly and efficiently? Oh, and where is it? The bottom of your dive bag is not much help if you are going down with the ship!

Did you listen to the Safety Briefing and thus know where the dive boat's knife is kept?



Lloyd's Victory Green River boat knife.

Throwing a Line

It is useful to be able to throw a rope in a straight line, especially to a person in the water as part of a rescue. To do this, coil the rope in your left hand, as if you're going to store it. Take a few loops of the coil into your right hand, keeping the free end towards your fingertips and keeping your left arm outstretched, fingers unclenched. Throw the coils in your right hand directly at the recipient. Their weight will make the coil in your left hand feed out smoothly. Do not forget to hold, or tie off, the inboard end of the line before throwing.

Throw bag lifelines designed for life-saving purposes are often available on



Rope throw bag.

dive boats. To use this type of throwing line you simply hold the free end, and throw the bag at the recipient. The weight of the rope and the bag make it easy to throw the rope accurately, and the line pays out as it is needed.

Launching and Recovering the Dive Boat

Take the time to learn how to assist the boat owner of the dive boat to which you've been assigned to safely launch and retrieve the dive boat. They all have slightly different setups.

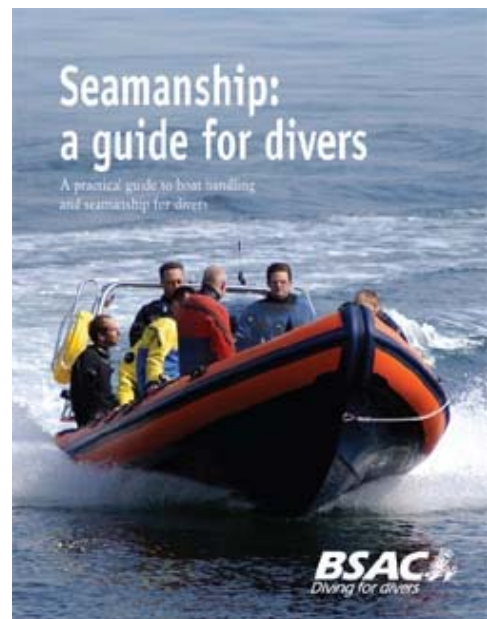
These operations are often a high stress time for the boat owner, so having safety conscious and careful helpers often makes the world of difference.

But if the boat owner prefers to do everything themselves, so as to maintain a safe routine, then please keep out of their way.

Dive Boat Safety

The more you know about good procedures and practices for diving from small boats the safer you'll feel out on the water on VSAG dive days. Some of the resources I recommend are:

- The *Safety in Diving* section of the VSAG web site. See <http://bit.ly/V6MTHF>
- *Guidelines for Safe Operation of Member Club Dive Boats*. See <http://bit.ly/TruPse>
- The *Diving Safety* section of the British Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC) web site. See <http://bit.ly/QMKbLV>
- The BSAC book, *Seamanship: a guide for divers. A practical guide to boat handling and seamanship for divers*.



VSAG is a Dive Club, Not a Charter Service

We're members of a great dive club. As with all clubs, VSAG expects club members to co-operate and help each other at all times.

When your fellow club members make their private dive boats available for you to dive from (typically at considerable expense to themselves) they don't expect you to treat them the same way you would a charter dive boat operator, who is providing you with a set service for a financial reward.

VSAG boat owners expect you to help out in any and every way possible, so

as to lighten the load on all concerned. So please think about what you can do to improve your dive kit and your small boat diving knowledge and practices. Be prepared, so that you can respond properly at all times, but especially in an emergency situation. **Become a part of the solution, not the problem!**

Who is Responsible?

We all truly believe that we want to, and do, dive safely. Yet the moment an unfortunate incident occurs, one of the first reactions is to question who is responsible for controlling the activity.

Well, when diving with VSAG, responsibility for "**Safety in Diving**" rests with

