

**ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ADMINISTRATION**  
**DIRECTORATE OF TOURISM**  
**A & N Islands**

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***Draft***

**Guidelines for Operations of**  
**Submersible Scooter**  
**in**  
**Andaman Nicobar Islands**

**GUIDELINES FOR OPERATION OF SUBMERSIBLE SCOOTER  
(SUB-SCOOTER) IN A&N ISLANDS**

**1.0 Purpose of Guidelines**

The guideline for the Submersible Scooter is to ensure that the activity is performed with due regard to safety concerns of all and conservation of ecology and environment. The standards for equipments and operating procedures defined herein are intended to establish the minimum acceptable norms for safe and responsible operation of the activity in the islands. Guidelines is in coherence with “Tourism Policy 2010” envisaging to encourage Self Regulation and established a simple system for operation of the activity as envisaged in Ease off doing Business.

**2.0 General Definitions**

**2.1 Administration** means Andaman & Nicobar Administration, Port Blair.

**2.2 Ferry Vessel** means vessel to ferry the guest/tourists from shore to the Launching Platform /Pontoon as the case may be.

**2.3 Launching Platform** means a vessel / pontoon used for descending the sub-scooter into the sea. The launching platform should hold a registration by the Competent Authority.

**2.4 Nodal Department means** the Directorate of Tourism, A & N Administration, Port Blair.

**2.5 Operating Area** means the area permitted by the Administration for operation of sub scooter recreational activity.

**2.6 Operator** means the firm/company /individual/organization who owns/runs/manages the Sub-Scooter recreational operations undersea with a valid permit issued by the Nodal Department.

**2.7 Site Manager** means the person who shall be present at the “Operating Area” all the times to supervise the operations and equipments. He should be a certified Dive Instructor (PADI/SSI or NIWS or any competent agency approved by Nodal Department). He shall also ensure the safety of users, cleanliness of the operation area, maintenance of crafts & prevent damage to wildlife/environment.

**2.8 Sub-scooter** means submersible scooter used for recreational under water activity.

**2.9 Driving Sub-Scooter** means a recreational activity wherein: -one or more person is seated inside a transparent dome shaped scooter equipped with a steering wheel/handle bar, accelerator pedal/switch which enables driver to reach a maximum speed of 2-4 km/hour. The diving dome shaped helmet is integrated into the scooters body and the rider’s head goes inside an air chamber within the helmet which is supplied with breathing air from scuba tank. The scooter is powered by a button to submerge or to reach to the surface of the water. A floating buoy is tied to the sub-scooter visible on the surface to indicate the presence of the driver.

**2.10 Driver** means the person or tourists going underwater to drive a submersible scooter.

**2.11 Surface Swimming Monitor** means an experienced surface swimmer in scuba gear who follows the sub-scooter driver while swimming on the surface and watches the overall safety of participants/tourists and renders assistance immediately without loss of time. She/he shall be qualified rescue diver (PADI/SSI/NIWS or any competent agency approved by Nodal Department) who can descend and stay down to give assistance if required. She/he shall also be a certified Emergency First Respondent (EFR).

**2.12 Underwater helmet** means a breathing device worn over the head to ensure that the driver has sufficient volume of breathing air at all times to breathe normally.

**2.13 Underwater monitor** means an experienced certified Dive Master from PADI/ SSI or any competent agency approved by Nodal Department, who shall follow every sub-scooter driver to guide and accompany all the time the Driver is under the sea. The Dive Master would be equipped with SCUBA accessories/breathing apparatus, having secondary breathing air source to meet any emergency.

### **3.0 Procedure for Registration/ Renewal of Submersible Scooter - recreational activity**

To facilitate Operators of Submersible Scooter Nodal Department will grant registration to Operator to undertake sub-scooter recreational activities in permitted areas only, in accordance with the following procedure:

#### **3.1 Registration**

- i. The firm/owner/operator, desiring to operate a Sub-scooter in the islands shall submit three sets of filled up application forms in the prescribed format (**Annexure – I (A)**) along with the non-refundable application fee of Rs.10,000/- (Ten Thousand only) or as prescribed by the Nodal Department from time to time in the form of demand draft/pay order in favor of Sr. Accounts officer (IPT), to the Director (Tourism), Andaman and Nicobar Administration, Port Blair, Pin code-744101 (Andaman Island) India, Tele-fax No. 03192-230933, before the commencement of the operation.

