

The Emergency Assistance Plan

One of your projects as a PADI Divemaster candidate is to prepare an emergency assistance plan for a dive site or area assigned by your instructor. As you may recall from the PADI Rescue Diver course, this plan provides the information you may need in the event of a dive accident.

How extensive a plan needs to be depends on how far you may be from assistance, the availability of emergency medical services in the area, and other variables such as whether you're diving from shore or from a boat. The goal is to have all the information you're likely to need in handling an emergency — so at the extremes it can range from “dial 911” (or appropriate contact number for the area) to a comprehensive list of contact information, evacuation procedures and maps to follow. In putting your plan together, think about the following points and try to address them:

- How do you contact local emergency medical care?
- How do you evacuate a patient to medical care? (Contact the coast guard or emergency medical services? Transport the patient yourself?)
- How do you coordinate emergency recompression and other diver-specific medical information (local diver assistance, such as the Divers Alert Network, local recompression chamber, etc.)?
- What services can you expect and not expect from local emergency services (eg., no recompression chamber in immediate area, evacuations only available in life-threatening situations, etc.)?
- What special contact numbers do you need in an emergency (telephone numbers, radio frequencies, etc.)?
- Where is the nearest communication (area with cell service, radio), if not available at the dive site?
- What route would you take in evacuating a patient to care if you would have to do it yourself (in areas without emergency medical services, for example)?