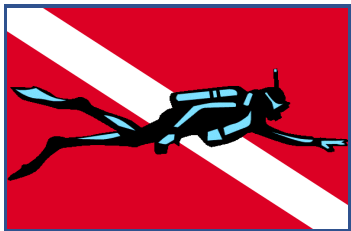


# Common Scuba Hand Signals

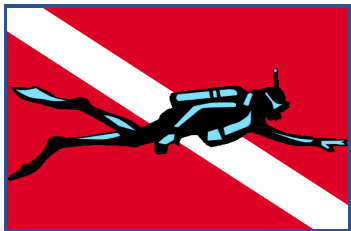


# Why Do We Need?

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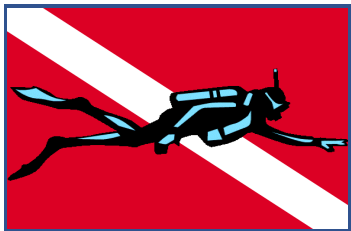
- **Most of us can't afford, or are too cheap, to purchase full-face masks with radios.**
- **And, Oh by the Way, we are an international community and don't all speak the same languages.....**
- **Therefore, we need some method for reasonably universal communication underwater.**



# Results of Poor Communication

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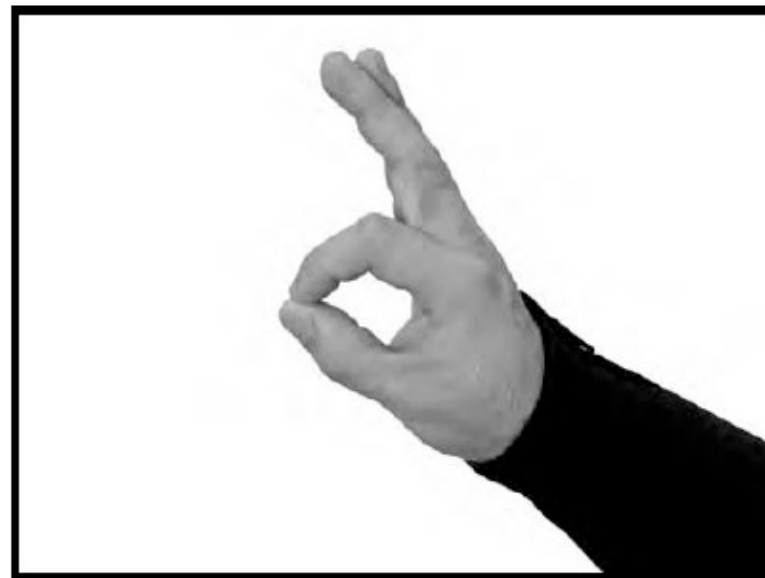




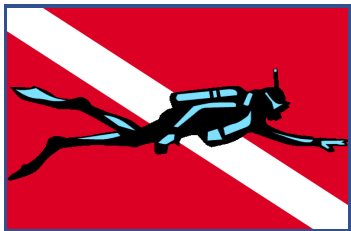
# Common Hand Signals



Are you OK? or OK!



