

which I would commit any person for trial in relation to these deaths. No person is committed for trial.

Copies of the transcript of the relevant evidence together with a copy of these findings to be delivered to the appropriate Ministers of the Crown to which I have referred.

The Inquest is closed.

E R Wessling
Coroner
16 May 1996

The following has been provided by Mr Brian Marfleet, Workplace Health and Safety Inspector, to inform SPUMS members of the changes to medical certification requirements which came into force in Queensland on 2/7/97.

SAFETY LINK

Medical Examinations for Underwater Divers Information for Doctors

Purpose

To advise doctors who carry out diving medical examinations on people involved in underwater diving of the -

- requirements under the *Workplace Health and Safety (Underwater Diving Work) Compliance Standard 1996*
- and
- the recommendations given in the **Advisory Standard “Code of Practice for Recreational Diving and Snorkelling at a Workplace”**

What the Workplace Health and Safety (Underwater Diving Work) Compliance Standard 1996 requires

The *Workplace Health and Safety (Underwater Diving Work) Compliance Standard 1996* requires employers, self-employed people and workers doing any type of underwater diving work to hold a **current certificate of medical fitness** to dive. This applies to all types of diving work.

What is a current certificate of medical fitness to dive?

A current certificate is one that is less than 12 months old which has not expired, been revoked or superseded.

People doing underwater diving work will need to have an annual medical examination to obtain a “current” certificate.

A certificate of *medical fitness to dive* is a certificate that -

- a on its face is issued by a doctor who has satisfactorily completed training in diving medicine approved by the Board of Censors of the South Pacific Underwater Medicine Society (SPUMS); and
- b contains the following information -
 - the name of the person who holds the certificate
 - the date the certificate was issued
 - shows that the person is medically fit to dive according to the fitness criteria in AS 2299 1992 *Occupational Diving*, appendix A, paragraph A3
 - any limitations on diving imposed by the doctor.

While AS 2299-1992 fitness criteria specify a minimum age of 18 for divers, the compliance standard allows persons under the age of 18 to hold a certificate of medical fitness to dive as there are circumstances where a person under the age of 18 may wish to do underwater diving work. Whether a person under 18 is declared fit to dive or not is a matter for the doctor’s discretion. The type of diving work the person intends to do may be a relevant factor in assessing whether the person is fit to dive.

If the person is under the age of 18, the doctor may issue a certificate but the certificate must show -

- that apart from being under 18, the person is medically fit to dive in accordance with AS 2299-1992, appendix A, paragraph A3 and no limitations on diving are needed even though the person is under 18; or
- that apart from the limitations on diving stated on the certificate, the person is medically fit to dive in accordance with AS 2299 - 1992, appendix A, paragraph A3. The certificate must show which, if any, of the limitations are imposed because the person is under 18.

As employers, self-employed people and workers who do underwater diving work must hold a certificate that shows the above information, it would be useful if doctors issuing certificates made sure all the relevant information is shown on the certificate.

Training in diving medicine

The compliance standard requires the certificate to be issued by a doctor who has satisfactorily completed training in diving medicine approved by the Board of Censors of SPUMS.

Doctors may issue a certificate of medical fitness to dive if they have satisfactorily completed any of the following training -

- Royal Adelaide Hospital Basic Course in Diving Medicine and the Advanced Course in Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine
- Royal Australian Navy Submarine and Underwater Medicine Unit Basic Course, Advanced Course or the Medical Officer's Course
- Diving Medical Centre Medical Examiner Course
- Fremantle Hospital Medical Assessment of Divers Course
- Royal New Zealand Navy Basic Course
- Christchurch Hospital Basic Course
- Institute of Naval Medicine (UK) Medical Examiner Course
- United States Navy Diving Medical Officer Course

If the Board of Censors of SPUMS approves any new training in diving medicine, these courses also will be covered by the compliance standard. Because SPUMS recommends courses of 10 days duration or more as the most appropriate training for carrying out AS 2299-1992 medical examinations, it needs to be noted that the compliance standard permits a doctor who has satisfactorily completed any training in underwater medicine approved by the Board of Censors to issue certificates of medical fitness to dive, and that not all approved courses meet the recommended period of 10 days.

