



SPEARFISHING

Step 1: IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS: Let's look at the hazards associated with spearfishing:

- Water Entry and Exit - People have died entering and exiting the ocean from shore.
- Current and Surge - Rip currents can suck you out into the ocean.
- Ear pressure equalization is so important because if it is not done correctly it can cause irreversible hearing loss and vertigo.
- Drowning is a very real danger. Getting tangled on the bottom, having a shallow water blackout, getting knocked out by a boat or by bumping your head against a rock the surge pushed you into.
- Accidental Spearing
- Boating Traffic
- Shallow Water Blackout
- Sharks

Step 2: ASSESS THE RISK:

HAZARD	Initial Severity	Initial Probability	Initial Risk
Water Entry and Exit	Catastrophic	Unlikely	Moderate
Current and Surge	Catastrophic	Unlikely	Moderate
Ear pressure equalization	Critical	Seldom	Moderate
Drowning	Catastrophic	Seldom	High
Accidental Spearing	Catastrophic	Seldom	High
Boating Traffic	Catastrophic	Unlikely	Moderate
Shallow Water Blackout	Catastrophic	Seldom	High
Sharks	Catastrophic	Unlikely	Moderate

Step 3: MAKE RISK DECISIONS: Decide on some controls that can be employed to reduce or mitigate the hazards:

Spearfishing Rules

1. **Always dive with a buddy** – and keep an eye on each other. Diving with a buddy doesn't mean go spearfishing with someone and split off and explore your own areas. It means maintaining constant contact in case one of you has a problem.

2. **One up, One down** – The safest way not to shoot your partner is to agree to dive one

at a time. One dives down while the other one waits and watches from the surface. Once your buddy is up at the surface make eye contact and wait 20 seconds before starting your dive. Shallow Water Blackout could happen up to 20 seconds after making it to the surface. That's how long it could take for the first breath you take to make it to your brain.

3. **Do NOT hyperventilate** – The urge to breath is triggered by a buildup of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) in the lungs. Your body tells you it needs to breathe because of the CO₂ buildup, NOT a lack of Oxygen. We all have a residual amount of CO₂ in our lungs. When we dive the Oxygen we use is converted to CO₂ and when the CO₂ level rises, we start to feel the urge to breath. When divers hyperventilate, they get rid of that residual CO₂ before they dive. The result is that it takes longer for them to feel the urge to breath. The problem is that they don't feel the urge to breathe with enough warning to make it back to surface safely. They may be close to out of oxygen and not know it because they are tricking the body's warning system.

4. **Recovery breathing** – After every dive spend at least twice as long on the surface breathing normally. This is to allow your body to recover and exchange that built up CO₂ back to normal levels.

5. **Stay Hydrated** – It is very easy to get dehydrated when diving. Drink plenty of water during dives to replace the fluids you lose. Being hydrated helps blood flow and oxygenate your muscles. So get in the habit of drinking LOTS of water throughout the day.

6. **Only load your spear gun underwater** – Never load a spear gun out of the water. If the gun accidentally goes off it will travel much further than it does under water. If the shooting line has a bungee that spear might come back to you.

7. **“Muzzle Control”** – Be aware of where your gun is pointed at all times. Imagine a laser shooting from your gun at all times and never put the laser on anyone. When loading your gun make sure it is not pointing at anyone. When swimming along the surface hold your gun from the middle so you can control where it is pointing at all time.

With selected controls in place, decide if the benefit outweighs the risk. You need to either accept the risk, avoid the risk, reduce the risk, or spread the risk. Do not make dumb decisions.

Step 4: IMPLEMENT CONTROLS: Once you select appropriate controls, implement them! A plan is only good if it is followed.

Step 5: SUPERVISE: As always, the situation is subject to change quickly. Monitor the situation and adjust as necessary to keep things under control.

Member
Printed Rank/Rate/Name

Member Signature

Date