With Gloves



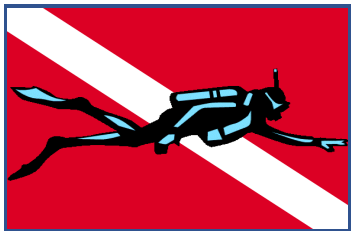
# Common Hand Signals



**Are you OK? or OK!**  
**(on the surface at a distance)**



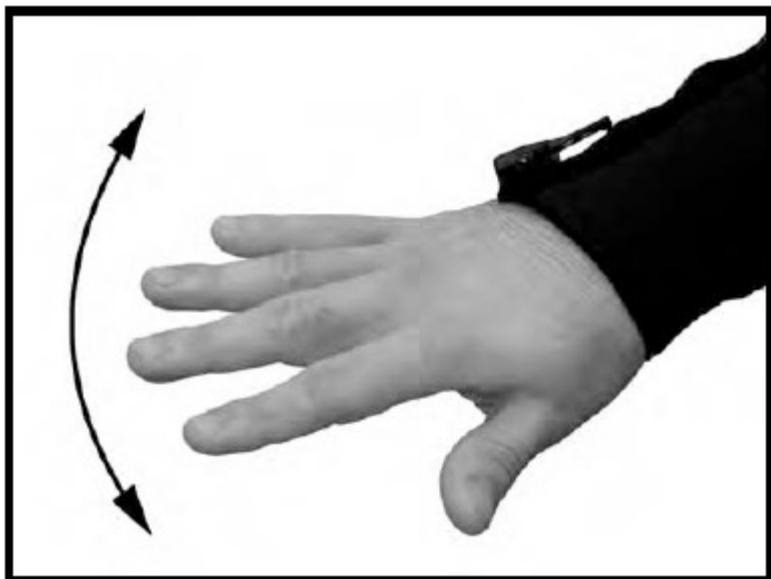
**Alternate – One Hand**



# Common Hand Signals

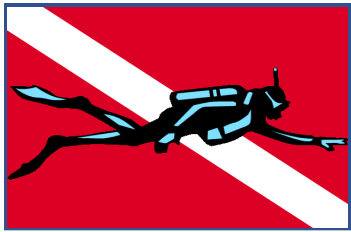


**Distress or help me**



**Something is wrong.**

**Wiggle Hand – (Thumb and Little Finger Vertically) and point to area of problem.**

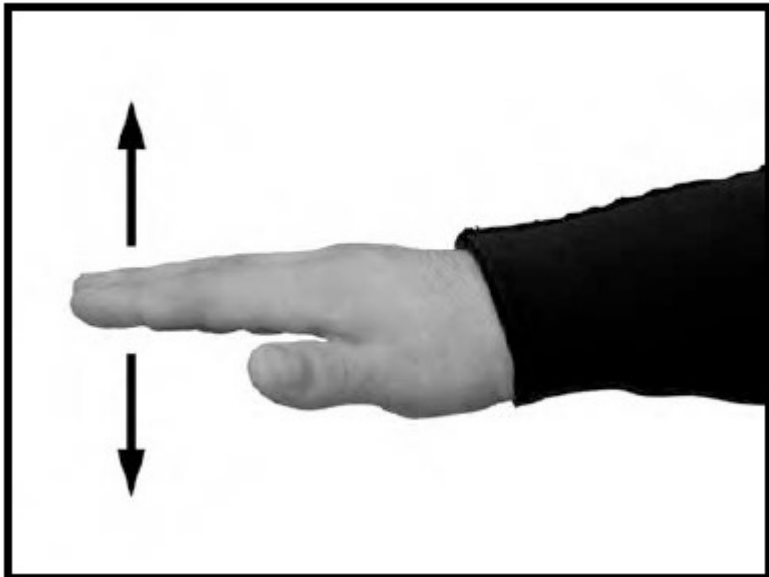
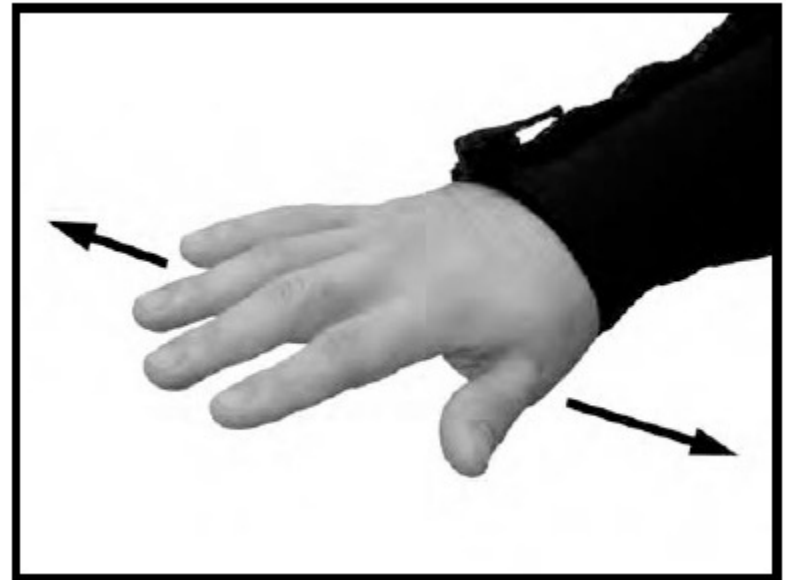


# Common Hand Signals



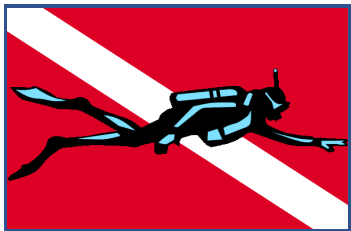
## Level off at this depth.

With hand flat, palm down, fingers apart and thumb sticking out, move hand slowly back and forth horizontally.



