



# Student Diver Guidebook

## Open Water Scuba Course - Winter 2016

Congratulations! You're on your way to one of the greatest adventures on Earth - Scuba Diving! It is the goal of High Tide Scuba to ensure that our student divers have a safe, fun, and rewarding experience. In order to ensure that you have the best experience possible, please take a few moments and familiarize yourself with the content of this guide. We recommend that you print this guide, bring it to your class, and keep it handy through the duration of your course.

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**Thank you for choosing High Tide Scuba! Let the adventure begin**

## Terms & Conditions

All students are required to complete a PADI/RSTC Medical Statement. If you can respond “yes” to any question on the medical history section of this form, then it is required that you obtain a physician’s signature on this form prior to participating in any in-water scuba activities. Once enrolled in a class, moving from one class date to another requires a \$100.00 rescheduling fee. This includes open water lake weekends. High Tide Scuba will not cancel a class (Classroom and Pool sessions) based on number of participants. However, we reserve the right to cancel open water lake weekends based on number of participants, weather conditions and unforeseen issues. High Tide Scuba and its Instructors are under no obligation to certify a person as a diver and there is no guarantee that any individual will receive his or her certification. Training requirements are performance based, and the Instructor must be convinced that a prospective diver can perform all skills repeatedly, with confidence, and without assistance (except for buddy skills).

## Medical Information

### **For your safety and to avoid delays in your course:**

Immediately after signing up for your course, please carefully read and complete the RSTC MEDICAL STATEMENT and DIVERS MEDICAL QUESTIONNAIRE found under the “Forms” section at <http://www.hightidescuba.com>. If you can answer YES to one or more of the questions on the DIVERS MEDICAL QUESTIONNAIRE, then it is required that you obtain a physician's release before being allowed to participate in the confined water (pool) sessions of your course. This is for your safety. This physician's signature must be on the RSTC MEDICAL STATEMENT form. Print all 6 pages of the form, and complete page 1 and the student section on page 2. Send or take all 6 pages to your doctor. Ask your doctor to complete the physician section on page 2 and return the entire form to you. Pages 4-6 are information for your doctor.

### **Give your completed form to your instructor during your first classroom session.**

You and/or your physician may have questions regarding your fitness to dive. Divers Alert Network (DAN) at Duke University Medical Center is available to help you address these questions. You and/or your physician can speak to diving medicine specialists by calling the DAN non-emergency line at (919) 684-2948 (Mon-Fri, 8am to 4pm CT). Referrals to area diving and hyperbaric medicine specialists are also available. This is a no-charge service to scuba divers and student divers.

## Equipment Requirements

There is no requirement to purchase or own any equipment for our Open Water Diver course. All necessary gear is provided for Open Water students, and our course price is all inclusive.

## Youth Student Divers

### **Under age 18:**

A parent or legal guardian must cosign all course documents, forms, and releases. A parent or legal guardian must be onsite at all times during the confined water (pool) training and open water dives at Clear Springs Scuba Park. Minors not accompanied by a parent or legal guardian will not be admitted entry into the scuba park.

### **Under age 12:**

In addition to the above...

A parent/legal guardian must review the *Youth Diving: Responsibilities and Risks Flipchart* with your child prior to the orientation night. A parent/legal guardian must review and sign the *Youth Diving: Responsibilities and Risks Acknowledgment* with your child. The Youth Diving Flipchart and Acknowledgment can be found under the “Forms” section at <http://www.hightidescuba.com>.

## Your Training

All High Tide Scuba core training programs follow the same four-phase format.

**Phase 1:** At home Study.

**Phase 2:** Classroom Sessions.

**Phase 3:** Confined Water Training to learn and tune your skills in heated pool.

**Phase 4:** Open Water Training where you'll apply your new knowledge and skills. Each of these phases is explained in more detail on the following pages, along with what to expect and your responsibilities for a successful and enjoyable experience.

### Phase 1: At Home Study

The Knowledge Development portion of your course is conducted at your pace using the appropriate PADI student textbook. All students must complete the Knowledge Reviews at the end of each chapter of their textbook. It is required that you complete the at home study prior to Phase 2, the Classroom Sessions.

