

SAA LECTURE No S4

PROTECTIVE CLOTHING



Wet Suits/Semi Dry Suits

Neoprene synthetic rubber – insulates by trapping water between skin and suit. Many types – try before buying. Crushes as you descend and increased weight/lower insulation

ADVANTAGES Cheap, buoyant, light, rugged, at one with water

DISADVANTAGES Not for UK winters or long period wear, slow to dress, no wind insulation

Dry Suits – Neoprene

Thick synthetic rubber keeps you warm and dry, light underclothing, need Air intake/ dump valves and special training

ADVANTAGES Year round, rugged, cushioned, no undersuit, always buoyant

DISADVANTAGES Easily damaged, prone to squeeze, no built-in buoyancy, undersuit required

Surface Clothing

Hats, gloves, water/wind proofs

Hypothermia

When the body temperature drops to an abnormal low

CAUSE Inadequate body insulation

SYMPTOMS Increased breathing, mental & physical distress, loss of strength and dexterity, cramp

SIGNS White cold skin, slurred speech, shivering, abnormal vision, possible cardiac arrest

TREATMENT End dive, get warm and dry, shelter from wind – get into an exposure bag, have hot (110F) bath and hot drinks. Monitor casualty constantly whilst in bath. **Never** give alcohol, very hot drinks, rub skin or apply direct heat **Always** monitor vital signs, handle gently, get medical help **Learn** areas of the body where heat is lost

WINDCHILL FACTOR Higher wind speed=lower temperature

INSULATION REQUIREMENTS Use the correct suit for water temperature

CORE TEMPERATURE COOLS Body areas close down – keep head covered

Hypethermia

When the body temperature rises to an abnormal high

CAUSES Excessive body heat, too much insulation, exposure to sun

SYMPTOMS Heat exhaustion, profuse sweating, pale clammy skin, tired, weak, headache, nausea

TREATMENT Move out of sun, remove insulation, cool down, cool drinks, if severe call for medical assistance

PREVENTION Kit up slowly, wear a hat, stay in shade as long as possible
Always monitor for heat stroke and dehydration

Stings/Abrasions/Bites

Learn the potential nasties, consider taking the SAA Marine Life ID course.

Safety

Always wear a buoyancy aid when diving, snorkelling or on a small boat.

Suggested viewing “Cold Water Casualty” video

A TRAINING PROGRAMME MUST BE ATTENDED AND PASSED BEFORE A TRAINEE CAN USE A DRY SUIT FOR DIVING IN OPEN WATER