## Take it easy or slow down.

With hand flat, palm down, slowly flex hand up and down repeatedly.

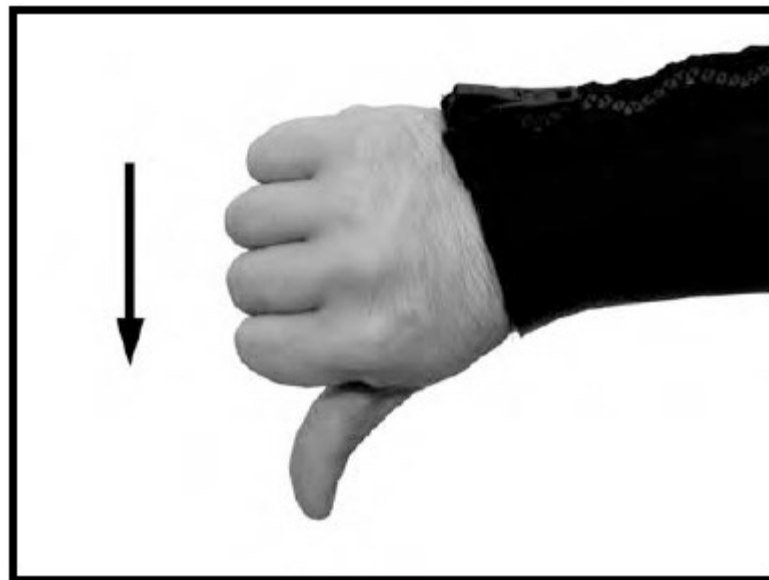


# Common Hand Signals

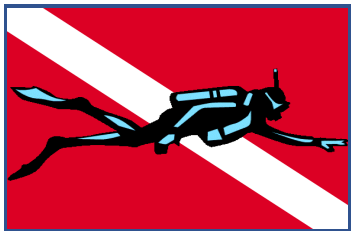


Go up or I'm going up.

Go down or I'm going down.







# Common Hand Signals

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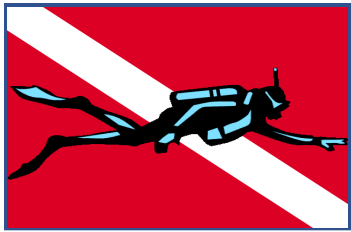


**Stop, Or Wait Here.**

**Cramp**

**Show Tight Fist then  
point to Where**





# Common Hand Signals



## I'm low on air.

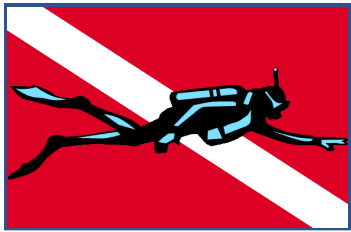
Make a clenched fist with one hand and move hand inward toward the chest.



## I'm out of air.

With hand flat, fingers together, palm down, draw hand across the throat in a cutting motion.

**Repeat for Urgency!!!**



# Common Hand Signals



## Let's share air.

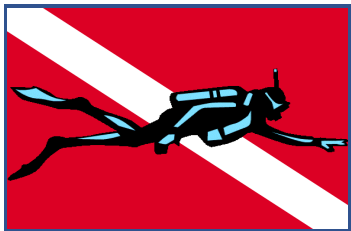
Using the fingers of the left hand, point towards the regulator or remove the regulator and point to the mouth.

**Repeat for Urgency!!!**



## Danger

Make a clenched fist with one hand and extend arm in the direction of danger.

