



Sea Base Participant Health & Safety Advisory

This document is meant to serve as a guide to understand health and safety considerations for all Sea Base Program in the Florida Keys, USVI and the Bahamas. This document also outlines contradictions that may preclude participation in some of our programs/ activities per [Scouting America Policy](#). Please note that Sea Base does not dictate policies set by Scouting America in regards to Scuba Diving and Snorkeling. Sea Base, Scouting America is an industry leader in maritime adventures with an excellent safety record. If you have questions regarding medical policies, medical concerns, or medical approval, please contact Sea Base at 305-664-4173.

General Health & Safety Info

Sea Base Experience: Sea Base adventures are not risk-free. Participants must follow safety measures and take personal responsibility for their health and safety. Climate conditions include temperatures ranging from 45 to 95 degrees, high humidity, heat indexes reaching 110 degrees, and frequent, sometimes severe tropical weather. Prolonged, rigorous activities include snorkeling, scuba diving, kayaking, canoeing, sailing, hiking, and others. It is the responsibility of participants, participant parents or guardians, participant health-care teams, and unit leaders to see that each individual—youth or adult—can safely take part in Sea Base adventures.

Adult Participants: It is the role of accompanying adults to ensure youth safety. Because of this, adult participants must arrive in good physical condition and have no medical conditions that could result in diverting the Sea Base staff's attention away from youth participants.

Participant Ability Level: Sea Base Participants must be able to:

- Swim in a strong manner
- Climb a 6-foot ladder, unassisted, in inclement weather, from the water onto a rocking vessel
- Self-rescue if found overboard in inclement weather

Trained Leadership: Each crew is required to have at least one adult who is trained in wilderness first aid and CPR or has a greater professional medical certification. This leader acts as the primary first response until emergency services arrives. There are no on-site facilities for treatment or extended care at Sea Base. Sea Base does not staff professional medical personnel.

Location: Sea Base adventures are conducted at sea, often far from land, with limited access to emergency services. **Response times can be affected by weather, seas, and location, and can be delayed for hours.** Individuals with medical conditions that require immediate or nearly immediate access to professional medical care should not attend Sea Base.

Right to Refuse: Sea Base reserves the right to deny participation based on health and safety concerns and/or medical history.

Special Needs or Medical Concerns: Any individual with special needs or medical concerns must have an onsite advocate who understands the individual's condition and treatment and who is prepared to provide support to the individual. Special Needs youth who do not meet certain attendance requirements may be eligible to attend [COASTS designated programs](#).

Medications: Individuals requiring medication should continue medications as prescribed and bring an appropriate supply. Each crew must develop a plan to secure, lock, and dispense medication.

Scuba Participants: Persons with conditions listed as severe by the Recreational Scuba Training Council (RSTC) will not be permitted to scuba dive. Persons with conditions prohibited by Scouting America scuba policy will not be permitted to scuba dive. Various risk factors may exclude a person from scuba diving, either temporarily or permanently. Risk factors include, but are not limited to, ear and sinus problems, recent surgery, spontaneous pneumothorax, asthma or reactive airway disease, seizure disorders, diabetes, leukemia, sickle-cell disease, pregnancy, panic disorders, active psychosis, certain medications, and narcolepsy. For more specifics please see the [Absolute Medical Contradictions for SCUBA Section here](#).

General Health Considerations

Weight Limits: Those persons weighing more than 295 pounds will not be permitted to attend.

If a participant weighs more than 295 pounds, they will be sent home at their own expense. There will be weigh-ins upon arrival at Sea Base. There are no exceptions or waivers to the 295-pound weight limit

Allergies: Participants with allergies that may result in severe reactions or anaphylaxis should bring an adequate supply of epinephrine auto-injectors (EpiPen) to last up to three hours.

Sleep Apnea: Prospective participants with sleep apnea may participate at Sea Base if they have been medically cleared for participation, **they understand that they are responsible to provide battery support for their CPAP and may not have access to electricity** if participating in Bahamas, St. Thomas, St. Croix, Florida Keys Sailing, SCUBA Live Aboard, Keys Adventure or Out island programs.

Recommendations Regarding Chronic Illness and/or Compromised Immune System: Persons with chronic conditions and/or compromised immune systems should seek medical advice and education regarding medical risks associated with harsh marine environments before

participating. Individuals with open wounds or who are at risk for chronic illnesses or immune disorders should not attend Sea Base.

Hypertension (High Blood Pressure): Participants should have a blood pressure less than 140/90. Individuals with hypertension should have the condition treated and well-controlled before attending.

Recent Musculoskeletal Injuries and Orthopedic Surgery: Persons with musculoskeletal problems or orthopedic surgeries within the last six months must provide a letter from their treating physician to participate.

Psychological and Emotional Difficulties: Any condition should be well-controlled without the services of a mental health practitioner. Participants requiring medication must bring an ample supply and take as prescribed for the duration of their trip. **If you are a SCUBA Participant** please see the [*Absolute Medical Contradictions For Scuba Diving- Psychological & Emotional Difficulties Section.*](#)

Insulin-Dependent Diabetes Mellitus: Diabetes must be well-controlled. Hypoglycemia can lead to unconsciousness and drowning. **If you are a Scuba Participant**, please see the [*Absolute Medical Contradictions For Scuba Diving- Insulin Dependent Diabetes Mellitus Section.*](#)

Asthma & Reactive Airway Disease: Asthma must be well-controlled. Persons requiring use of medication and/or an inhaler must bring an ample supply. **If you are a Scuba Participant**, please see the [*Absolute Medical Contradictions for SCUBA Diving- Asthma & Reactive Airway Disease Section.*](#)

Absolute Medical Contradictions for Snorkeling & Scuba Diving

Seizures (Epilepsy): Seizures while snorkeling or scuba diving are extremely dangerous and often fatal.

