

Commentary on recommended reading material for FCD Preparation.

I have graded each publication on a scale of 1-10 on how useful I did or would have found it, if available at the time.

Instructor Manual. (4/10)

This was not on the list 2-3 years ago. A cursory browse through the manual will re-focus a few items of information you may have forgotten.

I think the only real benefit towards FCD prep would be to test yourself on the DL & AD papers when prepping for theory.

The DL section on oxygen admin has now replaced the original stand-alone oxygen admin SDC so this section should be studied in respect of O2 admin if you don't have access to the original SDC notes.

Seamanship- A Guide for Divers. (7/10)

This latest edition was not available 2-3 years ago. However, I do have a copy and this excellent book should be on every diver's bookshelf.

Of particular use (if the book had been available earlier, are the clear, concise diagrams. The section on ropes & knots is also very useful.

The Diving Manual (3/10)

Worth a read to refresh the knowledge you may have once had if it's a while since you did your grade theory tests or are not an active instructor. There are some good diagrams of first and second stage operation, which every aspiring FCD should be able to draw and/or explain.

Dive Leading (5/10)

I originally bought this book when it was first released to help my wife who was just completing her DL. I must confess I did read through it. Again, recaps knowledge you may have forgotten or reminds you of the current technique where some aspects have changed/ evolved over time (CPR, CBL etc)

Again, good simple pictures of basic knots a aspiring FCD should be able to apply/ identify.

Safety & Rescue For Divers (8/10)

Consolidates most if not all of what a rescue specialist should know. covers first aid, O2, life saving techniques, PRM, CBL, basic recompression theory and other useful peripheral information. This book well worth studying and then practicing any techniques you may have forgotten or not familiar with.

Sport Diving (4/10)

Surprised this book is still being promoted. Although an excellent reference in it's day, and to be fair I would still suggest there is lots to be learned by reading this book in respect of 'timeless' subjects such as gas laws etc. However, as you might expect, some of the information is now out of date and it would be easy to be misled on subjects such as:

Diving cylinder manufacturing standards and markings.
Breathing air purity standard
CPR (carotid artery check and 2 person CPR rates)
Diver rescue (CBL on dry suit inflator ????)
Underwater Photography- Digital has arrived !!!!
Safety at Sea- Sea areas- Finnistere now Fitzroy

Teaching Scuba Diving (0/10)

Because this is not what we are doing on the FCD exam ?
Not on the pervious reading list and I certainly did not refer back to it.

BS-AC Nitrox, Advanced Nitrox and ER Diver Student notes (8/10)

Well worth studying and being aware of the theory outlines.

With ERD, you would be better off doing the three day course/ assessment as there are plenty of practical lessons to actually practice and learn.

I had previously been a student on the BS-AC combined nitrox course and am a BS-AC nitrox instructor. I think anyone who has a nitrox qualification from Other agencies should make sure they are aware of the subtle differences in BS-AC's teaching. (max pp02 = 1.4 bar, max deco mix in practice 80% etc)

BS-AC 88 Tables (air and nitrox) (10/10)

You will quickly loose the finer points of using these tables if you don't Teach OD/SD/DL etc on a regular basis !!!

Make sure you can use them in every available mode !! read the foreword notes and definitions as there are rules and information embedded here as well.

If you can do the multi-level dive questions on the DL and AD theory papers you are well on the way to having a good understanding of using the air tables to solve some potentially complex questions the FCD theory paper might just spring on you.

However, don't assume these tables are the ultimate authority on decompression diving. As a potential FCD you should go beyond the '88's and study/ be aware of pyle stops, Buhlmann tables, computer-based tables and how to use them and their limitations. This information should be covered in a basic format on day 1 of the BS-AC ERD course)

Decompression Calculator (0/10)

Don't have one, never seen or used one & don't intend to buy one !

I use computer/ V planner or Pro-Planner for deco diving and '88's for basic back up/planning.

THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATIONS GO INTO SUBJECT MATTER DEEPER AND IN MORE DETAIL THE BS-AC PUBLICATIONS.