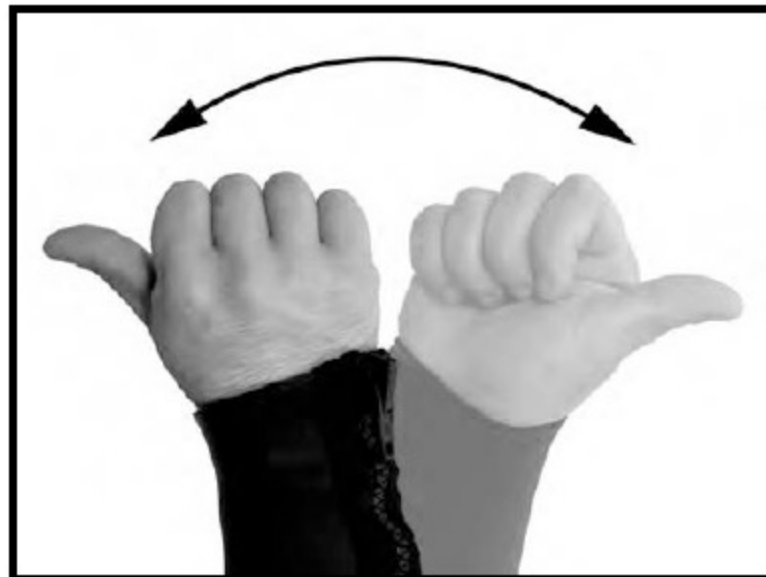


# Common Hand Signals

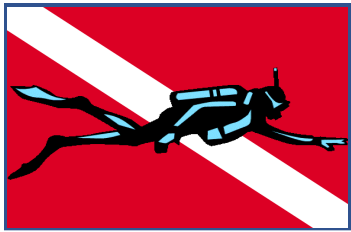
**TVSC**

## Which direction?

Make a fist with one hand, thumb extended, and rotate the hand through 180 degrees several times to indicate confusion regarding the intended direction of travel.



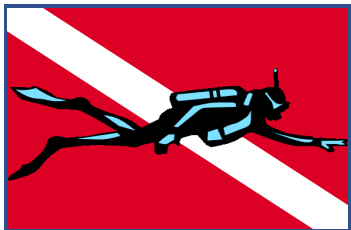
**Go that way.**



# Always have the Fallback of the Slate.....

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# Common Hand Signals



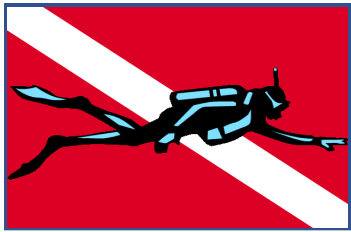
## Get with your buddy.

Make fists with both hands, forefingers extended, and bring hands together.



## Who will lead, who will follow.

Point at the diver who will lead and position that hand in front of the body. Point to the diver who will follow and then position that hand behind the other, indicating direction with both forefingers.



# Common Hand Signals



## Watch or look

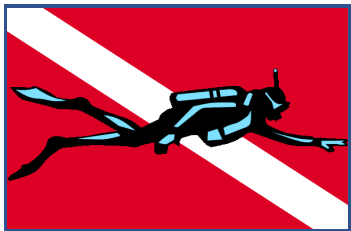
Place the tips of the forefinger and middle finger against the mask lens.

May be followed by another signal indicating direction in which to look or the person to watch.



## Me or I

Point to yourself at chest height.

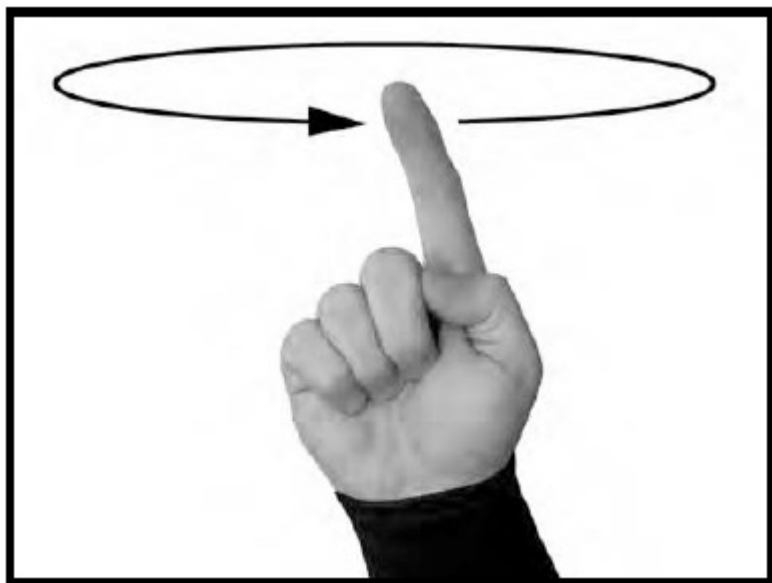


# Common Hand Signals



## Under, over or around

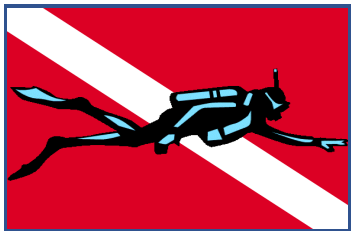
With palm down, use hand motion to indicate intended route to go under, over or around an underwater formation.



## Turn around.

Extend the forefinger of one hand vertically and rotate the hand in a circular movement.