The Knowledge Development portion develops your familiarity with basic principles and procedures. You learn things like how pressure affects your body, how to choose the best gear and what to consider when planning dives. You complete Knowledge Development on your own, reading each of the five sections of the PADI Open Water Diver Manual and watching the PADI Open Water Diver Video (which also previews skills you'll learn). At the end of the course, you will take an exam that makes sure you've got all the key concepts and ideas down. You must complete the Knowledge Reviews at the end of each chapter in their appropriate student manuals. These must be completed before you may progress to Phase 2.

### Phase 2: Classroom Sessions

**Open Water Students:** Classroom sessions take place on Saturdays of your scheduled class. The normal class hours are from 9:00AM to 5:00PM. During these sessions, your instructor will review your completed knowledge reviews, take course quizzes and exams, and size you for any gear provided with your course

### Phase 3: Confined Water Training

This is what it's all about – diving. You develop basic scuba skills in the pool. Here you'll learn everything from setting up your gear to how to easily get water out of your mask without surfacing. You'll also practice some emergency skills, like sharing air – just in case. Plus, you may play some games, make new friends and have a great time. There are five confined water dives, with each building upon the previous. Over the course of these five dives, you attain the skills you need to dive in open water. Pool sessions are conducted on Sundays from 6:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

### What do I need to bring?

- Swim Suit
- Towel
- Dry Clothing
- Sunscreen

**We will have the following for you to use at the pool:**

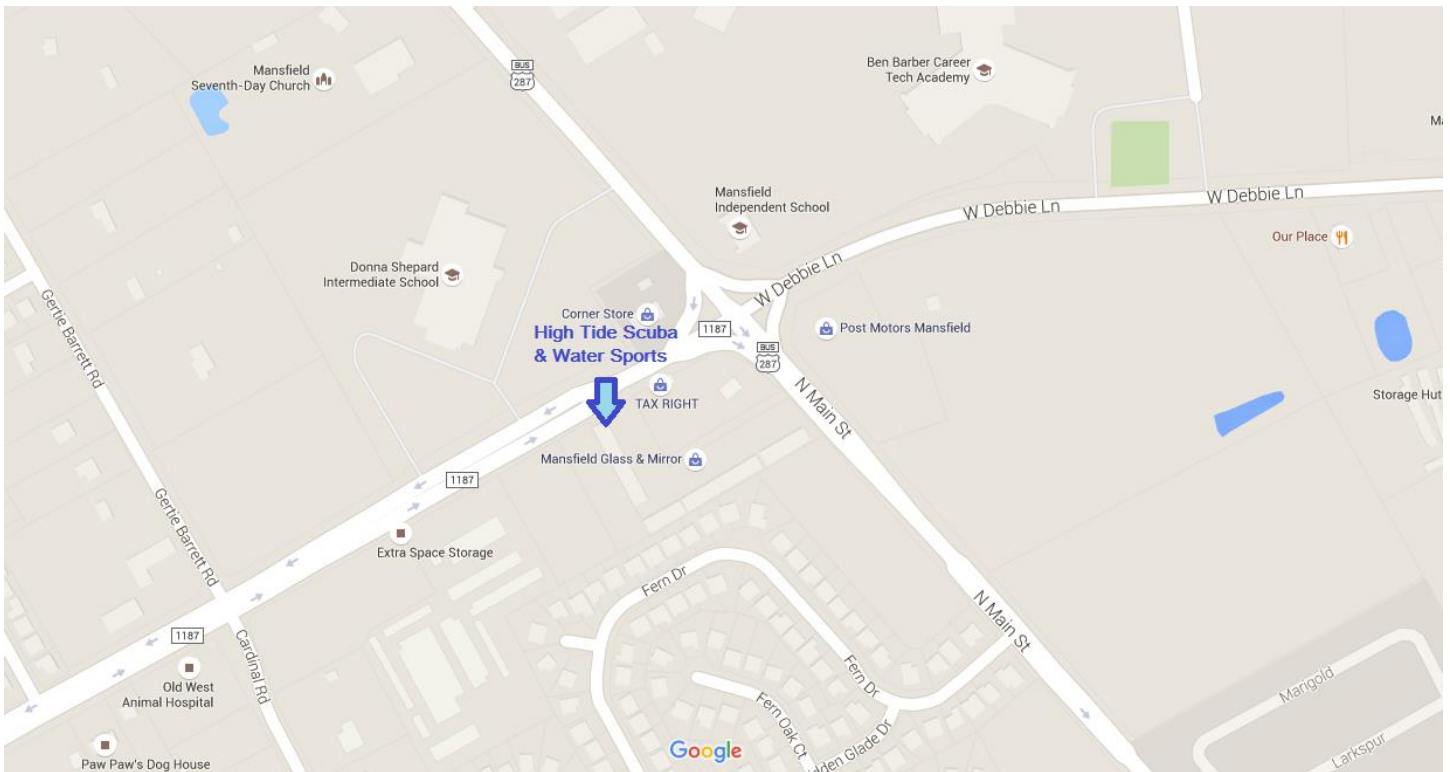
- ☑ Regulator
- ☑ Dive Computer or Console
- ☑ Buoyancy Control Device
- ☑ Weight System
- ☑ Air Tank
- ☑ Wetsuit and Booties
- ☑ Fins, Mask, Snorkel