#### **3.2 Renewal**

- i. The Sub-scooter Operator may apply for renewal of permission with the prescribed non-refundable renewal fee, of Rs 10,000/- (Ten Thousand only) or as prescribed by the Nodal Department from time to time in the form of demand draft/pay order in favor of Sr. Accounts officer (IPT), to the Director (Tourism), Andaman and Nicobar Administration, Port Blair, Pin code - 744101, 45(Forty five) days before expiry of permission. In case the firm fails to apply for renewal 45(Forty five) days prior to expiry of permission granted, the non-refundable renewal fee Rs. 15,000/- (Fifteen Thousand only) would be applicable. The renewal of permission granted should be applied as per the prescribed format given at **Annexure – I (A)**.

- ii. The application for renewal must be submitted to the Nodal Department along with required documents as per Annexure I at least 45 days before the expiry of existing permission. The Nodal Department will not be responsible for delay in renewal if the application is submitted late. The permission will be granted for one year at a time.
- iii. The operator, while applying for renewal of permission, shall submit an annual report to the Environment & Forest Department on the state of the marine environment from an agency approved by the Nodal Department.

### **3.3 Terms and Conditions of Registration/ Renewal of Submersible Scooter**

- i. The Launching Platform and Ferry Vessel shall be registered under I.V Rules 2016 and a copy of registration certificate so obtained shall be enclosed with the application form.
- ii. Sub-scooters along with its all equipments and accessories must be approved by either (i) classification society, who is IACS member or (ii) DGS or (iii) OEM certified.
- iii. The sub-scooter along with associated equipments/accessories will be subjected to inspection by Nodal Department for clearance and periodic review as and when needed or at least once every year.
- iv. The Foreign Divers engaged by the firm/operator/owner shall have Restricted Area Permit (RAP) together with work permit for Andaman Islands, from the Foreigner's Registration Office, Port Blair or from Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India and shall enclose a copy of the same with their application form. The firm/operator will also furnish the details of works carried out by the foreigners in their firm.
- v. The rates charged for the activity should be reasonable & linked with the duration of the activity. The rates should be properly displayed. Tax as applicable should be paid to the concerned authority and proof of the same should be submitted at the time of renewal of the permission.
- vi. The Permission of operation of sub-scooter recreational activity will be issued by Nodal Department preferably within 10 working days of submitting all required documents as per section 3.1 & 3.2.
- vii. The operator shall ensure that **ALL DRIVERS are above 16 years and below 60 years of age**. If a minor intends to undertake the submersible scooter activity, parent or legal guardian must read and get signed an assumption of risk and release of liability waiver prior to participating in the activity as per *Standard Form* annexed at **Annexure – II**.
- viii. Guests having serious ailments/medical conditions, any kind of heart ailments or had heart surgery, angina or blood vessel surgery, have Asthma or wheezing with breathing or exercise, sinusitis or bronchitis, any lung disease, epilepsy, seizures or

convulsions or take medications to prevent them ,have history of blackouts or fainting, had a diving accident or decompression sickness, have high blood pressure or take medicine to control it, have a history of bleeding or blood disorder, have a history of ear or sinus surgery, ear disease, hearing loss, or problem with balance, equalizing (popping) ears with airplane or mountain travel, or have any history of diabetes affecting ability to participate in a strenuous activity and pregnant ladies shall not be allowed, for this activity. An undertaking shall be obtained from the Guest with one witness in the format attached **at Annexure – II.**

**ix. Environmental Conditions**

The operator shall follow the following instructions regarding environmental conditions:

- a. The Launching Platform used for the activity shall be anchored at the designated space and permitted by Administration on a sandy bottom devoid of corals, sea grass bed and seaweed. The anchored Launching Platform shall not be displaced;
- b. No coral shall be removed or broken;
- c. No marine organism dead or alive shall be imported to the site and shall be removed from the site or disturbed in any way;
- d. Feeding of fauna available in the area of operation shall not be allowed;
- e. All measures shall be taken by the Operator to ensure that the marine ecosystem is not disturbed or damaged
- f. It is the responsibility of the Site Manager/Operator to ensure that guides/divers/participants do not touch/stay clear of any form of marine life/organisms including corals and do not block or attempt to alter their natural path.
- g. The Operator shall monitor the site and submit a report (including videos/photos) after three months of operation, for review by the Nodal Department. Further the Operator is to monitor the site and submit a report in every 6 months about the condition of coral reef in an around the operational site through an authorized entity approved by the Nodal Department.

