

The Diving Medical Advisory Committee

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Diving Distance from Seismic Surveying Operations

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Consideration has been given to the safety of divers in the vicinity of seismic surveying operations. This note sets down guidelines which it is suggested will be of help in relevant cases.

When seismic surveys are to be conducted in the vicinity of diving activities, it is considered that a safe distance between the seismic source and the diver in the water should be 1,500 metres where the seismic source is of the airgun or gas gun type and its capacity is not greater than 4,400 c. ins or equivalent.

When conventional explosive (for example TNT) is used, safe distances may be considerably less than those advised for air and gas guns but, unless there are compelling reasons for not doing so, it is advised that the limiting distance of 1,500 metres should still be observed.

It is unlikely that seismic work will ever be conducted in shallow water but it should be pointed out that the calculations used to determine the figure of 1,500 metres are not applicable in extremely shallow water depths, e.g. less than 10 metres.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the psychological effect of seismic surveying upon a diver in the water may be significant and will certainly distract his attention from the work he is engaged upon, long before the sound and shock waves from the explosion have any physical effect upon him or reach levels of intensity which even begin to approach danger.