



CDAS SAFETY FLASH 2026-1

Diver Injured Following Failure of Pressurised Equipment During Underwater Cleaning

Information compiled from a firsthand diver account and personnel involved directly or indirectly with the job operation

(No official outcome from authorities at time of writing)

Summary

A commercial diver sustained a serious hand injury during underwater sea chest cleaning operations after a pressurised water jet hose failed unexpectedly. The diver required hospitalisation and surgical treatment.

This safety flash is issued to raise awareness within the diving community. At the time of writing, no official investigation findings or regulatory reports have been released.

What Happened?

The incident occurred in February 2025, during underwater cleaning works on a vessel's sea chest. A diver was instructed to carry out cleaning using a water jet system. After completing one section of the task, the diver repositioned to continue cleaning at a second location.

According to the diver's account, shortly after activation from the surface, a loud bang was heard and the hose failed while the diver was holding it. The diver momentarily lost consciousness and, upon regaining awareness, experienced severe pain and bleeding to his hand.

The diver immediately requested the system to be shut down and reported that he was leaving the bottom. He was recovered to the surface using a davit system after trying and failing to climb up the ladder on his own due to the injury on his left hand. First aid was rendered onboard, and the diver was subsequently transported from Marina South Pier for medical treatment via a company vehicle.

Medical assessment revealed a deep hand injury requiring surgical intervention. The diver underwent multiple procedures and remained on medical leave for an extended period.

Additional Context

Based on information shared by the injured diver:

- Questions were later raised regarding the suitability of the water jet & hose used for the pressures involved.
- The diving operation continued after the incident.

These points are based solely on personal accounts and do not represent verified findings or conclusions.

What Went Wrong?

As there are no confirmed investigation outcomes, the following are potential safety issues highlighted by the incident, rather than causes:

- Exposure of divers to pressurised systems that may fail unexpectedly.

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- Risks associated with surface-controlled equipment activation during underwater tasks.
- Limited ability for divers to react when failures occur at close range.
- Emergency response arrangements being tested under real-world conditions.

Key Lessons & Actions for the Diving Community

1. Suitability of pressurised equipment

- Ensure the water jet, hoses, fittings, and components are rated for intended pressures and underwater use – this should be accompanied by valid certification confirming suitability for use.
- Verify equipment compatibility before deployment – function tests conducted

2. Stop-work authority

- Reinforce that any serious incident or near miss should trigger immediate stop-work and review before operations resume.

3. Emergency response preparedness

- Ensure Emergency Response Plans (ERP) are in place, understood, and practised.
- Review arrangements for medical evacuation and emergency transport.

Closing Reminder

Pressurised systems used underwater present a significant hazard, particularly when failures occur in proximity to the diver. This incident serves as a reminder of the importance of equipment suitability, communication, stop-work discipline, and emergency preparedness.

As there are no official findings yet, members are advised not to conclude until further information is available.

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