**How good of a swimmer do I need to be?**

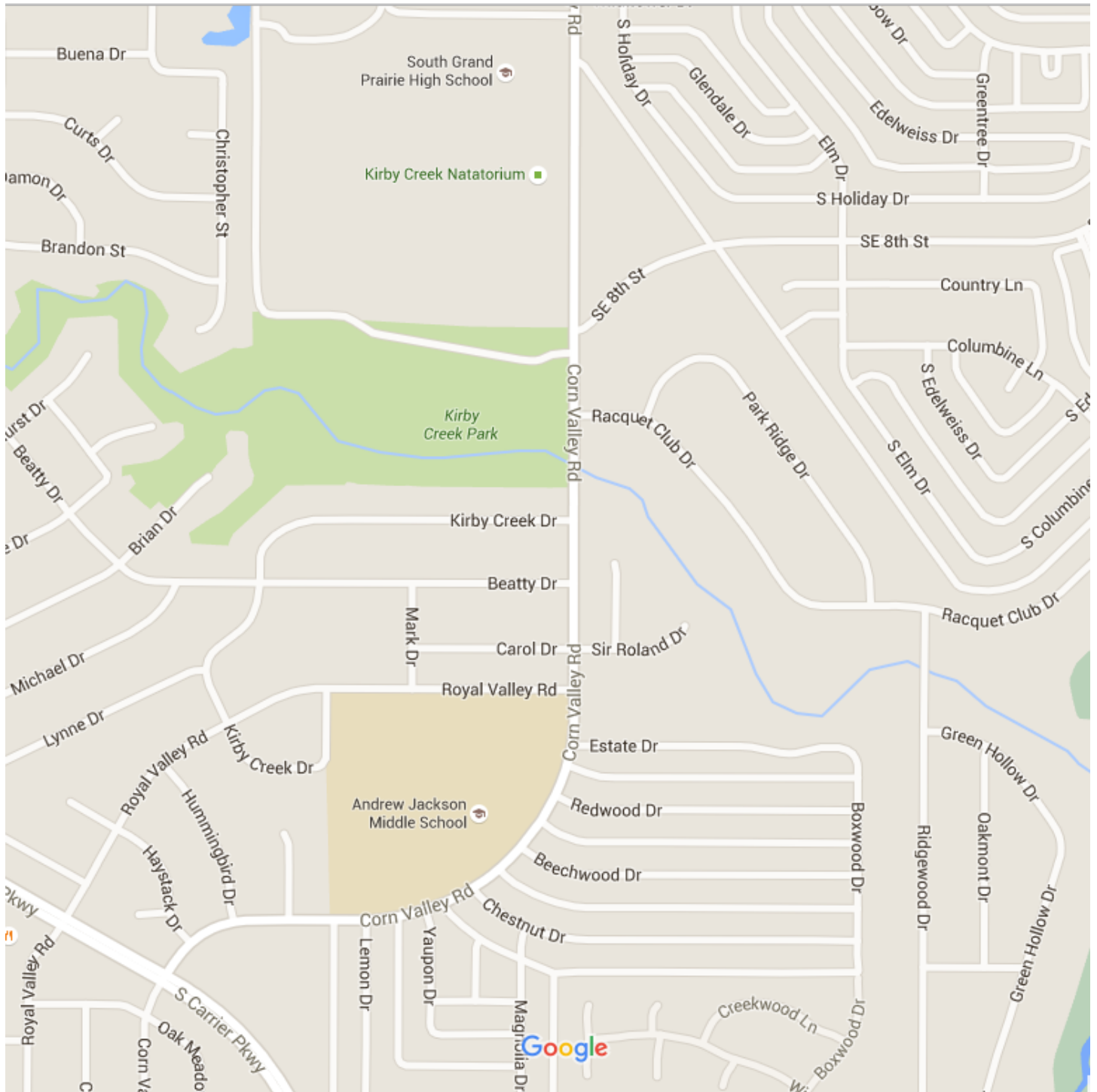
While you don't have to be an athlete swimmer to go scuba diving, you should be comfortable in the water and have basic swimming ability. To demonstrate your basic swimming ability, your instructor will have you swim 200 yards (non-stop and using any stroke you wish, no time limit), or snorkel 300 yards using mask, snorkel, and fins (non-stop and no time limit). You may choose which swim you would like to do. You will also be required to complete a 10 minute survival float (tread water, float face up, or survival float) without touching the sides or bottom of the pool. This will be completed during one of your confined water sessions and must be completed before you are cleared for Phase 4: Open Water.