**x. Area of Operation**

- i. The Operator will get the “Operating Area” allotted from the competent authority before applying for registration/renewal.
- ii. In case the “Operating Area” is allotted by the Nodal Department, the Operator will have to pay the rent for the allotted space at the rate determined by the Nodal Department from time to time.

- iii. In the event of availability of scheduled species as per wildlife protection act in the site identified for operation, approval of Chief Wildlife Warden will have to be obtained by the operator.
- iv. The operator before taking the guests, shall ensure, that there is no harmful elements or obstacle present in the operating area.
- v. The site of operation identified shall be outside any national park or sanctuary.
- vi. The place where the operation is conducted should be even surface and there should not be elevation difference of more than 2 meters along the path of movement of the Sub-Scooter.
- vii. A minimum distance of one meter shall be maintained from the coral reef.
- viii. The activity shall be carried out strictly in the location and demarcated area as approved by the Nodal Department. There shall not be any change in the “Operating Area” of the activity without prior intimation to the Nodal Department.
- ix. The validity of the Permission is subjected to validity of all documents required for such permission.

#### **4.0 Standard Operating Procedure(SOP)**

##### **4.1 Information to be displayed**

- i. Sign boards shall be placed on **do’s and don’ts** for the Sub-Scooter recreational activity at prominent places
- ii. The Date of Expiry of Permission to conduct the Sub-Scooter recreational activity, applicable tariff/ fee, duration and description of the activity shall be displayed prominently on the Launching Platform.
- iii. The name and contact numbers of Designated Officers of the Administration who can be contacted in the event of any emergency shall be Prominently displayed on the Launching Platform – **Annexure - III.**
- iv. The timing of operation and availability of complaint register shall be displayed at prominent place on the Launching Platform.
- v. The provisions of the **clause 3.3 (Viii) & (ix)** shall be displayed at a prominent place on the Launching Platform.
- vi. “Emergency Action Plan” (EAP) as approved by the “Nodal Department” shall be displayed prominently on the Launching Platform.

- vii. The “Operator” shall put up Sign Boards of such specifications as may be prescribed by the Nodal Department in compliance of instructions mentioned at clause **4.4 (i, ii, iii, iv, v & vi )**, above at a prominent place.

#### **4.2 Manpower deployment**

- i. During the submersible scooter activity minimum of one “Underwater Monitor” shall accompany the “Driver”.
- ii. The “Underwater Monitor” shall always be in sight and communication with the “Driver” at all times to provide assistance.
- iii. All Sub Scooter recreational activity shall be operated with trained staff, all of whom shall be certified in
  - a. Life Saving Techniques through National Institute of Water Sports (NIWS), Goa or equivalent.
  - b. First Aid Technique approved by the Nodal Department.
- iv. **Surface swimming monitors:** At least one surface monitor (certified in EFR) using masks, snorkels and fins shall follow **two sub-scooter drivers** while swimming on the surface and watch the overall safety and wellbeing of “Drivers”.
- v. **Site Manager:** One site manager (certified in EFR) shall be present at the “Operating Area” at all times to supervise the overall operations and equipments. He shall be responsible to ensure the safety of Sub-Scooter Drivers, cleanliness of the “Operating Area” and maintenance of crafts. The Site Manager must preferably a qualified dive instructor and “Overall In charge” of Sub-Scooter drivers and other “Drivers” including complete platform.
- vi. The “Operator” shall give details of all the offices and currently employed certified dive personnel, in the prescribed format. Changes in staff members (Dive Instructor/ Dive Master/ EFR/ Rescue Diver etc) are allowed subject to replacements fulfilling all qualifications as prescribed in the guidelines. The details of which, along with documentary proof, must be intimated to the Nodal Department in the prescribed format at least one day in advance.

#### **4.3 Insurance**

- i. The Operation of Sub-scooter recreational activity should have a public liability insurance of **Rs. 20 lakh (Twenty Lakh) per accident** and a maximum coverage for four times i.e. Rs. 80 lakh(Eighty Lakh) per annum.
- ii. There should also be a minimum **Personal Accident Insurance** cover **of Rs.10 lakh (ten lakh)** per person undergoing Sub-scooter recreational activity at any point of time.