What the Advisory Standard “Code Of Practice for Recreational Diving and Snorkelling at a Workplace” states:

For non-certification course divers

The employer or self-employed person at a workplace should ensure that a person intending to do a non-certification course in underwater diving has satisfactorily completed a medical declaration containing information outlined in Appendix 3 of the Advisory Standard/Code of Practice.

If any medical condition is disclosed, medical advice should be sought from a diving medical practitioner before any diving takes place.

For people doing entry-level certification for open water diving

These people should be certified as being medically fit for diving in accordance with

- Appendix A - Prediving Medical Examination for Prospective Recreational Scuba Divers; and
- Appendix B - Typical Medical Form for Prospective Recreational Scuba Divers of AS 4005.1 - 1992.

This certification should be provided in English by a diving medical practitioner within 90 days prior to the commencement of training.

The employer or self-employed person at a workplace where people are engaged in entry-level recreational certification training should ensure that all students are certified as being medically fit for diving.

Advanced and/or speciality certificate training

These people should be certified as being medically fit for diving through -

- medical certification within the past 5 years with no injury or illness since;

or, if over 40 years of age

- the same medical certification as required for people doing entry level certification for open water diving.

The employer or self-employed person should ensure people engaged in advanced and/or speciality certificate training meet the above criteria for medical fitness to dive.

1. Example only of information a certificate of medical fitness to dive must show for a person who claims to be over 18 and has no limitations imposed on medical grounds.

Diving Medical Certificate	
Issued by:	<i>who has satisfactorily completed training in diving medicine approved by the Board of Censors of the South Pacific Underwater Medicine Society.</i>
Issued to:	
Date of Issue:	
Fit to Dive:	under AS 2299-1992, appendix A, paragraph 3

2. **Example only of information a certificate of medical fitness to dive must show for a person who claims to be over 18 and has a limitation imposed on medical grounds.**

Diving Medical Certificate	
Issued by:	<i>who has satisfactorily completed training in diving medicine approved by the Board of Censors of the South Pacific Underwater Medicine Society.</i>
Issued to:	
Date of Issue:	
Fit to Dive:	under AS 2299-1992, appendix A, paragraph 3 insert limitation

3. **Example only of information a certificate of medical fitness to dive must show for a person who claims to be under 18 and has no limitations imposed on medical grounds.**

Diving Medical Certificate	
Issued by:	<i>who has satisfactorily completed training in diving medicine approved by the Board of Censors of the South Pacific Underwater Medicine Society.</i>
Issued to:	
Date of Issue:	
Fit to Dive:	under AS 2299-1992, appendix A, paragraph 3 (apart from being under 18) No limitations on diving are needed even though the holder of this certificate is under 18.

4. **Example only of information a certificate of medical fitness to dive must show for a person who claims to be under 18 and has a limitation imposed on medical grounds because the person is under 18.**

Diving Medical Certificate	
Issued by:	<i>who has satisfactorily completed training in diving medicine approved by the Board of Censors of the South Pacific Underwater Medicine Society.</i>
Issued to:	
Date of Issue:	
Fit to Dive:	under AS 2299-1992, appendix A, paragraph 3 (apart from being under 18) insert limitation This limitation on diving is imposed because the holder of this certificate is under 18

Further information can be obtained by contacting

BRISBANE	Brian Marfleet (07) 3872 0677 Michael Williams (07) 3872 0678	or Workplace Health and Safety
CAIRNS	Chris Coxon (070) 523 910 Robert Newie (070) 523 908	Freecall: 1800 177 717 Internet: http://www.gil.com.au/va/whs_home/whs.htm