**Classroom & Pool Directions**

**Classroom Location: 1315 FM 1187 Suite 101, Mansfield, TX 76063**



**Pool Location: Kirby Creek Natatorium - 3201 Corn Valley Rd, Grand Prairie, TX 75052**



## Phase 4: Open Water Training

This is the fourth and final phase of your training where you will apply your new diving knowledge, skills, and equipment. Open water dives will be conducted at Spring Lake in San Marcos, Texas, on the weekends.

**A PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF MINOR STUDENTS (UNDER 18 YEARS OLD) MUST BE ONSITE AT ALL TIMES DURING THE OPEN WATER WEEKEND. Minors not accompanied by a parent or legal guardian will not be admitted entry into the scuba park.**

### **Days and Times:**

- Please plan to arrive at the scuba park at 9:30 am on Saturday and Sunday. It is approximately a 3 hour drive time from Mansfield.
- Orientation and pre-dive briefings will begin at 9:45 am each day.
- We generally finish around 1:30 pm each day. Actual completion times vary due to class size, weather, and other environmental factors.
- We will do two open water dives each day for a total of four dives.

**Entry Fee:** Park entry fee is \$40 per person per day—cash, check or credit card paid directly to the park.

## Open Water Checklist

### **Money—Cash, Check or Charge**

\$40 daily park entry fee

### **Food and Drink**

Cooler with plenty of ice

Plenty of drinking water

Non-alcoholic beverages

Snacks

Picnic Lunch

### **Comfort Items**

Sunscreen

Hat

Towel

Weather Appropriate Dry Clothing

Sunglasses

Beach or Camp Chair

Appropriate Footwear

### **Other Items**

Recreational Dive Planner (RDP)