# Common Hand Signals

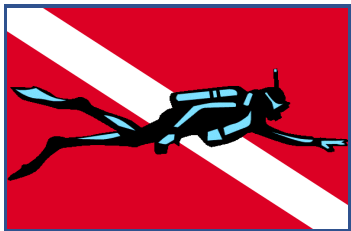


## I Don't Feel Well.

Diver encircles front of body – head to torso.  
Point to source of problem. May be given after  
“Something Is Wrong” signal, and before “Going  
Up / End Dive” signal.



**New PADI Signal – July 2020**



# Common Hand Signals

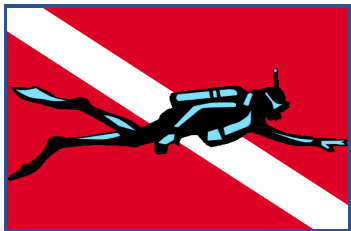


**Ear(s) not clearing**



**I am cold.**

Cross arms in front of chest, grab upper arms with opposite hands to indicate chilling.



# Common Hand Signals



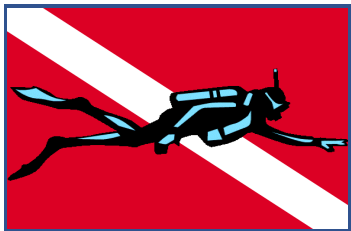
## Danger??? Or Abort Dive???

Clench both fists and cross arms in front of the body.



### Potential for Confusion-

- PADI chart shows As “Cold” Signal.
- RSTC shows as “Danger” Signal (with Clenched Fist)
- RSTC also shows as “Cold” Signal (with Flat/ Open Hands)
- Key West and other Caribbean areas – using as “Abort Dive” Signal



# Common Hand Signals

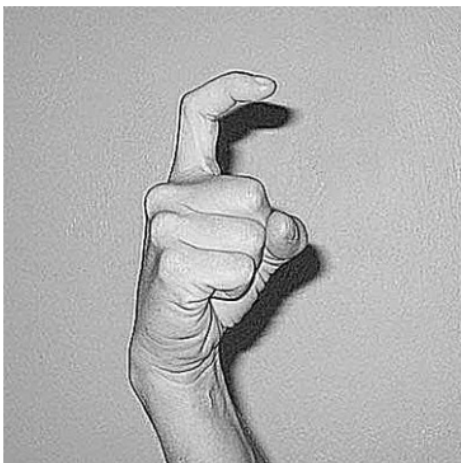


## I don't know.

Position hands out to each side of the body with palms facing up and shrug shoulders to indicate confusion.



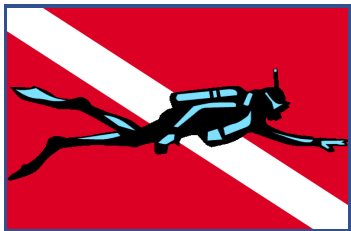
19 'Question'  
of 20



Natalie L. Gibb

## Question

Raise hand vertically with index finger curved like a Question Mark. Usually followed by a 2d Hand Signal such as “Cold”, Etc



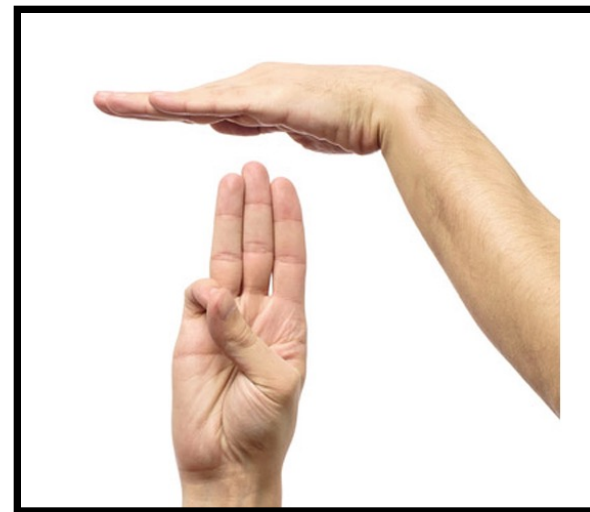
# Common Hand Signals



## Safety Stop

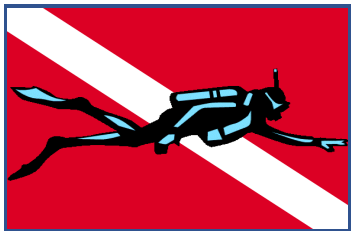
Hold the “Level Off” hand signal over your other hand with three fingers raised.

