SDI Reinforces Commitment to Diver Safety with Updated Open Water Standards and New Safety Initiative

Scuba Diving International (SDI) has announced updates to its Open Water Diver Standards as part of its ongoing commitment to diver safety, quality education, and continuous improvement. The updates are being introduced under the banner of SDI's new "We Care" initiative, a long-term effort focused on promoting safer diving practices across the entire dive community.

For more than three decades, SDI has built its reputation on providing practical, modern diver education. The latest standards updates strengthen that commitment by enhancing instructor-to-student ratios for younger divers, reinforcing guidance related to environmental conditions, and providing clearer expectations for reducing ratios when conditions become more demanding. These changes are designed to increase supervision, improve the learning experience, and help instructors make informed decisions based on real-world conditions.

“We can do better, and what I mean by that is the industry can do better,” said Brian Carney, President and CEO of SDI. “I looked and reviewed our SDI/TDI standards and talked with over 1,000 professionals around the world for the last two months. This is about safety and this is what the industry needs to do. It needs to focus on safety more. The industry standards aren’t good enough.”

The updated standards represent more than procedural changes. They are part of a broader vision to help divers develop stronger skills, greater confidence, and better decision-making abilities from the very beginning of their training. By placing additional

emphasis on supervision and environmental awareness, SDI continues to prioritize quality outcomes over certification volume.

"I want our professionals to be proud of what we do as an agency," added Carney. "I want to be proud of what I do and updating our standards are the right thing to do."

"We consulted with a lot of people as we are an agency that was started by instructors for instructors," added Sean Harrison, Senior Vice President at SDI. "We wanted realistic standards that were developed and maintained by dive professionals. When we started talking with them about ratio reduction, they were all in support. We want our professionals teaching in the best way with the most current practices. We want to be better."

As part of the initiative, SDI is also launching a summer-long safety awareness campaign featuring educational content, practical diving tips, instructor resources, and reminders designed to help divers build safer habits before, during, and after every dive.

The "We Care" initiative supports a culture where safety is viewed as an ongoing commitment shared by instructors, dive centers, professionals, and divers alike. Through updated standards, continued education, and community engagement, SDI aims to help more people safely explore the underwater world with confidence and lasting awe.

Key Updates Include:
- Enhanced instructor-to-student ratios for younger divers
- Increased emphasis on supervision and instructor oversight
- Stronger guidance regarding environmental and diving conditions
- Clearer expectations for ratio reductions when conditions become more challenging
- Continued focus on quality diver education and skill development

SDI instructors and members can access the updated standards through the SDI Standards and Procedures portal.

For additional information about the Open Water Standards Updates and the We Care initiative, visit the SDI website or click here.

Safety Is Not a Marketing Message or Cliche. It's a Responsibility.

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