

2.1.5 Recreational Diver Level 3

2.1.5.1 Course Outcomes

GUE's Recreational Diver Level 3 course is a limited decompression course structured to prepare divers for deeper recreational diving while using sound equipment, efficient diving skills, and advanced breathing mixtures. Course outcomes include, but are not limited to: skill cultivation and refinement; knowledge of relevant physics and physiology; familiarity with the theory and practice of decompression; correct ascent procedures; the use of a double tank configuration; the use of nitrox for decompression; the use of helium-enriched breathing mixes to minimize narcosis, CO₂, gas density, and post-dive "nitrogen stress;" and the use of a single decompression stage for accelerated decompression techniques.

2.1.5.2 Prerequisites

Applicants for a Recreational Diver Level 3 course must:

- a. Submit a completed Course Registration Form, a Medical History Form, and Liability Release Form to GUE HQ.
- b. Be physically and mentally fit.
- c. Hold insurance that will cover diving emergencies such as hyperbaric treatment, e.g., DAN Master-level insurance or equivalent.
- d. Be a nonsmoker.
- e. Obtain a physician's prior written authorization for the use of prescription drugs, except for birth control, or for any medical condition that may pose a risk while diving.
- f. Be a minimum of 18 years of age. Documented parental or legal guardian consent must be submitted to GUE HQ when the participant is a minor.
- g. Have passed GUE Recreational Diver Level 2 or GUE Fundamentals.
- h. Have completed the GUE Doubles Primer or be proficient in doubles with at least 25 experience dives using doubles.
- i. Have a minimum of 75 non-training dives and have at least 25 logged dives beyond either GUE Fundamentals or GUE Recreational Diver Level 2.

2.1.5.3 Course Content

The Recreational Diver Level 3 course is normally conducted over five days. It requires a minimum of eight dives (two of which are trimix experience dives) and at least forty hours of instruction, encompassing classroom lectures, land drills, and in-water work.

2.1.5.4 Recreational Diver Level 3 Specific Training Standards

- a. Student-to-instructor ratio is not to exceed 6:1 during land drill or surface exercises; it cannot exceed 3:1 during any in-water training.
- b. Maximum depth of 130 ft/39 m
- c. No overhead diving
- d. Dives must not be planned to incur more than 15 minutes of unadjusted decompression time, as established by GUE's DecoPlanner.

2.1.5.5 Required Training Materials

GUE training materials and recommended reading as determined by the course study packet received via online download after GUE course registration.

2.1.5.6 Academic Topics

- a. Introduction: GUE organization and course overview (objectives, limits, expectations)
- b. Applied diving physics
- c. Applied diving physiology
- d. Introduction to normoxic trimix
- e. Narcosis
- f. Gas density
- g. Carbon dioxide
- h. Oxygen limitations
- i. Dive planning, gas management, and logistics
- j. Decompression dynamics and theory
- k. Decompression practices while using nitrox
- l. Decompression planning using decompression tables and DecoPlanner
- m. Decompression illness
- n. GUE equipment configuration

2.1.5.7 Land Drills and Topics

- a. Dive team order and protocols
- b. GUE EDGE and pre-dive drill sequence, including gas analysis
- c. Valve management including failure procedures
- d. Descent, ascent, and decompression protocols
- e. Gas-switch procedure
- f. Unconscious/toxing diver rescue

2.1.5.8 Required Dive Skills and Drills

- a. Must be able to swim at least 300 yds/275 m in less than 14 minutes without stopping. This test should be conducted in a swimsuit and, where necessary, appropriate thermal protection.
- b. Must be able to swim a distance of at least 50 ft/15 m on a breath hold while submerged.
- c. Demonstrate proficiency in safe diving practices, including pre-dive preparation, in-water activity, and post-dive assessment.
- d. Demonstrate awareness of team member location and a concern for safety, responding quickly to visual indications and dive partner needs.
- e. Demonstrate proficiency in surface marker buoy deployment.
- f. Demonstrate good buoyancy and trim, i.e., approximate reference is a maximum of 30 degrees off horizontal while remaining within 5 ft/1.5 m of a target depth.
- g. Efficiently and comfortably demonstrate how to donate gas to an out-of-gas diver in multiple gas-sharing scenarios.
- h. Demonstrate three propulsion techniques, including comprehension of the components necessary for a successful backward kick.

- i. Demonstrate proficiency during gas-sharing scenarios, including a gas-sharing horizontal swim and a direct ascent while managing decompression obligations.
- j. Demonstrate proficiency in the use of the primary light including passive and active communication.
- k. Demonstrate proficiency with a single decompression cylinder.
- l. Demonstrate proficiency with valve management by conducting a GUE valve drill.
- m. Demonstrate proficiency with proper ascents and descents, utilizing variable ascent rates and safe gas switching procedures.
- n. Demonstrate proficiency in surfacing an unconscious diver from depth.
- o. Demonstrate basic equipment proficiency and an understanding of the GUE equipment configuration.

