

WE CAN ALL LEARN FROM THIS

The victim entered the water with two companions for a dive of no more than 6M.to gather seafood. Conditions were regarded as rough with a 1.5M swell rolling in and low visibility underwater. The information on this accident is far more precise than usual as the area was under surveillance by MAF at the time. The dive had a duration of 31 min.

The snorkelling diver left the water earlier, the remaining two surfaced at about the same time where our victim showed signs of distress by waving his arms around. By the time his buddy towed him to shore he was not breathing.

A fisheries officer was there on the scene and administered CPR, which was unsuccessful, and the diver died of an air gas embolism (AGE). Compressed air bursts from the lungs and shunts the blood out of the arteries, which would normally supply the main organs. In, a severe case like this, first aid is seldom successful.

The post mortem revealed nothing medically wrong prior to the dive, which would have had an impact on the result of this dive (he did have a patent foramen ovale, a condition which can have consequences in certain diving scenarios).

SO WHAT CAN HAPPEN ON SUCH A SIMPLE DIVE

- (1) Our divers gear was badly worn and although the regulator was delivering air satisfactorily the pressure gauge was reading more air than was available.
- (2) Air leaks were found in the High-pressure hose which reduced the available air for breathing, therefore the hose was in a very dangerous condition.
- (3) The BCD and inflator hose both had leakage to a dangerous level, which would also would have consumed a considerable volume of air.
- (4) The police report states that the condition of the victims gear clearly indicated a lack of due maintenance.
- (5) We top this off with the fact his blood analysis showed that he had been smoking cannabis within the last 1.5hrs.
- (6) His level of training is unknown, but no reference can be found in any of the training agencies records, so he will be listed as untrained.

The really scary thing about this accident is that as an ex shop owner and a current instructor I know that out there this weekend, someone, and there are at times many of you, diving with some or all of the above 6 factors in your dive day.

Please go back to your basic dive manuals, re read them and take the information to heart. Refresher courses, especially if diving has not been consistent over recent times would be invaluable. The information is all taken from the experience of many divers

over many years, and the knowledge is absolutely essential in avoiding the above and similar scenarios.

If all divers followed all the basic rules we would have no deaths. Lets aim for that. Then I would have more time for diving and less time spent writing about sad and unnecessary tragedies like this.

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