

Let's Talk Dive Equipment

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Exclusively for NAUI Instructors

Gear up to go Diving!

There is no way around it: scuba diving is an equipment intensive sport! This handout lists selection considerations and approximate prices of scuba equipment, listed by what you must own, what you must own or rent, and everything else that may be nice to own. Though rental equipment is available, most divers choose to purchase selected scuba equipment, or a complete system. Refer back to this list when someone asks "What do you want for your birthday?"

For the first pool session, you need the "must haves" but you should purchase them after the classroom session, where we discuss dive equipment. Don't buy any other equipment until after we've answered your questions so you can be sure to buy what's right for you the first time.

Must Haves:

Mask: Fit & comfort are the most important factors in choosing a mask. Single or double lens, skirt quality and mask volume are other selection considerations. A double lens mask is needed to use corrective lenses (\$56-\$130 for prescription lenses). Price: \$55 - \$100+.

Fins: Full foot fins enclose your heel and are suitable for snorkeling, while open heel fins (used for scuba diving) are adjustable, provide more power, and are worn with booties for warmth & protection. Consider fit, power, efficiency, and stiffness. Price \$35 - 85 (full foot fins) or \$70 -190 (open heel fins).

Snorkel: If you are planning to dive mostly from boats or in calm lakes, save money and buy a basic snorkel with a purge valve. Divers that snorkel frequently or that plan on diving mostly from ocean beaches may want a "dry" or "semi-dry" snorkel. Price \$27 - \$50.

Wet suit booties: Open heel fins require booties. Fit, the

ability to air out your booties, and protection appropriate for your use are key considerations. Price \$35 - \$70.

Watch or dive timer: You must have a device that tracks your dive time. A dive computer, depth timer, or a rugged dive watch is required. Price \$50 - \$300+.

Swim suit: Long baggy swim trunks don't fit comfortably under a wetsuit, but think twice about a revealing or flashy suit if you're not going to wear a wetsuit.

Must Own (or Rent) after Pool Training:

Thermal protection: Depending on water conditions and available budget, divers will wear dive "skins" (\$80 - \$100), wetsuits (\$100 - \$450), or drysuits (\$900 - \$2000). Hoods (\$30 - \$60) and gloves (\$20 - \$60) are worn with wetsuits and drysuits. This subject could be an entire class! A good close fit leads to warmer divers.

Buoyancy compensator ("BC"): Features & function vary widely; your main diving activity is the primary consideration when purchasing a BC. Fit, tank

stability, and convenient features are all important. Be sure to get a BC with enough "lift" for both cold and warm water diving. Price \$320 - \$600+.

Regulators and gauges:

Your regulator set must have a primary regulator and an octopus or alternate air source. You will also need an air pressure gauge, depth gauge, and an underwater compass. Expect to spend \$600 - \$1300 on the whole package.

Weight belt: These are common rental items, but we recommend buying at least a belt with pockets for adding weight. You should consider buying lead weights if you will be driving rather than flying to your dive sites. If you buy a "weight integrated" BC you will not need a weight belt. Price \$20 - \$50 for a belt and \$2 - \$3 per pound of lead.

Tank: Tanks are steel or aluminum and vary by working pressure, volume, and buoyancy characteristics. Aluminum 80's can be purchased for \$140-160. Steel tanks are more expensive (\$180 - \$300+), but depending on your diving activity, they may be worth the extra money.

Dive Tables: These are necessary for planning your dive times and knowing your decompression status. We provide your NAUI dive tables in your course pack

(replacement cost \$12 - \$15).

Log Book: You should log every dive! We provide you with your first log book. Replacement cost: \$7 - \$25.

Useful Stuff:

Dive knife or tool: A dive knife or cutting device should be carried by all divers, especially those that may encounter fishing line or kelp. But, don't go overboard on a knife that may be lost or rust beyond repair. Price \$25 - \$90.

Dive computer: Technology keeps improving dive computers and reducing their price. Plan on spending \$250 - \$1200 for a full-function computer that monitors your decompression status.

Dive light: When diving at night each diver must carry two lights. Lights are useful during the day, too. Your main light may cost \$40 - \$85 and your secondary light may cost \$20 - \$40.

Surface float and dive flag: In Michigan, you must fly a dive flag while diving. When diving from a boat, the flag will be on the boat. When diving from shore, your flag will be attached to a float. Price: up to \$20 for a flag and \$20 - \$90 for a complete float.

Dive bag: You need something to protect your equipment during transport, from a simple bucket (\$7 - \$35), a mesh bag (\$25-60) or a high-tech rolling bag with

multiple compartments (\$150 - \$250).

U/W photo equipment:

Divers often start with a "point-and-shoot" camera (\$120 - \$200) and may go up to a top of the line camera that offers more adaptability for different light conditions (\$700 - \$1200). Strobes, specialty lenses, and framers are next on the journey to improved U/W photography (\$100 - \$\$\$). This is a glorious and rewarding, though expensive, specialty.

Other Goodies:

Mask defogger
Dive club membership
Continuing education
Aquatic life ID books
Dive magazines
Dive slate
Wetsuit & BC shampoo
Wetsuit & BC hangers
Underwater scooter
Fishing license
Measuring devices for game
Diver's tools
Lift bags
Save-A-Dive kit (spare parts)
Cyalume or glow sticks
Mask strap wrapper
Tank racks for car
First aid kit
Spare film and batteries
Windbreaker
Motion sickness medication
Silicone grease
Signaling devices
Tank banger
Ankle weights
Clips & carabiners for
attaching all your goodies
Spare equipment (mask, regulator, dive timer...)