



News



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IMCA issues warning over rogue diving schools offering non-existent 'IMCA approved in-water diver training'

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The International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA) has issued a warning to the industry regarding false and misleading claims made by unscrupulous diver training schools.

IMCA has become aware of establishments falsely claiming that they offer 'IMCA approved in-water diver training', leading some divers to believe that they hold an 'IMCA diver training certificate.'

In response to inquiries from newly qualified divers – many of whom have spent thousands of dollars on diver training believing it will lead to an 'IMCA qualification' – IMCA has clarified that it does not approve individual diver training schools or issue certificates for in-water diver training.

Given the presence of organisations falsely claiming IMCA approval, IMCA strongly advises individuals engaging with such establishments to perform thorough due diligence.

Before making any significant financial commitments, prospective students are urged to verify the safety records of the schools, to seek confirmation that the certificates they issue are officially recognised by IMCA, and that schools ensure compliance with the highest safety standards. For those uncertain about the legitimacy of training establishments, IMCA welcomes direct inquiries for clarification.

“False claims about IMCA-approved diver training undermine not only the integrity of our industry but also the safety and professionalism of divers worldwide”

Bill Chilton, Diving Manager at IMCA, said: “False claims about IMCA-approved diver training undermine not only the integrity of our industry but also the safety and professionalism of divers worldwide. IMCA is committed to holding organisations accountable and ensuring that only legitimate training standards are recognised. If you are doubtful about the credibility of a training establishment, we urge you to carry out due diligence and, if necessary, reach out to IMCA for guidance.”

IMCA recognises certain in-water diver training certificates that are issued or endorsed by national or regional governments, or their appointed agencies (such as that country's Navy, etc). Certificates issued solely by training schools are not recognised by IMCA.

IMCA defines in-water diver training as the foundational diver training required for individuals to safely work underwater. This training is distinct from surface courses approved by IMCA, which include programs such as IMCA Diver Medical Technician, IMCA Diving Supervisor, IMCA Assistant Life Support Technician, and IMCA Accredited Dive System Inspector training courses.

In response to the misinformation, IMCA has published detailed guidance on the process for IMCA recognition of in-water diver training certificates:

[D087 – Diver Training Schools: Assessment procedure for IMCA recognition of in-water diver training qualifications](#) sets out what IMCA expects a training school to have in place to deliver safe, high quality, in-water diver training leading to the issuance of an in-water diver training certificate recognised by IMCA. IMCA only recognises diver training where there is proper oversight, normally by government or government appointed agencies.

Schools who make an application for recognition will be subject to IMCA's standard company due diligence checks. IMCA will carry out a desktop audit of the school's submissions prior to arranging a site audit of the school's training facility. Following a successful audit, the certificate will be added to the IMCA list of recognised in-water diver training qualifications.

[D088 – Diver Certification and Verification](#) lists in-water diving qualifications currently recognised by IMCA and gives members information on how to verify the validity of in-water diver training certificates. This document replaces IMCA Information Notes 1394, 1571, 1598, and 1609, which have now been withdrawn.

[Information Note 1706 – Diver Supervisor Certification](#) sets out the process for IMCA's Diving Supervisor Certification Scheme, superseding IMCA IN1394. To obtain an IMCA diving supervisor certificate for Air Diving or Bell Diving, candidates must have the appropriate diver qualification and relevant experience, complete and pass an IMCA-approved trainee diving supervisor training course, and finish a set number of panel hours under direct supervision offshore as a trainee supervisor, and sit the final IMCA exam. Information Note 1706 also lists the offshore diving supervisor qualifications recognised by IMCA.



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