

# Incident Management Guidance for Coaches

Perhaps the most difficult tasks that a regional coach may be asked to perform is to assist a branch with the investigation of a serious or fatal diving accident involving members of the branch. This may involve notifying BSAC HQ of the incident or assisting with the completion of the incident and accident report.

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## 1. Fatality guidance

Serious incidents are very rare. On average there are 15 UK fatalities annually of which 5-6 are BSAC members. Consequently, during a 3-year term a regional coaching team can expect 1 fatality within the region on average. This will be a very tragic event and reactions will be very different. You can expect a wide range of responses:

- Shutters being put up
- You will be informed but the club will want to deal with it alone
- You will be informed and asked for help
- You will be asked for high levels of support
- Reactions that are impossible to predict
- You may be accused of intruding
- You may get reactions out of character

## 2. Notification

BSAC HQ will most likely notify the regional coach through a Fatality Notification. This will tell you where and when the incident occurred and where those involved came from. You may well pick up information locally and any specific actions will be communicated directly to you. The Regional Coach may also receive notification from a branch, from members within the region, from a regional team member or very occasionally the press.

In any event the main task is to inform the Safety Manager on 07733 104302 (out of hours) or via BSAC HQ. Collect all information available. Offer support but do not offer any answers. Since serious and fatal diving accidents may ultimately result in a claim on the BSAC third party liability insurance, it is imperative that BSAC HQ is notified immediately, rather than waiting and hoping that no claim will arise. The insurers would rather be notified of incidents and begin preparations without delay, then have no claim submitted.

## 3. Collating information

If the notification comes from a branch the individual will be concerned and may have a specific request for help. Often the information they have is limited but it must be recorded and passed onto the Safety Manager. Local information may subsequently appear e.g. in the local press and should be collated. You should contact the branch and offer condolences and support. It is worth identifying a contact for BSAC HQ.

If requested to support the branch, the regional coach should contact the branch diving officer as soon as possible, to offer condolences and to arrange a meeting with the branch committee to offer any assistance that they may require. It is not unusual for a major accident or fatality to be followed by some disruption and dispute within the branch and possible resignations from committee posts. The Regional Coach may have to provide a stabilising and supportive influence at a traumatic time for the branch, its members and its committee.

The branch should be advised about the following important points:



- There is a requirement to complete an incident report for insurance cover and the annual incident database
- Under no circumstances whatsoever is any action to be taken by any BSAC member in relation to any incident without first obtaining the specific consent of BSAC HQ or the underwriters.
- If, in the opinion of the underwriters, representation is required at any proceedings, they will appoint a suitable representative. If any request to appear is served on any individual, the details must be made available to the underwriters via BSAC HQ as soon as the facts are known.
- All correspondence received from any third party or third-party representative must be forwarded, without acknowledgement, to BSAC HQ. Legal representation, where necessary, will be provided by the underwriters. The individual members of the branch concerned are prohibited from taking any other action.
- Any calls or enquiries received from the media, whether by the branch involved or the regional coach assisting the branch following the incident, should be directed to BSAC HQ.

When considering whether to offer support remember:

- You are not trained for counselling
- There will be a limit to what you can achieve
- Involvement will impact upon you
- BSAC HQ is available to support you or the Branch
- Outside counselling may be available through BSAC HQ