



Understanding the types of divers and what they can do.

Who Is a Recreational Scuba Diver?

A **Recreational Scuba Diver** is someone trained and certified to dive for personal enjoyment, education, or non-paid experience. Even with **advanced certifications** (e.g., Advanced Open Water, Rescue Diver, specialty courses) and **100+ dives**, they are **not legally or professionally qualified** to do paid underwater work.

Key Differences: Recreational vs. Occupational/Commercial Divers

Feature	Recreational Scuba Diver	Occupational SCUBA Diver	Commercial Diver
Purpose of Diving	Fun, exploration, training, hobby	Paid work using scuba (light duty)	Paid work (heavy-duty, industrial tasks)
Certifications	Open Water, Advanced, Rescue, etc.	Specialized job training + local diving experience	DCBC-recognized commercial dive school
Legal Standing for Paid Work	✗ Not allowed	✓ Permitted (within scuba limits & regulations)	✓ Permitted (full industrial diving license)
Work Types	Photography, wreck diving, fun dives	Inspections, basic recovery, research	Welding, construction, salvage, offshore
Equipment Used	Scuba tank, BCD, regulator	Scuba + safety equipment	Surface-supplied air, helmets, full comms

Support Required	Self and buddy system	Requires a qualified buddy and planning	Surface crew, tender, supervisor, safety team
Regulatory Oversight	Agency guidelines (e.g., PADI)	OH&S regulations (if working for pay)	OH&S + DCBC + employer safety systems

Let's Get Real: Advanced Recreational ≠ Occupational

Even with:

- 100+ dives
- A drysuit specialty
- Advanced & Rescue Diver certifications

...you **still aren't trained or insured to do paid underwater recovery, salvage, or construction.**

Why?

Because **recreational training doesn't include:**

- Risk assessments
- Dive site hazard mitigation
- Emergency dive team coordination
- Surface-supplied equipment use
- Workplace legislation and reporting
- Fitness-for-duty standards (regulated by law)

✓ **So, When *Can* a Recreational Diver Use Their Skills?**

- Practicing search patterns on a fun dive? ✓
- Helping a buddy recover a lost fin or weight? ✓
- Volunteering with your local dive club to pick up trash? ✓
- Accepting payment or favors to recover someone's phone or inspect a boat propeller? ✗

(This crosses into **occupational diving** and is regulated under OH&S.)