



## Introduction

The Raja Ampat Diving Code of Practice was developed by the [Raja Ampat Homestay Association](#)<sup>1</sup> as a guide for guests diving with the [community owned and operated dive centers](#)<sup>2</sup> in Raja Ampat. All members of the Raja Ampat Homestay Association that offer diving are committed to complying with not only the local regulations, but also raising standards in order to comply with the Homestay Association's *Standards for Dive Centre Operators*. The Code is designed to protect Raja Ampat's wildlife and natural resources and ensure that diving in Raja Ampat will be safe, enjoyable and educational.

Diving is a high-risk activity. Anyone who dives in a Raja Ampat Marine Protected Area does so completely at his or her own risk. The Raja Ampat Homestay Association, their partners, agents and assigns shall not be held liable or responsible for any injury, death or other loss arising out of diving and/or related activities in Raja Ampat.

## Compliance

The provisions of this code apply to all persons engaged in recreational diving within the boundaries of Raja Ampat Marine Protected Area and are intended to be observed by both divers and the operators of community owned dive centres.

If you believe your dive guide or operator is not complying with the Code - or have any other concerns regarding diving - please make a report! You can make a report by publicly commenting on the Stay Raja Ampat website page of the relevant service provider and/or you can report privately by email to [diving@stayrajaampat.com](mailto:diving@stayrajaampat.com)

## Conservation Awareness

- 1) Capturing, collecting, harvesting or disturbing any living natural resource of the reef is not allowed.
- 2) Harvesting or disturbing any non-living natural resource within the Marine Protected Area (MPA), including taking of dead coral, shells or stone, is not allowed.
- 3) Feeding or attracting fish and other wildlife with food or bait is not allowed.
- 4) Observe the standard rules for environmentally-aware diving:
  - a) Practice good buoyancy and body control and keep a safe distance from corals and other marine life, particularly in currents or surge;
  - b) Make sure your gauges and other gear are clipped and secured so that they do not dangle, risking entanglement or damage to marine life;
  - c) Never stand or walk on living coral or other marine organisms;
  - d) If you need to stabilize yourself in powerful currents or surge, look for a piece of rock or dead coral – do not hang on to living coral.
  - e) Avoid wearing gloves while diving unless required in cold water.
- 5) Underwater photographers should be particularly careful about avoiding physical contact with the reef. A camera is not a license to move, prod, or harass marine life.
- 6) Possession or use within the MPA of chemicals (natural or synthetic) or explosives used for fishing, including for the purpose of stunning, is not allowed.
- 7) Possession or use within the MPA of spear guns and other underwater fishing gear is not allowed.
- 8) Leave no trace: Dispose of trash or rubbish appropriately, and never on the beach or in the sea. Aim to take home with you any plastic packaging or containers that you brought with you into Raja Ampat.
- 9) Do not permit others to damage the wildlife and natural resources of Raja Ampat. Report any violations of these rules that you witness to your dive guide or the homestay owner, and log the incident with the [Raja Ampat Environment Watch app](#).<sup>3</sup>
- 10) Anyone entering the Raja Ampat district must have a valid [PIN \(entry permit\)](#)<sup>4</sup>, which can be purchased in Sorong or Waisai. Tourists without a valid PIN will be forbidden from diving or snorkelling by the homestay or dive operator.

## Dive Safety

All divers should be aware that there is no reliable hyperbaric chamber in Papua, so in the case of decompression sickness (DCS), evacuation to Bali or Manado would be required. Therefore all divers must plan each dive as a non-decompression dive, and must carefully manage their dive profile during their trip. These guidelines are designed to remind all divers how best to dive safely in Raja Ampat.

- 11) All divers must be trained and certified by a recognized international training agency and physically fit to dive. In most cases, divers will be required to undergo a brief assessment dive with the Dive Master. This is not only to help get a sense of the diver's skill and experience level, but also to act as a refresher of key skills and safety awareness that will be especially useful for divers who do not dive frequently throughout the year.
- 12) Every diver (or, in the case of minors, a parent or legal guardian) must sign a liability release form before commencing diving in the park. Local regulations (*Perbup 4/2011*) require that all divers have insurance cover that includes the cost of medical evacuation, and all divers must supply proof of insurance or may not be permitted to dive. The Homestay Association recommends the cover provided by [Divers Alert Network \(DAN\)](#).<sup>1</sup>
- 13) Make sure your dive gear is in good working order and appropriate for the conditions you will be diving.
- 14) Familiarize yourself with these rules, as well as any special emergency procedures explained to you by your dive leader. It is your responsibility to attend dive briefings and to comply with depth limits and other instructions from your dive leader.
- 15) All divers are required to carry the following safety items on every dive:
  - a) Surface marker buoy (SMB), lift bag, emergency flag, or other appropriate daytime visual signaling device.
  - b) For night dives, one dive light and at least one backup light must be carried.
  - c) Whistle, air horn or other appropriate auditory signaling device.
  - d) Other recommended items include: compass, knife or line cutter, and back-up auditory and visual signaling devices (dye packs, signal mirror).
- 16) Divers in Raja Ampat may experience very strong currents, including down currents and eddies. These conditions can be dangerous, particularly for inexperienced divers. It is your privilege and responsibility to refuse to dive if you feel that conditions are beyond your current level of certification, training, experience, or physical fitness.
- 17) Adhere to sensible depth limits and profiles. Personal dive computers are strongly recommended, but dive conservatively – do not push the computer's 'no decompression stop' time allowances to the limits. Divers engaged in repetitive dives over multiple days should be particularly cautious. Make sure you know how to use your dive computer and understand the meaning of the display data, warnings and alarms.
- 18) Speed of ascent should be limited to 7 meters/minute (23 feet/minute). Avoid repetitive dives to increasing depths (reverse profiles), and observe at least a one-hour surface interval between repetitive dives.
- 19) Complete a 3-5 minute safety stop at a depth of 4-5 meters (13-16 feet) at the end of every dive unless deteriorating sea conditions or other factors dictate that the safety stop must be abbreviated or omitted. For dives to depths of 30 meters or more, additional deep stops are recommended. If your dive computer does not provide guidance on performing deep safety stops, ask your dive leader for guidance and advice.
- 20) Stay hydrated, and do not use alcohol, drugs, or caffeine before diving. Avoid strenuous exercise after diving.
- 21) Report to your dive leader any changes in your physical condition that may impact your fitness to dive, and/or any equipment malfunctions or other problems that may impact dive safety.
- 22) In the event of an accident or emergency, it is your responsibility to render assistance to another diver to the extent that your training, experience, and physical fitness allow, or to alert your dive leader or another diver qualified to render assistance. Do not undertake a rescue effort that puts yourself or other divers at risk.
- 23) Do not fly or ascend to an altitude of 2,500 meters (9,000 feet) or more within 24 hours after your last dive. A longer surface interval is recommended after repetitive dives over multiple days. Divers engaging in repetitive dives over multiple days should consider a 24-hour break every 3 or 4 days.
- 24) Most marine life poses little hazard for divers who refrain from touching or harassing marine life. However, fishes with venomous spines and some invertebrates (sea urchins, Crown of Thorns starfish, and some cone shells) can cause serious injuries if touched or handled. Fishes such as the Titan triggerfish and moray eels may be dangerous if harassed or when protecting egg-bearing nests. Other forms of marine life, such as hydroids, fire corals, and some anemones, jellyfish and sponges can cause injuries that could contribute to a serious diving accident, or may be dangerous to persons who are particularly sensitive.