

in depth

Passionate about ...

# Offshore Diving



Paul Evans, technical adviser at IMCA, explains the attractions of a career in commercial diving.

For me it all started in the decidedly less than glamorous surroundings of Chatham Docks in London. But my career in commercial diving has since taken me to exotic locations around the world and made me a member of a very special global family which shares a camaraderie born out of literally putting your life in the hands of your dive-team mates

Yes, there's an element of danger associated with the job that attracts a certain type of thrill seeking



person, but the diving industry attracts a wide variety of people from many cultural and professional backgrounds. Trainee divers range from the ex-military, university graduates, people who have had a first career, trade professionals, to those who have been sports divers and simply enjoy diving.

### ■ Modes of diving

A friend of mine once said that the whole thing boils down to a man in a rubber suit at the end of a hose. In essence this is true, but if that person in the suit happens to be you then you are faced with numerous challenges to get a job done in an environment that makes simply moving an effort!

Ultimately, diving is simply a means of travelling to a worksite which happens to be on the sea bed. Where you actually dive from can range from a small tug or barge to a large multi-million pound dynamically positioned diving support vessel (DPDSV), with a crew and team of over a hundred personnel, all there to help you get a job done.

How you get there can depend on a number of factors such as working depth and support vessel as well as location and environmental conditions. Modes of diving range from scuba for inshore operations to surface supplied air diving, surface decompression diving, mixed gas diving, bell bounce diving and saturation diving where you'll remain under pressure living in a chamber complex for a month!

### ■ The job of diving

The actual work to be done when you get to the jobsite can be incredibly varied including underwater cutting with a thermic lance, installing spool pieces using vessel-based cranes, supporting drilling rigs, deepsea salvage, or simply taking a photograph. Whatever the task, the commercial diver is expected to have the skillset to accomplish it.

With this expectation comes a level of responsibility for all members of the dive team from the diver up to the superintendent who all have to work together to accomplish the task in hand.

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An air diving team on a straightforward diving job, diving from a simple vessel, can be quite self-contained. A saturation dive is quite the opposite. Many people with various skills are needed to support the diver. Together they are an integrated team, so training, competence and good communications are essential. Very complex pieces of diving equipment and vessel systems are used, so equipment quality control and maintenance are critical. In fact, good procedures, equipment and personnel are fundamental throughout.

And there is nothing quite like the feeling of getting a difficult diving job done, within tight time constraints with a DPDSV crew, team and client watching your every move!!

### ■ **Career opportunities**

Many people who go into a career in commercial diving are more than happy to be the diver in the water doing the hands-on work. If promotion and increased responsibility appeals, then diving can offer good career prospects – from diver to lead diver, supervisor, superintendent and shore based operations manager.

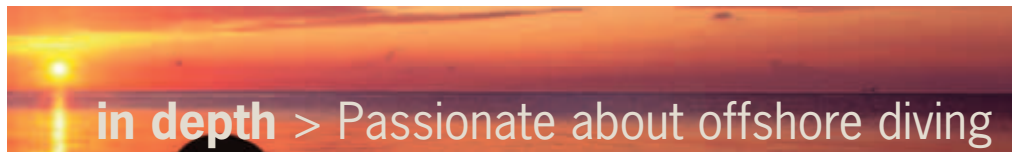
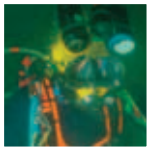
### ■ **Technology**

The technology of diving, though complex, has been fairly stationary for a number of years with only minor changes to personal diving equipment. Things are about to change over the next few years with the arrival of new DPDSVs with touch screen computer controlled diving systems, so welcome to the 21st century!

### ■ **Conclusion**

There has never been a better time to be in the commercial diving industry with demand and salaries at an all time high, so if you are thinking of a diving career, now is the right time!

Whatever your background, if you have the right aptitude, the world of commercial diving can be extremely rewarding in every sense of the word.



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■ **Further information**

IMCA has developed an extensive range of factsheets on careers in offshore diving setting out job profiles, training requirements, career prospects and personal case studies.

For further information on the work of IMCA Diving Division, visit our website at [www.imca-int.com/diving](http://www.imca-int.com/diving)

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