

## Soldiers Undertaking Disabled SCUBA (SUDS) ~ Guiding Principles

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### **Background and Philosophy**

Soldiers Undertaking Disabled SCUBA (SUDS) is a Charitable and educational non-profit corporation formed for the purpose of bettering the lives of disabled veterans through participation in SCUBA diving. SUDS was established in 2007.

1. Objects of organization:
  - a. To share our passion for SCUBA with other veterans
  - b. To assist our participants in overcoming the physical limitations of their disabilities to become certified SCUBA divers
  - c. To promote disabled veterans' lifelong participation in SCUBA activities
  - d. To ensure the safe and professional conduct of our charitable purposes
  - e. To ensure that our participants are not exploited for commercial or political purposes
  
2. We do this by:
  - a. Offering SCUBA certification classes to disabled veterans through (SDI) certification programs;
  - b. Educating disabled veterans about the opportunities for obtaining SCUBA qualifications;
  - c. Facilitating the open-water SCUBA qualification process of disabled veterans by coordinating trips to dive sites both in and outside of the United States.

We believe that the veterans we serve have given of themselves unselfishly and made great sacrifices for our nation. It is because of this that we seek to honor them through our service. In pursuing our philanthropic purposes, we wish to share our passion for the sport of SCUBA diving and to enable our participants to experience the challenges, exhilaration, and sense of accomplishment and wonder that they may find in an aquatic environment. We encourage our participants to enjoy life, to share in the camaraderie that SUDS has to offer, to develop a lifelong interest in diving. We believe that our participants can accomplish extraordinary things regardless of their disabilities; the SUDS program gives them an opportunity to prove it to themselves.

### **Guiding Principles**

As a chapter of Disabled Sports USA, we fully endorse and strive to adhere to the guiding principles of our parent organization as quoted below:

#### **Guiding Principles for Disabled Sports USA**

Disabled Sports USA and its chapter members are dedicated to the following principles:

- The mission of DS/USA is "To provide the opportunity for individuals with physical

disabilities to gain confidence and dignity through participation in sports, recreation and related educational programs.”

- That participation in sports, recreation and physical fitness is an integral part of the rehabilitation process. Through sports, people with disabilities gain abilities that increase self-confidence, independence and mobility. This in turn promotes an active lifestyle and social development and increases prospects for employment.
- That activities be conducted, whenever feasible, in public recreation facilities and venues, to provide maximum interaction with the general public in an integrated environment.
- That people with disabilities be recruited to fill leadership, staff and volunteer positions in the organization; to provide opportunities for personal growth and employment, as well as positive role models for other disabled participants.
- That, in most cases, people with disabilities can achieve high levels of physical fitness; which is essential to lead an active and healthy life and achieve mental well-being.
- That sports instruction should be conducted in a carefully planned educational setting utilizing trained volunteers and professionals.
- That the organization should conduct its activities in a businesslike manner, with competent governance and sound financial guidelines.

### **Wellness**

We endeavor to promote active healthy lifestyles, self-reliance and camaraderie. In creating and supporting this environment, we encourage positive attitudes and self-affirming behaviors.

### **Commitment to Privacy**

We are committed to protecting the dignity of our participants in our dealings with the general public, media and sponsors. The program is first and foremost for the benefit of our participants and all other interests are secondary. We recognize that good media relations can help to further our cause, but we are forever mindful that the program exists for our participants and their experiences. In order to foster good relations and generate public interest in our activities, SUDS volunteers act as spokespeople and filter contact with our participants in order to ensure their privacy and dignity.

We will respect the privacy of the soldiers we serve. No personal information to include participants' names and the nature of their injuries will be released without their express written approval. Photography (film or video) will be permitted only with the approval of SUDS officers/instructors and with the participants' consent. We recognize that individuals who have permitted their images and stories to be released publicly may retract their release authorizations at any time and we will make our best efforts to accommodate their wishes in a timely fashion.

