

SAA LECTURE No C5

BOAT DIVING



Inflatable	Most common dive boat that clubs own
Semi-Rigid	Becoming more popular with diving clubs. Obviously more expensive than a basic inflatable. Both boats are popular with large and small clubs.
Benefits	Usually 4-6 metres in length, engines up to 100 hp. Fast – buoyant – seaworthy. Easy to tow, easy to launch/recover.
Against	Lack of space inboard-cramped. Not very comfortable ride-exposed-wind-rain-spray. Limited in range. Small limit on divers carried.
Launch	Check launch site. Many hands make light work. Carry out instructions. Check engine before launch. Bow out to sea. Load and stow kit-obey cox'n Make sure ALL your kit on board. Only board when told to do so – sit where directed by cox'n
Travel to dive site	Wear buoyancy aid – if wearing dry suit – ZIP UP. Do not wear weightbelt unless kitted up ready to dive. Observe and listen to cox'n-gain experience. No "A" flag until divers in water.
The Dive	Anchor boat if required. First pair of divers kit up – second pair assists. Final buddy check – signals. Engine in neutral. Enter water when told-dive leader first. Exchange OK signals with boat and buddy. Dive using and SMB – cox'n hoists A Flag.
Surfacing	Surface to SMB – inflate ABLJ/STAB. Exchange OK signals with buddy and boat. Remain together and wait for boat. Pass weightbelt into boat. Disconnect direct feed hoses making sure assistant has hold of your cylinder-release it. Wait for permission to enter boat-dive leader last in. Ensure kit is safely stowed – sit where told by cox'n. Keep dry suits zipped up. Stow "A" flag
Return journey	Assist cox'n by keeping a look-out when approaching shallows-rocks-swimmers-dogs-paddlers-mooring ropes etc. In shallow water, engine in neutral, jump out to hold boat still, if required by cox'n.
Boat recovery	Check recovery site-if rough water put bow out to sea. Remove personal kit. Remove boat equipment (reduce weight). Help with recovery-too few helpers and boat can end up damaged. Secure boat onto trailer-wash boat, engine, trailer in fresh water. Grease
Charter boats	Best for off-shore diving. Sometimes 6-8 metre open day boat or 20+ metre cruiser type that has live-aboard accommodation
Benefits	Perhaps slower than an inflatable, but has greater range and can stay out for days.
Facilities	Head (toilet) – galley (kitchen) – showers – sleeping accommodation
Sophisticated Equip	Decca-wreck locators-sonar-long range radio-RADAR-GPS
Preparation	Usually on board many hours-wear warm clothing-nights can be cold, take windproof clothing. Check if you need to take food. Arrive at departure point in plenty of time-unload kit-park vehicle-load kit onto boat-stow where directed. Get to know vessel-check if there are "out of bounds" areas. Help if asked-otherwise stay out of crew's way. Observe skipper and practice seamanship and navigation if possible.
Diving	Finalise dive plan-check signals and do buddy check (very important when diving with strangers). Plenty of space to kit up-usually enter water feet first. Small inflatable may be used for picking up divers. Ladder used for direct boarding after dive – once on board, clear away from ladder for the others coming up.
Return journey	Possible refreshments. Time for getting your kit ready for disembarkation.
Living aboard	Take sleeping bag-change of clothing-foul weather clothing. Find bunk and stow personal kit-keep bunk area tidy. Living aboard with other divers in a small space can cause problems. Be considerate of other divers' needs (sleep). Try to keep a good standard of hygiene- you don't want to spend the whole trip being ill.

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Sea sickness Can be a problem in large and small craft. Check with GP what medication to take – eat sensibly. Centre of vessel usually better if you're prone to sea sickness. Try to keep occupied – if you succumb-keep downwind. Never lock yourself in head (toilet) often smells can make you worse.

Don't dive after being sea-sick-dehydration-increases risk of DCI.

Hiring Charter boats usually hired for specific purposes. A day trip to wreck or location out of range of club inflatable, can be booked for diving holiday.

SAA lecture No C5 Addendum to Boat Diving Handout

Boat dives are undertaken when the dive site cannot be reached satisfactorily from shore.

Various types of boats are used depending on dive site location, club resources and personal preference. The boat skipper or coxwain is in charge at all times and can override the Dive Marshal for the sake of safety.

Inflatables

At one time the most popular boat owned by diving clubs. Inexpensive to run, convenient for transporting and launching. Lack sophistication, speed and load carrying capacity and have mainly been replaced by RIB's (Rigid Inflatable Boat)

RIB. (formerly called Semi-Rigid Inflatable)

These boats were first developed as improved inflatables. They had a solid floor made of GRP (glass reinforced plastic) but they did not have a hull form which would make them capable of tackling large waves or carrying powerful engines. The technology is now sophisticated. Chined, deep-V hull designs have been taken from fast cruiser boats resulting in strong, fast and safe boats with excellent sea keeping performance. These boats are significantly larger than their early counterparts. Diving RIB's start at 5m. The club boat is m with an hp engine capable of speeds up to knots with a range of nautical miles

Large diving RIB's are no longer an improved inflatable. They are purpose built craft in their own right. The combination of strong hull form, buoyancy and engine power make them excellent diving platforms. With the increased sophistication of marine electronic navigation aids and appropriate training and experience, they can transport divers to coastal sites which were once only accessible form hard boats.

The drawback from RIB's is their increased cost, running expense and the need for more powerful towing/launching vehicles.

Diving form the club RIB requires the same discipline as from an inflatable. However with the increased speed, range and capability of taking on rougher sea states additional measures are required:

Increased care in stowage of kit and personnel.

Increased personal safety measures- warm and windproof clothing, warm drinks, food

Advanced coxwain training

Maximum sea state approximately 1 m waves (Force 4)