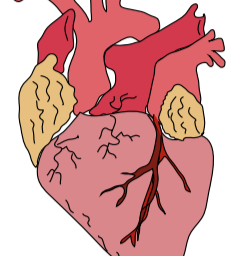




# Diving Fatalities

Drowning is usually described as the cause of the death but death is usually due to heart problems, known as Sudden Cardiac Death (SCD), and arterial gas embolism (AGE).

## SCD can be caused by:



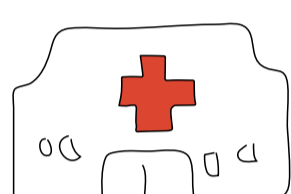
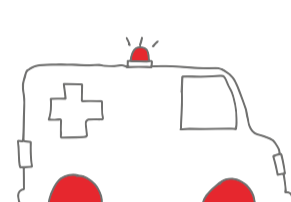
- Coronary artery disease and left ventricle hypertrophy (LVH)
- Atherosclerotic heart disease
- Arrhythmias

## Three patterns to a diver's death



Underwater, with no medical attention received

Above water, while being transported to medical facilities



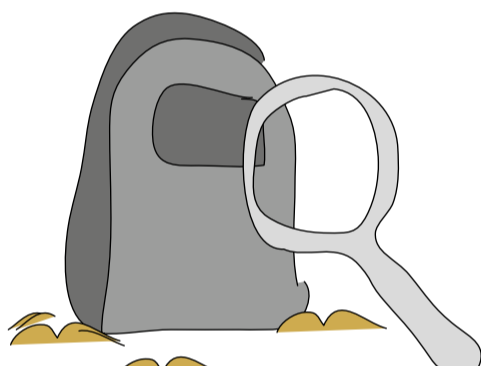
At a medical facility, hours or days after the diving accident

## Field investigation of cause of death



- History
- Antemortem events
- The environment
- Body recovery
- Medical care administered before death
- Body and equipment recovery, and documentation and preservation of evidence

## Post mortems



### Pathologists should be aware of:

- circumstances surrounding the fatal dive mishap
- the diver's past medical/surgical history
- recent health status
- any medications taken

## Main route causes of fatal accidents involving rebreathers:

- 1 Human error
- 2 Electrical problems
- 3 Mechanical problems

Autopsies cannot reveal the most common causes of rebreather fatalities: hypoxia, hyperoxia and hypercapnia.

## Guidelines

 <p>Exercise and eat a healthy diet</p>	 <p>Use the buddy system</p>
 <p>Follow your training consistently and often</p>	 <p>Use proper weighting practices</p>
 <p>Make sure you skill level is correct for the conditions</p>	<p>Account for all divers in your group</p> 
 <p>Avoid overhead environments unless properly trained</p>	<p>Have equipment regularly serviced and maintained</p> 

## Other possible causes of death

- o Air embolism
- o Decompression sickness
- o Carbon monoxide poisoning
- o Drowning
- o Venomous stings/bite

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