WE WERE LEAD TO BELIEVE THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE PRESENTED IN THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATIONS ARE A REFLECTION OF FCD REQUIREMENTS

Simple GPS Navigation

I don't have a copy nor have ever read this book. The cover gives me the impression the contents may be slightly dated (should I be judging a book by it's cover -:)

There is some basic information in the dive leading manual. A trip to the Garmin web site provides more information such as differential GPS, other GPS applications etc

RYA Book of Navigation (10/10)

This is the sort of book I felt was teaching me something beyond BS-AC and to a level I believe is expected of a FCD. Also read RYA Day Skipper theory notes if you have access

Adlard Coles Book of Navigation Exercises (10/10)

As above.

Reeds Skippers Handbook

I don't have a copy nor have I read this book

Weather at Sea (9/10)

Well worth buying. Once I got my head around the cloud types and fronts etc I found myself studying weather patterns most days to put in to practice. Watching the weather forecast summary for the day, on TV will confirm your observations.

Guide to Knots & Rope Work

I don't have a copy nor have I read this book
Probably my weakest subject area. I found that learning the knots and applications to the level shown in Dive Leading and the earlier addition of seamanship for divers helped me.

Diving Emergency Handbook (8/10)

This book is a handy little reference guide. It covers the information found in the BS-AC syllabus for FAD, O2, RFA and more. Easy to read and covers the sort of knowledge required for the theory exam and those poignant questions a NI might start asking you on the practical exam

This book is made up of waterproof pages and would be useful as a dive marshal's reference guide for the more unusual ailments etc irrespective of you being a FCD candidate or not.

Oxygen First Aid for Divers

I don't have a copy nor have I read this book.

Marshalling Slate (5/10)

Make sure you have latest version that allows for nitrox etc.
You will need to consider a more complex slate if you are marshalling rebreathers and want to record sorb time, set points etc on the same slate.

However, you will not get the run time for the day on this slate.
We ended up devising a separate run time slate for the day in the final days of prep. This worked well as the day's plan could be posted on a hard boat wall for all to see. This prevented the divers constantly having to ask the marshal for an update etc.

The actual marshalling slate referred to, should then be used by the marshal for it's designed purpose.

I have been using this marshalling slate for several years and will continue to do so. I will also be using the run time slate we devised for future trips as well.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Back Issues of Dive Magazine (3/10)

Only good for the subject matter quiz

HMSO Chart Symbols (Chart 5011) (10/10)

Everyone who does chart work and navigation should have this one. Make sure you know how to use it and the logic behind the symbols and annotations

Macmillan Almanac

I don't have a copy as really only purchased by serious sailors as re-published annually. I can use to find out local information about harbours if available on a hard boat.

It would be worth having a look at the almanac next time you are a hard boat. If you know what's in it and how to use it, it may be of assistance on the practical exam.

Wreck Diving Manual (7/10)

Lots of good all-round practical information. well worth reading/ re-reading

Diving & Sub-Aquatic Medicine (10/10)

Expensive but this book has got to be one of the most wide-ranging & detailed diving medicine book you will encounter. Also a good one for insomnia if you attempt to read from cover-cover !
I often refer back to this book for information.

First Aid Manual (8/10)

Always a useful reference guide and again, read it as a knowledge updater.

FCD Web Forum (3/10)

Most useful as a communications method with other students.
There is very little reference material on this site.
The new forums are also in their infancy so things might change over time.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION I FOUND/ FIND USEFUL

Reading all of the above publications is hard work and after a while you will become 'saturated' with information.

As you reach advanced stages of knowledge prep you will need to consider methods of capturing all those facts you think you will need to remember for final prep /aide-memoir etc.

You can write these facts down as you go (bullet points) and also consider using condensed information references.

One of the best forms of condensed publications I found are the Fenhurst guides found in all good chandleries.

Sea Safety Companion ISBN 1 898660 64 6
Weather ISBN 1 898660-59-X

www.fenhurstbooks.co.uk

There are also some good websites

For synoptic charts

www.wetterzentrale.de

Starts off in German but if you go to wetterkarte you will link back to synoptic Charts from current to +60 hour & in English (synoptic courtesy of met office @ Bracknell)

Other

You should have retained the student notes from the numerous SDC's you have attended over the years. Read the notes. Check the publication date- chances are if they are a few years old they may have been updated. if in doubt check with HQ.

Google the subject ! You will be amazed at what information can be downloaded free of charge !

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