This is used to inform the dive team that you have reached the pre-designated safety stop depth and that everybody should level off for at least three minutes.



## Leaks or Bubbles

With your hand facing up, hold your fingertips together, and then apart (do this rapidly)



# Common Hand Signals



## How Much Air Do You Have?

You tap two fingers lightly onto the palm of your opposite hand, with your palm facing upward or outward.

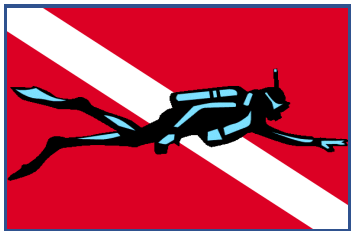
**IN RESPONSE-** your buddy will signal how much air he has by holding up fingers to represent the bar/psi shown on his gauge.

A half-tank is sometimes indicated by making a “T” sign with your hand.  
(Except when Diving Metric????)



## **ALTERNATE-** Tap Your Computer.

Tap two fingers lightly onto your Computer Face (Wrist or Console) or hold your console up.



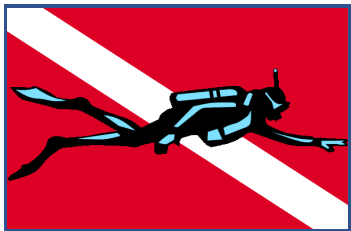
# Remaining Air Response



Unfortunately, NO Consensus on this Hand Signal.  
Some Systems being taught include:

- 1. Both Hands – “Hundreds”.** Use both hands to indicate PSI in Hundreds. 1600 PSI would be: a. Both hands with Five fingers followed by- b. One Hand with 5 fingers, One Hand with 1 finger.
- 2. Vertical and Horizontal Hand.** Indicate 1-5 with Hand Vertical and # of fingers. Indicate 6-9 with Hand Horizontal and # of Fingers. Still need to show 1000's with Vertical Finger(s). 1,600 would be: One Vertical Finger (PAUSE) followed by 1 Finger Horizontal.
- 3. Arm and Fingers.** Indicate 1000's by holding 1-2- (3?) Finger against the Left Arm. Indicate 100's with Vertical Hand(s) shown by fingers.  
(Preferred Method Used by US)

**DISCUSS BEFORE ENTRY IF WITH SOMEONE NEW – REVIEW AGAIN  
with Previous Partners**



# Horizontal / Vertical Hand (100's)



1. Indicate **100 - 500 PSI** with Vertical Fingers.



**500 PSI**

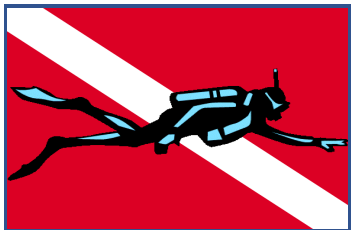
2. Indicate **600 - 900 PSI** with Vertical Fingers.



**800 PSI**

3. Indicate **1000 PSI** with Closed Fist. (??)





# Arm (1000's) / Hand (100's)



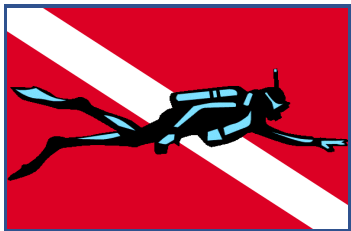
1. Indicate **1000's** by placing Right Hand against the Left Upper Arm with **1** or **2 (3?)** Extended.



2. Indicate **100's** by Holding One, or Two, Hands in the open water with appropriate fingers extended.



3. Preferred method for Board Members



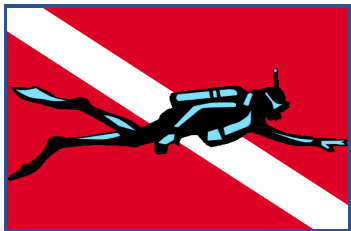
# Remaining Air Response

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**Bottom Line- Very Important to Clarify and Agree on how you are going to Signal Remaining Air when you dive with new Buddy(ies).**

**If Diving with me – I Will Ask You Signal When you Reach 1500 lbs.**



# Remaining DECO Time?



Even more so than Remaining Air, NO Clearly Defined signal to ask for Remaining DECO Time.