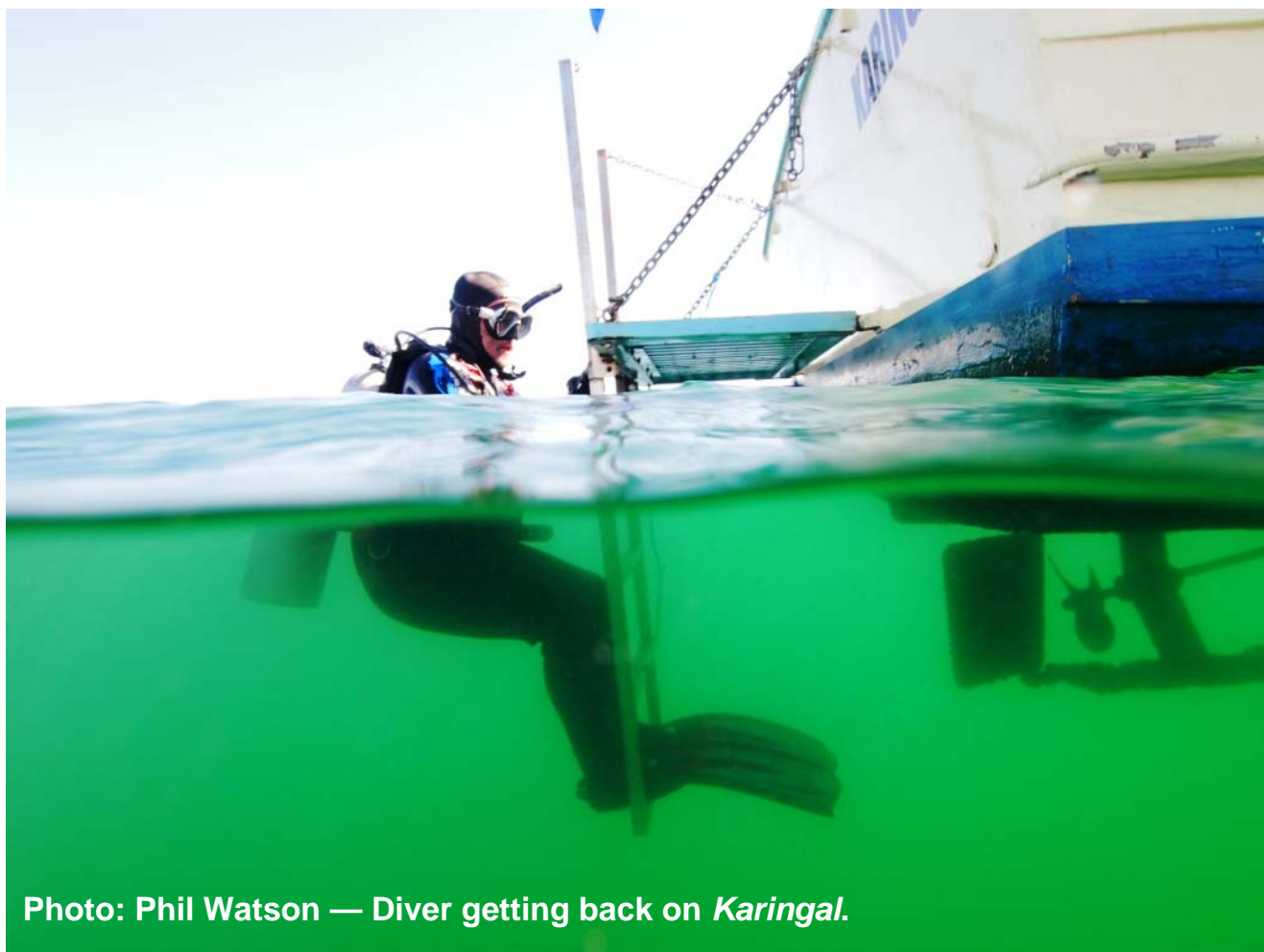


Photo: Phil Watson — Diver getting back on *Karingal*.

YOU, the individual member. Your first and overriding responsibility is to you and your dive buddy. Regardless of your background, training and experience, you are equipped with the skills and knowledge to make your own informed decisions for your own safety and that of your dive buddy.

All VSAG divers are encouraged to take responsibility to follow their training and restrict their diving to the limits of their qualification and refuse to be tempted beyond their limits by more experienced and qualified divers no matter how forceful or knowledgeable they may be. **If you do venture beyond your qualification limits, it's your responsibility.** No-one else is responsible for your decision and what might occur as a result.

As then VSAG president Don Abell put it back in 1991, **"If you need a group which will control you and tell you how to dive, if you want someone to be responsible for your diving, then VSAG is probably not for you."**

Safe Diving

No matter how much we all think we know what is involved in safe diving practices, it would do us all good to remind ourselves from time to time.

Regular practice and attention to pre-dive checks should minimise many risks before even entering the water. Don't let anyone rush your pre-dive checks. You



Buddy checks help to ensure safe diving.

should not be pressured either by your dive buddy, the boat captain, the dive captain, or the need to hit slack water. If someone does pressure you, politely tell them to back off. They'll understand.

Where we've learnt skills and practiced them in substantially different conditions, it is not always a simple matter of transferring those skills to the new environment. For example, moving from charter boat diving, to diving from small private boats. Please be mindful of this and practise your skills under the new conditions until you're comfortable with them.

Stay safe out there! ❖

