COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
POLICY/PROCEDURE/PROTOCOL

SUBJECT: TREATMENT PROTOCOL -
DECOMPRESSION ILLNESS/DIVING/ALTITUDE RELATED INCIDENTS

BLS             ALS

- 100% O₂, and/or ventilate prn
- O₂ Saturation prn
- Spinal stabilization when indicated
- Monitor EKG
- IV/IO SO adjust prn

Reference Policy S-415 for Disposition of Diving Victims

**Diving Victims:** Any victim who has breathed sources of compressed air below the water’s surface and presents with the following:

- **Minor presentation:** minimal localized joint pain, mottling of the skin surface, localized swelling with pain; none of which are progressive.
- **Major presentation:** symptoms listed above that are severe and/or rapidly progressing, vertigo, altered LOC, progressive paresthesia, paralysis, severe SOB, blurred vision, crepitus, hematemesis, hemoptysis, pneumothorax, trunk pain, or girdle or band-like burning discomfort.

**Disposition of Diving Victims:**

**Major presentation:**

All patients with a “major” presentation should be transported to UCSD-Hillcrest

Trauma issues are secondary in the presence of a “Major” presentation

If the airway is unmanageable, divert to the closest BEF

**Minor presentation:**

- **Major trauma candidate** – catchment trauma center
- **Non-military patients** – routine

**Active Duty Military Personnel** – transport to the Military Duty Recompression Chamber if possible. The Base Hospital will contact the Duty Recompression Chamber at (619) 556-7130 to determine chamber location. Paramedics/Base Hospital shall transfer care to Diving Medical Officer (or designee) upon arrival to chamber. Hyperbaric treatment may begin in accordance with military medical protocols.

- **Naval Hyperbaric chamber locations:**
  - Naval Station 32nd Street and Harbor Drive

**Note:** If possible, obtain dive computer or records.

Hyperbaric chamber must be capable of recompression to 165 ft.