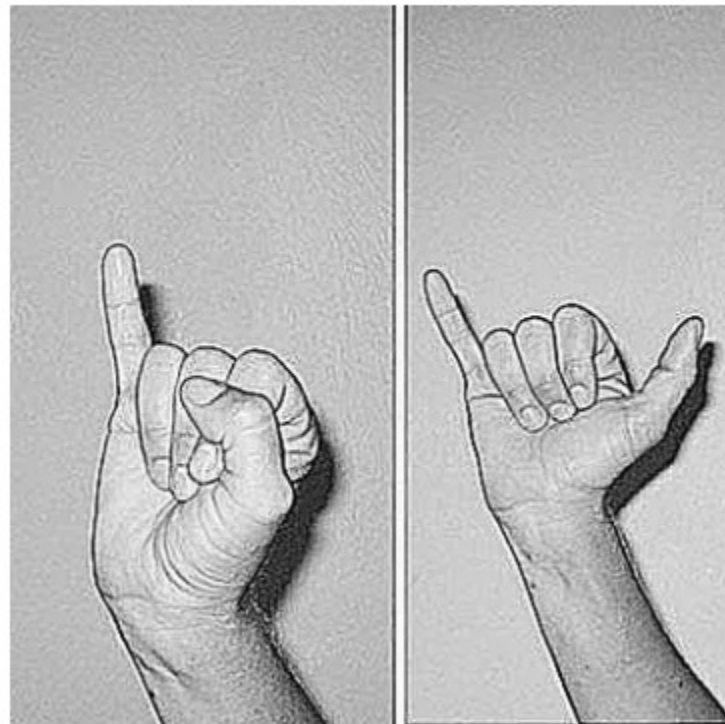
Technical Divers DO have a/some signal(s) to indicate when to Start (hopefully Planned) Decompression.

Some of us have discussed using these two signals to query as to remaining DECO time – particularly when combined with the “Question” hand signal.

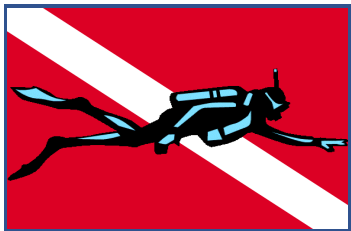
**RESPONSE – Hand Signal indicating remaining DECO time in Minutes????**

## 14 'Deco' or 'Decompression'

of 20



Natalie L Gibb



# Completed Safety Stop?

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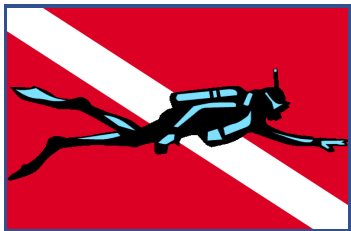


**“OK” Signal-** Most common signal used to indicate completion of Safety Stop.

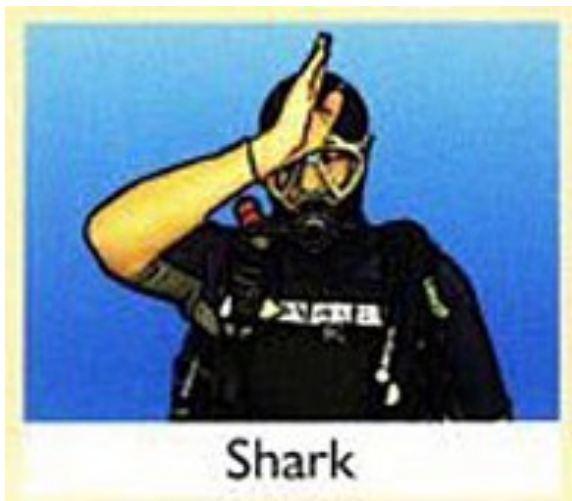
## **Alternatives:**

- **Hand Swipe** – Often used by some DM’s when all divers have signaled completion.





