

Safety Is Good For Business

Generally, DAN Members understand the important services DAN gives its divers – providing medical information and assistance, researching why divers get hurt and finding ways to make diving safer, and teaching divers how to provide care for injured divers. Even if they think that DAN only provides them lowcost dive accident insurance, they realize that DAN is important to their well-being.

DAN offers a series of dive-specific first aid courses, teaching divers how to deal with injured divers by administering oxygen first aid, handling injuries caused by jellyfish or other hazardous marine life and performing a neurological assessment on a diver to help determine the extent of a diver's injuries.

Unfortunately, dive instructors, even those who are DAN Members, sometimes express concerns about teaching DAN courses. They cite worries of scaring their customers away from diving. At the same time, DAN Training receives calls weekly from divers interested in taking DAN classes. They have learned about them on the website or from Alert Diver, and they can't find a class taught locally.

Several DAN Instructors have said that DAN Training programs are an obvious fit for their training toolbox. Grant Graves, of Malibu, a DAN Instructor Trainer, said that he's found that at the worst of times, DAN programs have been the one consistent educational offering that is always in demand. "DAN programs have allowed me to generate income when rain is falling for months and no one is thinking about going diving," Graves said. "DAN programs allow an entry-level diver with a modest investment of time and money to leave their training feeling far more confident and able to help when needed. In fact, if you are not offering DAN Training programs as an instructor, you are doing your clients a disservice."

Trainers like Graves realize the utility of teaching DAN courses. While DAN courses are designed to stand alone, they are also great programs to integrate directly into your other course offerings. When you lead a trip to the islands, offer a more complete program by packaging a fish identification course with the First Aid for Hazardous Marine Life Injuries course.

When you teach a traditional first aid and CPR course, integrate the AEDs for Scuba Diving program to answer some of the questions about using an AED on a wet boat deck. You can also package that course with the Oxygen First Aid for Scuba Diving Injuries course to explain to divers how to care for divers and what signs and symptoms to look for.

Michael Steidley, a very successful DAN Instructor Trainer, challenges all of the divemasters and dive instructors he trains to be Diving Emergency Specialists (DES), a program that recognizes divers who have completed dive-specific continuing education. In addition those with the DES designation, should have become rescue divers, been trained in CPR and First Aid and have completed several of DAN's dive-specific first aid courses.

"All dive instructors should strive for this rating; it's the Master Instructor of diving emergency management," Steidley said. "If all dive professionals earned their DES rating, the level of safety in the diving community would be phenomenal."

But the DES rating isn't just for dive leaders, but for any diver. One of the foundations of that program is the Diving Emergency Management Provider course (DEMP), a four-in-one program that covers many of the skills taught in independent DAN courses. It teaches divers to integrate those skills into their normal care procedures.

While many dive instructors admit they need this information at the rescue diver level, others see it as a

way to keep entry-level divers enthusiastic.

Said Graves: "DEMP is the perfect course to market to all of your newly certified divers. It is a simple step to get them started without their having to commit to rescue training. If you have not had them interested in rescue before DEMP training, they will be after the course. Use DEMP training to draw in all of your old rescue divers. Their enthusiasm will be infectious. "

Any dive leader (divemaster or above) who is also a CPR/First Aid instructor can become a DAN Instructor and offer DAN Training Programs. See your local DAN Instructor Trainer to attend an Instructor Qualification Course today. Find a list of Trainers on the DAN website under Training and Education. Divers interested in participating in any of the courses mentioned can find a DAN Instructor at the same place on the website.