

A Quick Guide to Managing Rebreather Divers

Planning

1. Rebreather divers have a limit of 40m on air on branch dives.
2. They can dive with buddies according to their normal diving qualification
3. They have:
 - a. Long no stop times
 - b. Shorter decompression times
 - c. Long endurance
4. Pick a buddy based on interests and personalities, don't always assume they need to be paired with another rebreather diver or are keen to do very long, deep dives.
5. Rebreather divers can be useful if you need an 'extra' person to buddy a diver on a second site, they will probably have gas and no stop time left over and it won't affect their first dive.
6. Allow slightly longer for them to kit up, although this will depend on the diver.

On the boat

1. Stow the rebreather with the same care you would all diving kit. They are more robust than they look!
2. The diver will kit up and then conduct a pre breathe
 - a. Lasts 3-5 minutes
 - b. Checks for major equipment problems
3. Whether diving with an OC or CC buddy, the buddy check should include:
 - a. Unit power on
 - b. O2 on
 - c. Diluent on
 - d. Counter lung clips
 - e. AAS
4. Note in the log:
 - a. O2 pressure – about 100 bar is ok
 - b. Diluent pressure- about 100 bar is ok
 - c. Scrubber life remaining
5. Be aware that some problems may appear shortly after the diver enters the water. Watch the diver until he leaves the surface and be alert for the possibility of a rapid ascent shortly after doing so.
6. After the dive stow the unit upright or on its front if possible

Contingencies

1. If a rebreather diver's buddy can't dive then swap buddies as you would an OC diver
2. Rebreathers can be temperamental and may take some tinkering but if you think something isn't right:
 - a. Don't be afraid to ask straight out "is the unit safe to dive?"
 - b. This may be the 'get out' the diver was looking for (as with any stressed diver)
 - c. If the answer is yes then you should accept that as a truthful response from a trained user and allow them to dive

Emergencies

1. A major concern for any rebreather diver who bails out onto open circuit is a shortage of gas:
 - a. Agree a 'problem' signal with divers
 - b. Be alert for 'extra' bubbles around a rebreather diver
 - c. If in doubt drop an air/nitrox cylinder (Labelled!!) on a 6m line and buoy near the divers (an Apex style direct feed on the cylinder may also be helpful if easily and quickly to hand)
 - d. If a suitably experienced diver is available consider sending them down to help (needn't be a rebreather diver)
2. Unconscious rebreather divers on the surface should be treated in the same way as all other divers
 - a. Remember to shut the mouthpiece
 - b. Drop the set point (middle button on the handset) **OR**
 - c. Switch off the O2 (green valve) to stop the counter lungs inflating
 - d. Unclip the counter lungs at the bottom to help remove the unit