

5. Sidemount Diver

5.1 *Introduction*

This course is designed to teach certified divers how to safely utilize side-mounted primary cylinders as an alternative to the traditional back-mounted configuration. This course can be combined with other TDI courses such as: Decompression Procedures, Extended Range, Trimix, Advanced Trimix and Advanced Wreck. If combined the standards for both courses must be met.

5.2 *Qualifications of Graduates*

Upon successful completion of this course, graduates may engage in Sidemount diving activities without direct supervision so long as the following limits are adhered to

1. Safety and decompression stops as appropriate or necessary.
2. Planned dives do not exceed diver's current certification level.

5.3 *Who May Teach*

This course may be taught by any active TDI Sidemount Diving Instructor.

5.4 *Student to Instructor Ratio*

Academic:

1. Unlimited, so long as adequate facilities, supplies and time are provided to ensure comprehensive and complete training of subject matter.

Confined Water (swimming pool-like conditions):

1. N/A.

Open Water Dives:

1. A maximum of 4 students per instructor is allowed.

5.5 *Student Prerequisites*

1. Minimum age 18.
2. Minimum certification; SDI Open Water Scuba Diver or the equivalent.

5.6 Course Structure and Duration

Water Execution:

1. Three open water dives are required with a minimum accumulated bottom time of 90 minutes.
2. If Advanced Nitrox is taught in conjunction with TDI Sidemount, only a total of four (4) dives are required, more may be conducted at the discretion of the instructor, but all dives must be conducted at depths within the diver's current level of certification.

Course Structure:

1. TDI allows instructors to structure courses according to the number of students participating and their skill level.

Duration:

1. The suggested number of classroom and briefing hours is 4.
2. The course must be taught over a minimum of 2 days.

5.7 Administrative Requirements

Administrative Tasks:

1. Collect the course fees from all the students.
2. Ensure that the students have the required equipment.
3. Communicate the schedule to the students.
4. Have the students complete the:
 - a. *TDI Liability Release and Express Assumption of Risk Form.*
 - b. *TDI Medical Statement Form.*

Upon successful completion of the course the instructor must:

1. Issue the appropriate TDI certification by submitting the *TDI Diver Registration Form* to TDI Headquarters or registering the students online through member's area of the TDI website.

5.8 Training Material

Required Material:

1. SDI/TDI Sidemount Manual and Knowledge Quest or eLearning.
2. *SDI/TDI Sidemount Instructor Guide.*

Optional Materials:

1. TDI Sidemount Cue Cards.
2. *TDI Sidemount* Evaluation Slate.

5.9 Required Equipment

The following equipment is required for each student:

1. Dual cylinders, volume appropriate for planned dive, and student gas consumption.
2. Two independent first and second stage regulators each with a submersible pressure gauge.
3. Buoyancy compensator device (BCD) with power inflator appropriate for Sidemount configuration.
4. Exposure suit adequate for diving environment.
5. Mask and fins.
6. Dive computer and an additional depth and timing device; backup computer recommended.

Instructors must wear full Sidemount diving equipment during all water exercises.

5.10 Required Subject Areas

Instructors may use any text or materials that they feel help present these topics.

The following topics must be covered during this course:

1. Gas matching procedures to include dissimilar volumes.
2. Gas management utilizing independent cylinders.
3. Psychological considerations.
4. Equipment considerations:
 - a. Cylinder options
 - b. Regulator options
 - c. Buoyancy compensator/harness options.
 - d. Proper weighting
 - e. Equipment configurations
5. Communication:

- a. Hand signals.
 - b. Light signals.
6. Problem solving:
- a. Gas-sharing.
 - b. Gas hemorrhages.
 - c. Light failure.
 - d. Loss of visibility.
 - e. Entanglement.
 - f. Self-rescue.
7. Tight spaces.
8. Conservation.
9. Difficult water entries.
10. S-Drills; specific to Sidemount.

5.11 Required Skill Performance and Graduation Requirements

The following land drills must be covered during this course:

1. Land drills may be performed at the instructor's discretion.

Pre-Dive drills:

1. Use START before every dive *START is an acronym for S-drill (Out of Gas drill and Bubble Check), Team (buddy equipment checks), Air (gas matching), Route (entry/exit and planned path underwater, Tables (depth, duration, waypoints and schedule).
2. Stress analysis and mitigation.

The student must perform the following in-water skills during dives:

1. Demonstrate various propulsion techniques: frog kick, modified frog kick, modified flutter kick, backwards kick, helicopter turns, and hand pulling if appropriate for the environment.
2. Demonstrate adequate buoyancy control; ability to hover at fixed position in water column without moving hands or Feet.

3. Demonstrate adequate trim; ability to maintain proper position during the descent, bottom and ascent portion of the dive.
4. Demonstrate the ability to perform the following exercises while maintaining trim and buoyancy in the water column:
 - a. Unclipping and attaching Sidemount cylinders.
 - b. Perform gas switches with and without a mask.
5. Demonstrate the ability to safely manage gas in independent cylinders.
6. Demonstrate conservation, awareness, and back referencing techniques.
7. Deploy lift bag.
8. Carry additional cylinder(s); optional.

In order to complete this course, students must:

1. Perform all land drills and dive requirements safely and efficiently.
2. Demonstrate mature, sound judgment concerning dive planning and execution.
3. Maintain an appropriate level of awareness and respect for the environment.
4. Log all dives.