



Joining the Volunteer Dive Team

The volunteer dive program at the Oregon Coast Aquarium offers a range of opportunities for qualified divers, tenders and support personnel.

- **Husbandry Divers:** Most of our divers provide support to our animal care staff, assisting with feeding, cleaning, and routine husbandry care of our exhibits.
- **Interpretive Divers:** Over the summer months we have an interpretive dive program with scheduled dive shows using full face masks and underwater communications equipment.
- **Non Diving Positions:** Tenders and other support personnel provide valuable contributions to the safety, efficiency and effectiveness of our operation.

Step 1. Attend a Recruiting Day

These are offered every couple of months and include:

- Overview of the dive program
- Overview of the prerequisites, required commitment, and duties/benefits of volunteering
- Tour of the diving facilities and dive platform
- Opportunity to see one of our dive teams at work
- Interview with our Dive Safety Officer and Volunteer Services Coordinator

Note: divers that do not yet meet the prerequisites may join as tenders/dive program support, and/or will be referred to local training resources for additional qualifications.

Step 2. Submit Application

The Recruiting Day provides you an opportunity to decide if becoming a volunteer diver is for you. If it is, the next step is to complete an application and be scheduled for training. Training includes the Volunteer Diver Course and Orientation (which are scheduled 2-3 times per year). Though not required, divers are also encouraged to attend a 30 hour interpretive training program (see optional training below) to achieve the maximum experience.

Step 3. The Volunteer Diver Course

An Oregon Coast Aquarium "Volunteer Diver" course has been developed by to ensure all divers meet AAUS dive standards. The curriculum includes a watermanship and scuba skills evaluation, underwater naturalist training, aquarium dive and rescue training as well as tending techniques. The course includes class, pool, and Aquarium dives and will require at least 3 days to complete. It is usually scheduled in concert with the Orientation Course (see below). The cost for the course is \$175.

Step 4. Orientation Course— The orientation is usually scheduled along with the Habitat Diver Course and is a one day program. This course includes an induction session on the history, structure and mission of the Aquarium; volunteer benefits, policies and procedures; a tour of the Aquarium behind the scenes; incident and emergency management procedures; role of the surface tender, lead diver and shift captain; a session on animal husbandry techniques and water quality; scientific diving standards; shark diving policies/techniques; shark behavior observation session; and a tour of other diving exhibits. Upon successful completion divers are assigned to a shift schedule that suits both the diver and the Aquarium. Cost for course is \$0.

Step 5. Optional Training: The Aquarium also offers an optional 48-hour interpretive training course. Staff and experienced volunteers give talks about the animals, habitat, and marine biology of the Oregon coast as well as the animals exhibited in the Aquarium. There are also components dedicated to the development of interpretive skills. Divers who wish to attend this optional training are asked to contact Volunteer Services, volunteer@aquarium.org.

Prerequisites*

Before applying, please carefully read through the necessary prerequisites. All applicants must hold the following:

1. Advanced Open Water certification (or equivalent)
2. Minimum of 25 logged dives - 12 of which must be in cold water (70° F or less)
3. Ability to obtain diver insurance (ex. Divers Alert Network)
4. Emergency responder training (including CPR, AED, First Aid, and Oxygen Administration for Divers)
5. Possess cold water dive gear
6. Proof of equipment maintained within annual service
7. Be cleared by a physician as “medically fit to dive”
8. Good-to-excellent diving and watermanship skills

***If you would like to become a volunteer diver but do not yet meet these requirements, please attend a Recruiting Day so our staff can advise you on how to bring your training and certifications up to speed!**

You can get more information on membership, insurance, benefits and training opportunities at www.diversalertnetwork.com

Equipment Needs

Volunteer divers provide the following equipment: mask, fins, thermal protection, buoyancy compensator, and regulator. Thermal protection includes drysuit (with appropriate undergarments) or wetsuit, plus gloves, hood, and boots as needed. The aquarium provides steel cylinders for the divers and an assortment of soft weights that can be loaded into an integrated system on a BC (which you provide) or divers can use one of the aquarium provided weight harnesses or weight belts.

Scheduling

Volunteer diver positions require a commitment of at least one 6 hr shift every three weeks. Each team has a Dive Shift Captain assigned by the Dive Safety Officer. The schedule is determined by your availability and the Aquarium’s needs. We are committed to providing a quality volunteer diving experience and believe we can do this best within the structure of teams.

Commitment – Volunteers in the dive program are required to commit a minimum of one full year (about 100 hours) to the Aquarium. We realize that this is a significant commitment, and we want you to consider it carefully. Do you have that much time? We are happy to answer your questions before you make that final decision. Most of our divers stay well beyond the requested one year, but that is the minimum commitment require.

Other Opportunities

Divers wishing to progress on to the Interpretive Diver Program will need to demonstrate a good attendance record, make application to Wendy Spalding, Education Coordinator, wendy.spalding@aquarium.org and complete training in full face masks, underwater communications and interpretive diving techniques.

Contacts– For more information on becoming a volunteer and dates for the next Recruiting Day and Volunteer Diver Course, contact Volunteer Services, [volunteer @aquarium.org](mailto:volunteer@aquarium.org).



Applicant name: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email address: _____

Cell Phone: (_____) _____ Home phone: (_____) _____

What is the best way to contact you (please check): Home Phone Cell Phone Email

Name of emergency contact: _____ Relationship: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Address: _____ City, State & Zip: _____

Physician's name: _____ Phone: _____

The following information is requested to develop demographic reports.

Birthday: _____ Gender: Male Female

Are you employed? Yes No If yes, full time or part time? If no, are you retired? Yes No

Occupation (current or past): _____

Currently a student? Yes No If yes, full time or part time? Institution: _____

Highest education level completed: Grade _____ High School Some college

Associate degree Bachelor's degree Master's degree Doctorate

Major: _____