2.1.5.9 Equipment Requirements

GUE base equipment configuration as outlined in Appendix A, plus:

- a. GUE double tank configuration
- b. One primary and two backup lights
- c. One decompression stage with stage regulator
- d. Drysuit inflation system independent from back gas cylinders (if using a drysuit)

Prior to the commencement of the class, students should consult with a GUE representative to verify equipment requirements and appropriateness of any selected equipment.

Appendix A - GUE Base Equipment Configuration

The GUE base equipment configuration is comprised of:

- a. Tanks/cylinders: Students may use a single tank/cylinder with a single- or dual-outlet valve. Students may also use dual tanks/cylinders connected with a dual-outlet isolator manifold, which allows for the use of two first stages. Dual tanks/cylinders connected with a dual-outlet, non-isolator manifold can be used, but only in recreational (no decompression) diving, and are considered an alternative for a single tank/cylinder. Consult course-specific standards and your instructor to verify size requirements.
- b. Regulators:
 - i. Single tank: The first stage must supply a primary second stage via a 5 to 7 ft/1.5 to 2 m hose. A backup second stage must be necklaced and supplied via a short hose. The first stage must also supply an analog pressure gauge, inflation for the buoyancy compensator (BC), and (when applicable) inflation for a drysuit.
 - ii. Double tank: One first stage must supply a primary second stage via a 5 to 7 ft/1.5 to 2 m hose (7 ft/2 m hose is required for all cave classes), and inflation for the buoyancy compensator (BC). The other first stage must supply a necklaced backup second stage via a short hose, an analog pressure gauge, and (when applicable) inflation for a drysuit.
- c. Backplate system:

- i. Is held to the diver by one continuous piece of webbing. This webbing is adjustable and uses a buckle to secure the system at the waist.
 - ii. A crotch strap is attached and looped through the waistband to prevent the system from riding up a diver's back.
 - iii. The continuous webbing must support five D-rings;
 - 1. The first placed at the left hip
 - 2. The second placed in line with a diver's right collarbone
 - 3. The third placed in line with the diver's left collarbone
 - 4. The fourth and fifth are placed on the front and back of the crotch strap when divers plan to use advanced equipment such as DPVs.
 - iv. The harness below the diver's arms has small restrictive bands to allow for the placement of backup lights. The webbing and system retains a minimalist approach.
- d. Buoyancy compensation device (BC):
- i. A diver's BC is back-mounted and minimalist in nature.
 - ii. It is free of extraneous strings, tabs, or other material.
 - iii. There are no restrictive bands or restrictive elastic affixed to the buoyancy cell.
 - iv. Wing size and shape is appropriate to the cylinder size(s) employed for training.
- e. At least one time/depth measuring device
- f. Wrist-mounted compass
- g. Mask and fins: Mask is low-volume; fins are rigid, non-split.
- h. Backup mask
- i. At least one cutting device
- j. Wetnotes with pencils
- k. Surface marker buoy (SMB) with spool: when required, the SMB should be appropriate for environmental conditions and deployed using a spool with at least 100 ft/30 m of line.
- l. Exposure suit appropriate for the duration of exposure

Additional Course-Specific Equipment

- a. Where required, back gas and stage cylinders are marked in accordance with the GUE General Training Standards, Policies, and Procedures document and configured in line with GUE protocols.
- b. When drysuit inflation systems are applicable, they should be sized appropriately for the environment; small tanks are placed on the backplate with larger supplies affixed to the diver's left back gas tank.
- c. Underwater lights:
 - i. When required, backup lights should be powered by alkaline batteries (not rechargeable) and stowed on the D-rings at a diver's chest.
 - ii. Backup lights should have a minimal amount of protrusions and a single attachment at the rear.
 - iii. The primary light should consist of a rechargeable battery pack and be fitted with a Goodman-style light handle.
 - iv. When burn time requirements create the need for an external battery pack, it should reside in a canister mounted on the diver's right hip.

- d. Guideline devices, as required during cave diving activities:
 - i. A primary reel is required for all cave diving and provides a minimalist form factor with a handle designed to support a Goodman or “hands free” handle operation. The primary reel must contain at least 150 ft/45 m of line.
 - ii. A safety spool is required for each diver while cave diving and must contain at least 150 ft/45 m of line.
 - iii. A jump or gap spool is required during Cave 2 diving and must contain at least 75 ft/23 m of line.