

General Information

DIVING IN MALTA

G.6b

New regulations governing scuba diving in Malta were passed in 2004.

Scuba diving is now governed by the Malta Tourism Authority (diving was previously regulated by the Department of Health). The principal changes involve the introduction of sensible health and safety regulations designed to ensure the high standards of dive centres.

Also included in the legislation are important issues that will be of great interest to visiting divers:

Self Declaration of Fitness to Dive

There is now no longer the requirement of visiting divers needing a current medical certificate signed by a doctor. Divers self-declare their fitness to dive on arrival at a dive centre in Malta. If a diver declares certain conditions, a medical examination will be required (*a similar process to the BSAC system*). The dive centre will also require evidence of the diver's qualification. The previous issuing of the Maltese Sports Diving Card and associated cost, is now discontinued.

Visiting instructors who wish to train or dive with persons who do not hold a minimum sports diver or equivalent qualification must still undergo a medical examination and register temporarily with a diving centre, valid for 20 consecutive days.

Nitrox and Trimix

These diving gasses are now sanctioned by the authorities in Malta for recreational scuba diving and many dive centres have installed the necessary blending equipment.

Minimum age revoked

The previous minimum age regulation of 14 to dive at Malta has now been revoked - the limitation now only being that dive centres can provide suitable equipment for young people. Under 18s will still need written approval of a parent or legal guardian.

The responsible Dive Centres in Malta have welcomed these new regulations. Although the health and safety requirements are stringent, the more professional centres already meet and exceed the necessary standards.

There are a few areas of the Maltese Coast where diving is prohibited because of heavy shipping, environmental or archaeological reasons. It is the divers' responsibility to ascertain whether their intended site is permitted. Ask at the dive centre.

The removal of archaeological artefacts is a criminal offence, as is breaking the diving regulations. The use of a spear gun (which is classified as a weapon) without a licence is also a criminal offence.