

spear safe

AUSTRALIAN SPEARFISHING SAFETY INITIATIVE

BLACKOUT

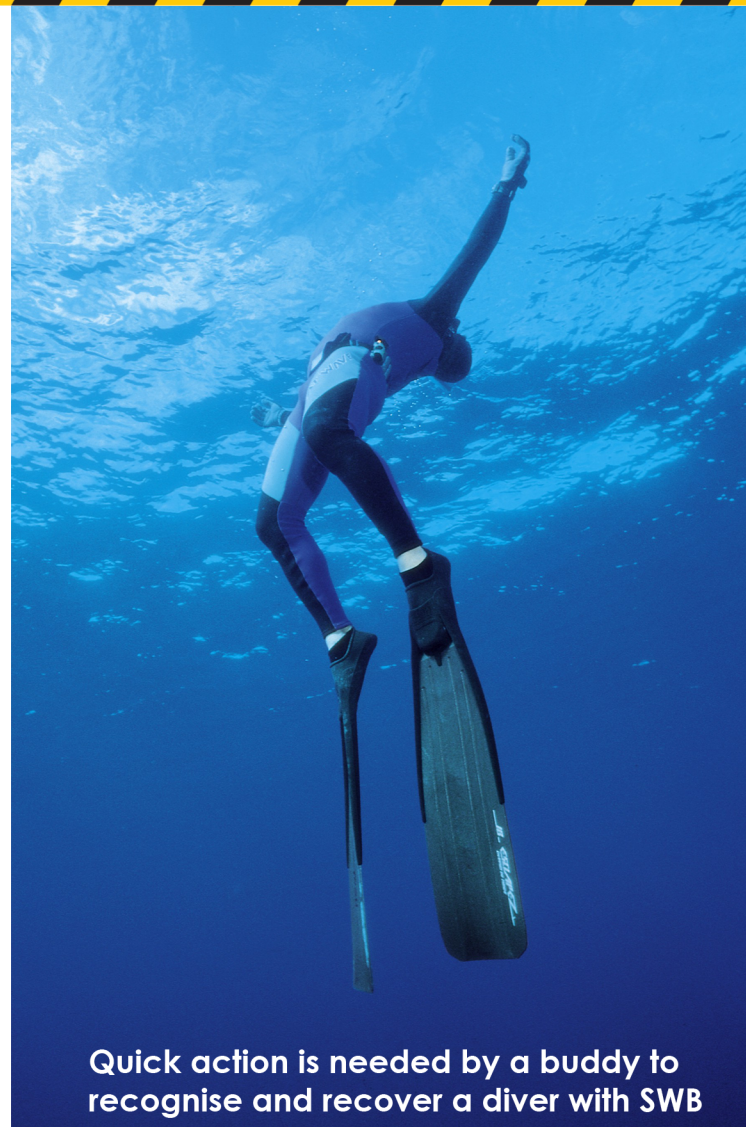
1. What Causes Blackout?

Blackout is a serious risk that breath-hold divers must consider and it results in many deaths world wide each year. It is the result of oxygen starvation at the end of a breath-hold dive. It is most likely to occur during ascent and with 10 metres of the surface or shallower. Many blackouts occur within 30 seconds after surfacing.

2. Avoiding and Surviving A Blackout

- Never dive alone. Dive in buddy pairs, one up and one down.
- Maintain direct supervision for at least 30 seconds after a diver has surfaced.
- Choose a dive partner with a comparable skill level to your own.

Technique for recovering a diver



Quick action is needed by a buddy to recognise and recover a diver with SWB

3. Weight Properly:

- Weight for neutral buoyancy at 10 metres on deep dives, and less for shallower dives. This increases the chances you will float to the surface in the event of a blackout and have a much greater chance of surviving through a timely rescue.
- If you ever feel at risk of blackout OR you are involved in a rescue, immediately ditch your weight belt.
- Use a weight belt with a quick release clip

4. Take Your Time

- Rest at the surface for twice as long as your dive time allowing oxygen and carbon dioxide levels in the blood to reach equilibrium.
- If you experience blackout and/or hypoxic symptoms (bluish lips or skin, loss of motor control, euphoria, etc.) stop diving for the day.
- Breathe absolutely normally to allow the body to dictate the rate of breathing to make sure the carbon dioxide levels are properly calibrated.
- If excited or anxious take extra care to remain calm and breathe naturally - adrenaline can cause hyperventilation without the diver knowing.

5. Breathe Sensibly – DO NOT hyperventilate

- Avoid hyperventilating by taking no more than 2-3 deep breaths before a dive - anything more than this can critically lower your CO2 level.
- CO2 buildup during a breath-hold dive creates the trigger that tells the body it is time to breathe
- Surface before the urge to breath. If the urge to breathe comes on, immediately return to the surface.

6. Be Prepared

- Know basic CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation) and how to handle a marine-based emergency.
- If there is a Diving Emergency phone 1800 088 200

BOAT SAFETY

There is a risk of injury from boat traffic. Severe injury or death can occur from being struck by the propeller or hull of a boat. There is also the risk of spearfishers being caught in currents and lost at sea. A float/flag alerts boats to the presence of a spearfisher in the water.

If a boat is being used it should display a large dive flag whilst spearfishers are in the water. Ensure a boatie monitors the spearfishers in the water. Be on alert for boat traffic. Ensure everyone that is to operate the boat holds a boat licence. Always dive with a friend(s) or tell someone where you will be diving and your estimated time of return. Obtain a current weather forecast report for the time that you will be diving.