



Become a Tec Diver

Technical Diving

Technical diving is scuba diving's "extreme" sport, taking experienced and qualified divers far deeper than in mainstream recreational diving. Technical diving is marked by significantly more equipment and training requirements to manage the additional hazards this type of diving entails. Tec diving isn't for everyone, but if you welcome the challenge, the PADI DSAT TecRec or PSAI courses are the answer.

What is technical diving?

Technical scuba diving is defined as diving other than conventional commercial or research diving that takes divers beyond recreational scuba diving limits. It is further defined as and includes one or more of the following:

- Diving beyond 40 meters/130 feet deep
- Required stage decompression
- Diving in an overhead environment beyond 40 linear meters/130 linear feet from the surface
- Accelerated decompression and or the use of variable gas mixtures during the dive

Due to decompression obligations, in technical diving the surface is effectively inaccessible in an emergency, so tec divers use extensive methodologies, redundancy in equipment, and training to manage the added risks. Even with this knowledge, equipment, and training, tec diving admittedly has more risk, potential hazards, and shorter critical error chains than does recreational scuba diving.

How long has technical diving been around?

Most people would agree that cave diving is a form of technical diving. Cave diving developed in the late 1960s and 1970s, developing into a discipline largely like it is today by the mid 1980s. In the early 1990s, several groups of divers around the world began experimenting with technologies for deep diving (beyond recreational limits) to explore both caves and wrecks. These communities united and emerged as "technical diving" or "tec diving" with the publication of aquaCorps (no longer in print), which dedicated itself to this type of diving. Tec diving continues to develop both in scope and in its technologies.

Why would I want to be a tec diver?

Tec diving not only has more risk, but it requires significantly more effort, discipline, and equipment. It's not for everyone, and you can be an avid, top-notch diver your entire life without making a tec dive. That said, there's a cadre of individuals who want to visit places underwater that relatively few people can see. Many spectacular, untouched wrecks lie at depths well below 40 meters/130 feet. Deep reefs have

organisms you don't find in the shallows. Some people enjoy the challenges and focus tec diving requires. Still others love being involved with cutting edge technologies. These reasons make tec diving rewarding.

PADI DSAT TecRec

The TecRec program debuted in 2000. Although TecRec is not the first tec diving program (cave diver training has been around for decades), it repeatedly receives accolades for its merits.

- TecRec courses are integrated into a seamless course flow that takes you from beginning tec diver to one qualified to the outer reaches of sport diving using different gas mixes.
- Each level introduces you to new gear, planning, and procedures appropriate to extend your diving limits. The Tec 40 course may be taken with a single large capacity tank with a Y or H valve OR a standard valve with a 30 cu ft (minimum) tank clipped to the side. Tec 45 and Tec 50 require a full tec harness and wings with either backmount doubles or sidemount configuration.
- The Tec Diver course is an integrated sequence of three subcourses: Tec 40, Tec 45 and Tec 50. You can complete them continuously, or you can complete each level separately with a time span between them. This gives you learning efficiency and schedule flexibility.
- The Discover Tec class exposes the diver to the basics of tec diving, but it is not a certification. If all skill requirements are met during Discover Tec, those dives can be applied toward Tec 40.

PSAI Technical Diving

The PSAI Technical Diving program starts with Advanced NITROX Diver and then progresses to Extended Range NITROX and other courses including Trimix.

Prerequisites

TecRec prerequisites vary (see individual course descriptions), but the following applies to anyone interested in technical diving. You must be:

- 18 years or older
- A mature, responsible person who will follow procedures and requirements strictly and faithfully
- Medically fit for tec diving (physician's signature required)
- Willing to accept the added risks that tec diving presents
- An experienced diver with at least 10 logged dives for Discover Tec, 30 dives for Tec 40, 50 dives for Tec 45, and 100 dives for Tec 50
- Certified as a PADI Advanced Open Water Diver, Enriched Air Diver (with a minimum number of Enriched Air dives), and PADI Deep Diver OR have a minimum of logged dives deeper than 30 meters/100 feet (Tec 40 requires 10 deep dives deeper than 60 feet)
- Tec 45/50 require PADI Rescue Diver (or equivalent) certification and currency in CPR & First Aid
- Although it is not required, if you have little or no experience with tec diving, you should take the Sidemount Diver course first or get familiar with diving with backmount double tanks, which will make you more comfortable with a tec diving set-up and allow you to practice your buoyancy and trim skills before the Tec course. Time spent fine tuning these skills before a tec class will pay big dividends.

How can I get certified?

Contact Glenn Van Vliet at SnapperScuba.com or 850-217-0679. Glenn is a PADI DSAT Tec Deep and MSDT Instructor, PSAI Sport, Cave and Tec Instructor, and an EFR CPR, AED, and First Aid Instructor.