All program participants are veterans of the current conflict (Iraq/Afghanistan) and, with some exceptions, are active duty service members. Because of their duty status,

most participants are governed by service regulations that restrict them from making commercial endorsements of products or services as well as the prohibiting them from participating in any partisan political activities. To be consistent with the rules governing the majority of our participants and to protect our non-profit status, SUDS and its board members acting on behalf of the organization will not intentionally make any endorsements or statements for commercial, political or personal reasons that do not reflect the philosophy of SUDS or that do not respect the privacy and personal integrity of our program participants.

While conducting our activities in public, we are sensitive to the potential for exploitation of our participants and we endeavor to balance our public activities with our responsibility to protect our participants from any form of exploitation.

**Risk management:**

Our participants' safety is paramount in the conduct of our training and related travel. We believe in managing risks through thorough analysis of our operations. This is a process that is to be constantly refined. With respect to managing the risks associated with diving operations, SUDS instructors are required to follow SDI procedures. Following all dive events/trips, SUDS instructors file after action reports with Disabled Sports USA. These after action reports provide an opportunity to identify issues that require attention to mitigate risks in future activities. As a board of directors, we strive to use every opportunity to refine our risk management and event planning procedures.

**Financial Responsibility and Sponsorship**

In order to accomplish our goals, we rely on the charitable contributions of private citizens and funding from other related non-profit organizations.

When traveling for dive certifications, program participants are funded by SUDS and the generous donations of our sponsors and sponsor organizations. From time to time, it may be appropriate for board members, volunteers, spouses, supporters and SUDS alumni to accompany program participants on dive trips. When attending these trips, all attendees who are not current SUDS participants or instructors will be responsible for all costs and fees associated with the trip. These individuals may take advantage of any discounts offered to SUDS participants if they are determined to be widely available to the general public.

**Business Ethics:**

As the board of directors, we will govern our activities as they pertain to our personal commercial interests in accordance with the SUDS conflict of interest policy.

**Protecting Our Image:**

The SUDS logo is worn by our program participants and instructors as a badge of honor which represents their esprit de corps. The tattered dive flag artwork that accompanies the name "SUDS" on the logo is a drawing rendered by Dianna Norwood and it is based on a copyrighted photograph by Kevin Morris. It is with

their express permission that we use the tattered dive flag artwork on the SUDS logo. The SUDS logo is renown in the diving community and associated with our activities as a de facto trademark. Reproductions of the SUDS logo for commercial use are not permitted without the written permission of the board of directors.

Current approved uses are:

1. For use on clothing and spirit items provided by the SUDS organization to its participants and instructors
2. For use on pamphlets posters and other informational materials used to promote the program
3. For use on pamphlets posters and other informational materials used to advertise fundraising efforts for the benefit of the program

### **Sponsorship:**

We are committed to practicing sound risk management techniques in evaluating appropriate sponsorship of SUDS events or events for the financial benefit of SUDS. Potential sponsorship opportunities will be vetted by the SUDS board of directors prior to engaging in sponsored events. The SUDS board of directors wishes to encourage appropriate sponsorship of events. To that end, we welcome the charitable assistance of individuals and organizations that will respect our core principles and support the guidelines set forth in our by-laws and guiding principles.

#### ***How do we determine appropriate sponsorship?***

1. Potential for commercial or political exploitation
2. Potential for physical danger to participants if service providers fail to uphold our standards for risk management relative to event planning and upkeep of equipment.
3. Potential exposure of SUDS to financial liability or risk to our image/reputation in being connected to any event that is poorly managed, misdirected or has the potential to result in physical or emotional injuries to its participants

It is our concern that if an event has the SUDS name on it and we are not in control of the planning, risk management and execution of the event, we will open ourselves to an unacceptable level of risk, liability, or potential damage to our reputation that will ultimately impede our ability to conduct our charitable purposes.

These guiding principles serve as an initial context to account for our conduct as a board. The list is not all-inclusive and will be modified as our activities expand and we encounter additional situations for which we need to establish guidance.