Diver Logbook

Ball Point Pen

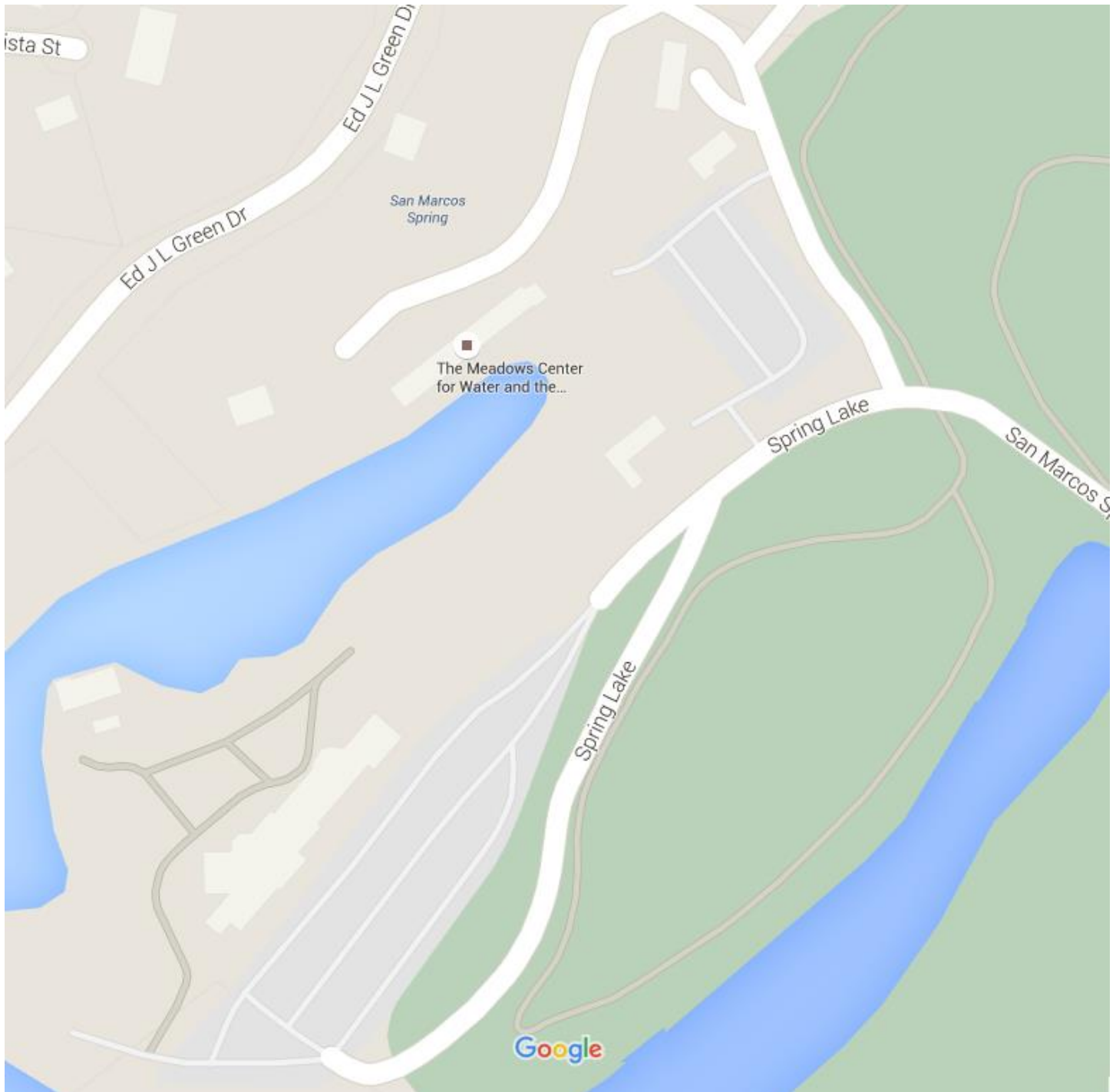
Mask Defog Solution

Driving Directions

## Scuba Park Directions

**Location: Spring Lake @ The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment**

201 San Marcos Springs Dr., San Marcos, TX 78666





**Checking In:**

- Upon arrival, park in the parking lot closest to the visitor center.
- Go to the picnic tables under the covered area nearest the visitor kiosk.
- We will have you sign a sign-in sheet and sign a release form.
- Pay your \$40/day park fee.
- We will provide you with additional parking locations closest to the dock entry point at the conclusion of check-in.