- Snorkeling or scuba diving as part of an official scouting activity is prohibited for participants with a history of seizures.
- No participant with a history of seizures or taking anti-epileptic medication may snorkel or scuba dive. Participants meeting these criteria must be wearing a USCG approved lifejacket and may not be wearing a mask anytime they are in the water. Participants meeting these criteria are allowed to **swim** in the water but must be accompanied by their buddy AND an adult who is trained to recognize symptoms of a seizure.
 - Prospective participants with a history of infant febrile seizures may be considered for snorkeling or scuba diving after formal consultation with a neurologist.

Absolute Medical Contradictions for Scuba

Absolute medical contradictions for scuba diving:

- Asthma
- Epilepsy / Seizures
- Insulin dependent diabetes
- Anxiety requiring medication
- Narcolepsy
- Spontaneous pneumothorax
- Exceeding the weight limit of 295 pounds
- Multiple (more than one) medication for ADD, ADHD or depression
- Blood thinners
- Migraines with auras
- Hearing loss in one ear

Risk factors include, but are not limited to:

- Ear and sinus problems
- Sickle-cell disease
- Recent surgery
- Pregnancy
- Chemotherapy
- Panic disorders
- Leukemia
- Active psychosis
- Certain medications
- Migraines requiring medication
- Blood thinning medication
- Pacemakers

NOTE: For additional information read the detailed description on the following pages. Not every disqualifying medical condition for Scouting America scuba diving is listed. If you require further clarification regarding an unlisted medical condition and scuba diving with the Scouting America, please contact the Sea Base Scuba Department.

Insulin-Dependent Diabetes Mellitus:

Diabetes must be well-controlled. Hypoglycemia can lead to unconsciousness and drowning.

- Diving as part of an official scouting activity is prohibited for the following:
 - For persons under age 18 with the diagnosis of diabetes.
 - Persons using insulin to control diabetes.
 - Persons with diabetes, who are non-insulin dependent and who have had recurrent problems and/or hospitalizations for diabetic problems.
 - Persons with any HbA1c test greater than 7.0 in the previous 12 months.
 - Persons having a documented or suspected hypoglycemic event requiring treatment or assessment in the previous 12 months.
- Diabetes is considered well-controlled when the following are met:

- The acceptable oral medications for diabetic control are as single agents only: metformin and metformin analogs; DPP-4 inhibitors (sitagliptin, vildagliptin, alogliptin, saxagliptin and linagliptin); or SGLT2 inhibitors and analogies.

Persons who control their diabetes with exercise and diet (without the aid of medication, except metformin) and document HbA1c test value less than 7.0 in the last 6 months) may be approved to scuba dive.

Participants that are insulin dependent, youth or adult, will not be cleared to scuba dive. Those that are currently scuba certified or have a physician's approval for scuba diving will not be cleared to scuba dive at Sea Base. Participants younger than 18 years of age with diabetes will not be cleared to scuba dive. There are no exceptions, exclusions or waivers to this policy.

Asthma & Reactive Airway Disease:

Diving as part of an official scouting activity is prohibited for persons being treated for asthma or reactive airway disease.

- Persons with a history of asthma who have been asymptomatic and have not used medications to control asthma for five years or more may be allowed to scuba dive if resolution of asthma is specifically confirmed by their physician and includes provocative pulmonary function testing conducted by a pulmonologist.
 - Provocative testing can include exercise, hypertonic saline, a hyperpnea test, etc.

Participants, youth or adult, with asthma will not be cleared to scuba dive. The predisposing factors, severity of attacks or intermittent asthma does not change this Scouting America policy. Those that are currently scuba certified or have a physician's approval for scuba diving will not be cleared to scuba dive at Sea Base. There are no exceptions, exclusions or waivers to this policy.

Psychological and Emotional Difficulties (ADD, ADHD, anxiety and depression):

Any condition should be well controlled.

- Diving as part of an official scouting activity is prohibited for:
 - Participants taking more than one medication for any of these conditions.
 - Participants with anxiety disorder requiring any medication.

Several medications are NOT COMPATIBLE with the hyperbaric stresses of scuba diving. All medications MUST be listed on the Scouting America Annual Health and Medical Record. Those participants on multiple medications (more than one) for ADD, ADHD, Depression or any psychological condition will not be cleared for scuba diving. Those participants requiring medication to control Anxiety will not be cleared for scuba diving. There are no exceptions, exclusions or waivers to this policy.

Concussions:

Those participants who have suffered a concussion and any side effects from the concussion should contact DAN and Sea Base to discuss this issue. Please provide the following information on the Scouting America Medical:

1. When did the injury occur?
2. Was there any loss of consciousness, inability to recollect events?
3. Were there reports of disorientation after the incident?
4. Have there been any lingering affects?

Closing:

Please note that the final decision for participation in all Sea Base programs is at the discretion of the Sea Base Medical Director. The decision is final and we are unable to reverse or alter that decision. No waivers will be issued.