# Sealife Signals



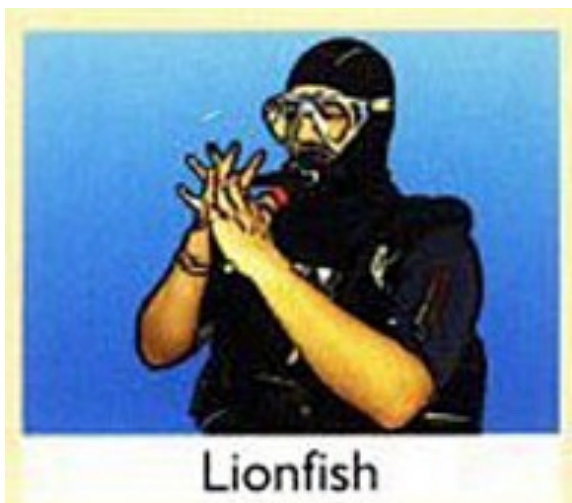
Shark



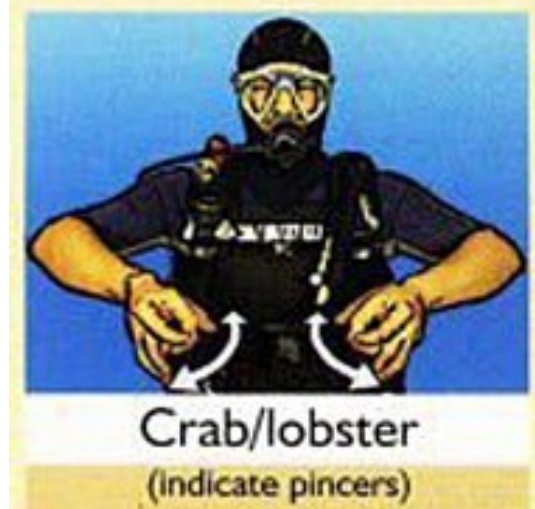
Turtle



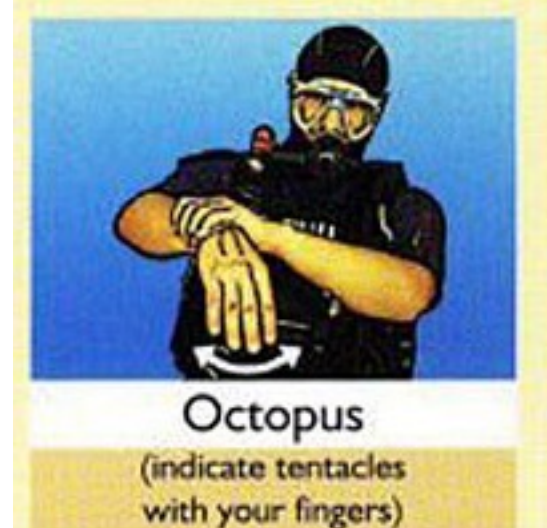
Moray eel



Lionfish

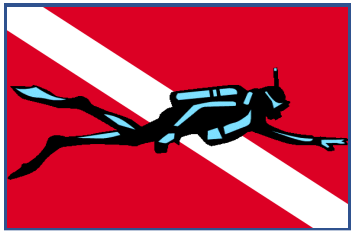


Crab/lobster  
(indicate pincers)



Octopus  
(indicate tentacles  
with your fingers)





# Sealife Signals

**TVSC**



**Triggerfish**

(indicate pulling a trigger)



**Garden eels**



**Manta ray**

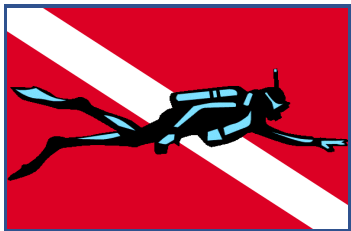


**Scorpionfish**



**Barracuda**

(indicate its stripes)



# Questions/Discussion

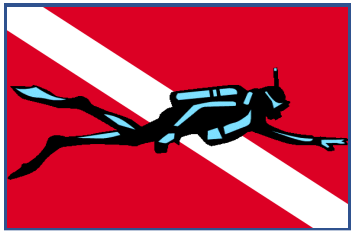
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## **BOTTOM LINE-**

- **Critical to discuss most important Hand Signals when diving with new Buddy(ies) – Particularly ones like Remaining Air.**
- **Important to Review with Recurring Buddies as part of dive planning.**





# PADI (or Other) Manuals



when planning a  
new buddy.



1. Stop, hold it, stay there



2. Something is wrong



OK? OK.



4. OK? OK. (glove on)



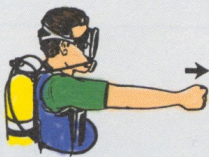
5. Distress, help



6. OK? OK. (on surface at distance)



7. OK? OK. (one hand occupied)



8. Danger



9. Go up, going up



10. Go down, going down



11. Low on air



12. Out of air



13. Buddy breathe or share air



14. Come here



15. Me, or watch me



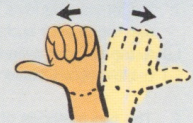
16. Under, over, or around



17. Level off, this depth



18. Go that way



19. Which direction?



20. Ears not clearing



21. I am cold



22. Take it easy, slow down



23. Hold hands



24. Get with your buddy



25. You lead, I'll follow