## Diver Protection Insurance

**Why diver protection insurance?**

During our scuba training we learn how to minimize our risk while scuba diving and how to plan and conduct dives within safe limits, making scuba diving one of the safest sports on the planet. Unfortunately, despite all of our best efforts, accidents can still happen. Diver protection insurance offers piece of mind that you are financially covered should you require medical care or evacuation during a dive vacation. Often regular health insurance programs will not cover the types of treatment required for diving injuries, but diver protection insurance fills those gaps 100%. We consider diver protection insurance as essential as mask, snorkel, and fins. The best part: It costs less than \$100 per year. It's a small price to pay for such great benefits, making it one of the best values in diving.

**Am I covered during my training with High Tide Scuba?**

Yes! For no-charge, all High Tide Scuba students are covered by Divers Alert Network's (DAN's) student diver insurance program. Your instructor will ensure you are enrolled during the orientation on your first night of class. This coverage is in effect for 6 months or until you complete your final open water certification dive, whichever comes first. To learn more about your student diver insurance coverage go to [www.danismybuddy.com](http://www.danismybuddy.com).

**How do I get my own diver protection insurance?**

We recommend diver protection insurance offered by Divers Alert Network (DAN). You can review the various insurance plans and sign-up for your insurance program online at [www.diversalertnetwork.org](http://www.diversalertnetwork.org).

**Who is DAN?**

The Divers Alert Network. "We are divers helping divers. DAN is a not-for-profit 501(C)(3) organization that provides emergency medical advice and assistance for underwater diving injuries, and underwrites a wide range of research, education and training programs that promote safe diving. DAN is supported by more than 200,000 fellow divers with a further 60,000 international divers supporting DAN Europe, DAN Japan, DAN Southeast Asia Pacific and DAN Southern Africa. DAN started in 1980 in association with Duke University Medical Center, initiating the 24-Hour Diving Emergency Hotline for dive accidents and providing emergency assistance and evacuation. It was quickly followed by a 9-5 information service and our award-winning magazine, Alert Diver, devoted to your safety as a scuba diver. DAN was the first to initiate insurance for the specialized recompression or other medical or evacuation services required in the event of a dive accident. DAN has trained medical staff on call to assist you in the event of a dive emergency. DAN initiated the use of emergency oxygen first aid programs and is the largest distributor of emergency oxygen equipment for the treatment of dive injuries. DAN remains focused on service to the community of recreational divers. We provide the most accurate up-to-date and unbiased information to the diving public, especially on diving safety. Examine this website and see for yourself the wide range of services DAN offers each and every day for you, the diver."

## Policies

**Course Fees**

All course fees are due at the time of the course registration unless other arrangements are made. High Tide Scuba reserves the right to withhold any certification until all course fees are paid in full and all rental gear is returned. We accept cash, check, and all major credit cards. There is a \$12.00 service for all returned checks.



**Course Cancellation/Reschedule policy:**

Our Scuba classes are performance based. Any student who cannot complete his/her course for performance reasons are allowed to join the next scheduled class at no additional cost. No refunds are made for students who cannot meet the performance standards.

Any student who requires personalized one-on-one instruction in order to complete the training must convert to a private course, and pay the difference in the group and private course fees.

Rescheduling a course requires a \$100.00 rescheduling fee.

Cancelling a scheduled course within three (3) days of a scheduled course start date will result in a loss of all paid fees.

**Certified Divers**

Scuba certified family and friends may not accompany students during any pool or open water dives. There are no exceptions to this policy.

**Air Filling Policy**

High Tide Scuba provides high quality breathing air for scuba divers. We use premium air filters with on line Carbon Dioxide monitoring to ensure high quality breathing air. Our air quality is tested quarterly by an independent lab, and our test results are available upon request.

High Tide Scuba will not fill any personally owned scuba cylinder when the cylinder's visual or hydrostatic inspection has expired. High Tide Scuba also reserves the right to deny the filling of any personally owned Scuba cylinder when the Visual Inspection Program (VIP) sticker does not conform to industry standards, or the identity of the inspector cannot be verified.

