



SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF – UNDERWATER SEARCH AND RECOVERY UNIT (DIVE)

TEAM LEADER – RESERVE SERGEANT TED THOMPSON



TEAM MISSION

The Sheriff's Underwater Search and Recovery Unit (DIVE) is a sub branch of the Law Enforcement (LE) Reserves division of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department. We are responsible for the underwater search and recovery of human remains, evidence or anything identified as important to recover as directed by the Sheriff's Department. We also provide public services by performing underwater maintenance at local lakes and reservoirs when requested. We cover the entire county of San Diego and our dive operations range from ocean recoveries to high elevation lake diving. We are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We may be called upon to perform a dive recovery at any time, but the majority of our dive operations will be conducted after normal working hours Monday thru Friday with the majority of our dive activities on Saturday and Sunday. Our main function for the department consists of dive recovery missions, but we can be called upon to assist with responding to natural disasters such as wildfires or to provide additional deputy support for various functions that are held throughout San Diego County. The Reserve Law Enforcement Bureau has a command structure that parallels the regular department which provides the opportunity for Reserve Deputies to hold ranks including Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain and Commander.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN THE DIVE UNIT

- Posses a Dive Certification from a nationally recognized agency
- Ability to dive in challenging environments
- 18 years of age for Citizen Volunteers or 21 years and older at time of academy graduation for sworn
- U.S. citizen or legal resident who has applied for Citizenship
- High school diploma or GED certificate
- Valid California driver's license and current vehicle insurance or bond (to be able to drive county vehicles)
- Good physical condition
- Good moral character. No felony convictions
- Vision must be correctable to at least 20/30 in both eyes
- Hearing must be unimpaired
- Military personnel should be assigned to area for at least 2 years
- Physically and emotionally able to perform LE duties
- Complete medical examination required (before being sworn)
- Pass physical capability and psychological tests (before being sworn)

All applicants will receive an initial interview by the senior staff of the dive team prior to submission of application and background investigation packet.

While it is our expectation that you are a capable and safe diver, we do not expect you to be proficient in this type of diving without prior dive recovery experience. Our training program will provide you with the additional skills required to effectively and safely operate in these environments and conditions.

TEAM DYNAMICS

The team is comprised of Citizen Volunteers (CV) and sworn Reserve Deputies. We are all volunteers of a reserve organization, therefore our team is comprised of many people from various backgrounds throughout San Diego County. Our team includes current and retired military, doctors, fire department personnel and professionals from all other forms of occupations. This multitude of diverse backgrounds has been the key to our success as a volunteer agency.

Many dive team members are sworn Reserve Deputies. As a new member you will become a CV but are encouraged to become a sworn Reserve Deputy. The team runs with the same chain of command that is used within the Sheriff's Department. A diver will be assigned to a squad of up to seven divers. This squad will have a squad leader who is responsible for that particular group of divers. Each squad leader will report to the dive team leader.

Any member of the team may bypass the chain of command when safety issues are identified where immediate action needs to be taken to prevent injury or loss of life.

COST OF BEING A DIVE TEAM MEMBER

As with any volunteer organization, the bulk of the expense to participate in this type of activity falls on the individual team member. Each diver is required to maintain their own complete set of diving equipment. We do provide cylinders with air or nitrox for our dive operations. In addition to dive equipment, the individual team member must also purchase uniform items such as shirts, pants, black boots, and duty belt with accessories. These items can be purchased for around \$500. Each year you will be permitted to submit a reimbursement form to the county that will repay you up to \$250 for items that you purchase in order to maintain your dive equipment and or uniforms. This reimbursement may not be used for firearms or ammunition. For sworn personnel, some equipment will be issued to you by the department and it is your responsibility to maintain it.

ATTENDING THE ACADEMY

Every member of the dive team will be encouraged to complete at least the minimum P.O.S.T 144-hour PC 832 course (Level 3) and up to the full P.O.S.T. Basic Law Enforcement (Level 1) academy. These courses are taught at community colleges in the evenings, typically on Tuesdays and Thursdays and all day Saturdays. You must be able to commit to attending the academy as you cannot miss any of the course work. There are no excused absences as this is a P.O.S.T. requirement.

This encouragement is due to the mission of recovering evidence. Often times our recoveries are connected with criminal activity. While any of our non-sworn divers may find evidence, only a sworn diver will be the one who must collect the evidence. Since the evidence is a major component in a trial for a conviction, the benefit of being a sworn deputy will allow you to give expert testimony and maintain the integrity of that evidence.

HUMAN REMAINS RECOVERY



EVIDENCE COLLECTION



JOINT UNIT RECOVERY



TEAM MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Maintain a complete and ready set of SCUBA gear that can be accessible at all times
- Submit monthly hours and miles to document the resources you have used in the performance of your duties
- Submit required reports as directed by leadership
- Maintain a valid First Aid and CPR certificate
- Perform routine maintenance checks on the team vehicle, boat, and other assorted equipment in order to maintain operational conditions and report any deficiency to leadership to address those deficiencies
- Commitment to the team. In the course of the year each diver must attend at least 80% of the units scheduled meetings, trainings and recovery operations. Unless other commitments are arranged by leadership to meet this commitment
- Complete required qualifications as directed by the department in order to maintain proficiency with your duty weapon (sworn only)
- Attend at least 24 hours of P.O.S.T. continued educational courses every two years as required by the department (sworn level 2 and above only)

DIVE CONDITIONS AND MEDICAL CONCERNS

While the team dives in all of the waters within San Diego County, the majority of our dives are conducted in zero visibility conditions where underwater lights and navigational aides will prove of little use to the success of the dive operation. These conditions adds a unique challenge to our dive environments that most divers do not train or plan for and is what makes our diving different from the ordinary diver.

Since these conditions are considered more challenging than the average recreational diver, we expect all team members to be in good physical health conditions at the time of our operations. While in the performance of your duties for the Sheriff's Department, to include dive operations, all team members are covered under the county's Disaster Service Worker in Emergency Services insurance in the event of an incident.

DIVE STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Reserve Sergeant Ted Thompson
Phone: 858-345-0665
E-mail: tedthompson@yahoo.com

Reserve Deputy Lance Cohen (Training Officer)
Phone: 530-545-0504
E-mail: lance.cohen@gmail.com