We will not fill any cylinder that: The manufactures stamped codes cannot be read; the valve has no pressure relief or burst disk; a burst disk that has been doubled or altered; has dents, bulges, line corrosion, pits, or heat discoloration.

**Privacy Policy**

We respect and are committed to protecting your privacy. That is why we have adopted this Privacy Policy. This policy lets you know how your personal information is processed and used. We will NEVER sell your e-mail address or any other information about you to a third party. All information gathered is strictly confidential and shared only with our financial institution for processing. We maintain a strict "No-Spam" policy that means we do not sell, rent, or otherwise give your personal information to outside companies. If you require further details or have any questions or concerns with our policy, please do not hesitate to contact us.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

Scuba diving gives you a unique way to face your challenges and transform your life in new ways. Becoming a diver can give you confidence that carries over into the way you face life every day. It's normal to have questions whenever you begin an activity like diving. The dive crew at High Tide Scuba can provide you with answers, and below you'll find the answers to many questions our students commonly have.

**My ears hurt when I go to bottom of a swimming pool or when I dive down snorkeling.**

**Will that keep me from becoming a scuba diver?**

No, assuming you have no irregularities in your ears and sinuses. The discomfort is the normal effect of water pressure pressing in on your ears. Fortunately, our bodies are designed to adjust for pressure changes in our ears – you just need to learn how, which we'll do during our first confined water dive in the pool.

**Does a history of ear troubles, diabetes, asthma, allergies or smoking preclude someone from diving?** Not necessarily. Any condition that affects the ears, sinuses, respiratory function, heart function or may alter consciousness is a concern, but only a physician can assess a person's individual risk. You and your physician(s) can consult with the Divers Alert Network (DAN) as necessary when assessing fitness to scuba dive. See our Medical Information page for more details.

**I wear glasses or contact lenses. Will I be able to see underwater?**

Being able to see clearly underwater is important, for avoiding injury, for being able to read your dive gauges, and to see directions from your instructor. If you wear glasses, then we recommend having prescription lenses installed in your dive mask before you begin the confined water portion of your training. There are many options for prescription dive masks, and High Tide Scuba can help you obtain the correct mask and lenses. If you wear contacts, most modern soft contacts can be worn while scuba diving. However, you should consult with your optometrist or ophthalmologist before using your contacts underwater.

**What are the most common injuries or sicknesses associated with diving?**

Sun burn and seasickness, both of which are preventable with over the counter preventatives. The most common injuries caused by marine life are scrapes and stings, most of which can be avoided by wearing an exposure suit (wetsuit), staying off the bottom and watching where you put your hands and feet.

**What about sharks?**

When you're lucky, you get to see a shark. Although incidents with sharks can occur, they are very, very, very rare and with respect to diving, primarily involve spear fishing or feeding sharks, both of which trigger feeding behavior. Most of the time, if you see a shark it's passing through and a relatively rare sight to enjoy.

**Do women have any special concerns regarding diving?**

Aside from pregnancy, no. Because physiologists know little about the effects of diving on the fetus, the recommendation is that women avoid diving while pregnant or trying to become pregnant.

Menstruation is not normally a concern.

**How deep do you go?**

With the necessary training and experience, the limit for recreational scuba diving is 130 feet. Beginning divers generally stay shallower than about 60 feet. Although these are the limits, some of the most popular diving is no deeper than 40 feet where the water's warmer and the colors are brighter.

**What happens if I use up all my air?**

That's not likely because you have a gauge that tells you how much air you have at all times. This way, you can return to the surface with a safety reserve remaining. But to answer the question, if you run out of air, your buddy has a spare mouthpiece that allows you to share a single air supply while swimming to the surface. You will learn and practice this and other options in training.

**What if I feel claustrophobic?**

Although wearing a lot of equipment may seem awkward, many people find the "weightlessness" of scuba diving to be quite freeing. Modern dive masks are available in translucent models, which you may prefer if a mask makes you feel closed in. During your training, your instructor gives you plenty of time and coaching to become comfortable with each stage of learning. Your instructor works with you at your own pace to ensure you master each skill necessary to become a capable diver who dives regularly.