- iii. All the equipments/boats/vessels/ "Ferry Vessel", used by the operator for sub-scooter activity shall be insured.

#### **4.4 Pre-operation activities**

- i. The Site Manager shall give necessary detailed briefing explaining entire operational part of this recreational activity, including demonstration, instructions and safety tips, before commencement of activity and shall ensure that all the instructions are understood by the drivers or guest. The "Operator/Site Manager/Firm" shall use audio-visual briefing for effective learning and shall contain, *inter alia* the following information:
  - a) A description of the activity;
  - b) Description of local marine life and conservation;
  - c) Safety precautions to be taken while proceeding to the site and while driving;
  - d) Safety and lifesaving equipment locations;
  - e) Warnings and procedures for unexpected events in case of emergency;
  - f) Signals for basic underwater communication which must include "OK" and "I want to go back to the dive platform" (use of illustrated cards for these signals is recommended);
  - g) How to equalize pressure in the ears;
  - h) No participant shall enter or be in the water at the operation site any time, unless having been instructed to do so;
  - i) Information contained in clause 3.3 (viii) of these guidelines.
  - j) No person of less than 15 years or as prescribed by the Nodal department from time to time shall be allowed to undertake the activity.
  - k) There shall be compulsory Question and answer session at the end of such pre-dive briefing.
- ii. The audio and video briefings as per sub clause (1) shall be recorded and shall be retained for a period of atleast 90 days. The same shall be provided to the 'Nodal Department' or/and any government investigating agency such as police as and when asked for.
- iii. The sub-scooter shall be operated in a minimum of clearly demonstrable 3 mtrs visibility situation (the procedure for such clear demonstration shall be prescribed by the nodal



department), and should not be operated in zones of a depth of more than 3mtrs. The operation of sub-scooter activity shall be carried out only during fair weather during which the speed of water current should not exceed 1 Knot and the sea condition should be over 3 on Douglas Scale (waves under 0.050m).

- iv. Prior to start of the activity/operation, Site Manager shall ensure that the underwater monitor inspects the “Operating Area” in order to ensure that it is completely safe for operation. The Site Manager shall also ensure daily inspections of all Sub-Scooters and other equipments/ diving equipment, to check and ensure that there is no damage and/or wear of any kind which requires replacement, in case of any damaged items accessories/equipments the same shall be immediately replaced. Under no circumstances operation shall take place with damaged accessories/equipments.

#### **4.5 Safety**

- i. **The safety audit of operation of Sub scooter:-**

A safety audit of committee consisting of following members will be undertaken at least once a year to verify that all the terms and conditions of operations are being followed and report of such audit committed shall be compulsorily attached with the application for renewal of permit.

- a) Director, Tourism Department - Chairman
- b) Representative of A & N Command - Member
- c) Representative of Port Management Board - Member
- d) Representative of Directorate of Shipping Services- Member
- e) Representative of Science and Technology - Member
- f) Representative of Forest Department - Member
- g) Representative of Police Marine Force - Member
- h) Representative of Coast Guard - Member

- Committee may invite an expert outside the committee for advice/ inputs.
- The committee can accept certificate of OEM authorized / approved or technically competent person / agencies as deemed fit by the nodal department.
- The committee will report in format enclosed by **Annexure - V**

- ii. Maximum and minimum permissible weight shall be as per specification of Original Equipment Manufacturer (**OEM**).
- iii. Fire extinguisher (of marine approved type A,B,C) with clear validity stipulation shall always be present in the vessel/pontoon for emergency.
- iv. Sufficient number of DGS/IRS approved life jackets and buoys as per the vessels carrying capacity, shall always be present in the vessel/Launching Platform or pontoon.

- v. There shall be no fixed / portable equipment onboard the Sub-Scooter capable of underwater video recording, photography, seabed mapping, scanning etc.
- vi. The area earmarked for the sub-scooter activity is to be clearly demarcated by the operator. The operation may be suspended any time by Nodal Department, on grounds of security/ administrative or any other reason deemed fit by the nodal department.
- vii. In the event of sub-scooter malfunctioning and posing a navigational danger to the ships entering / leaving harbor, or arising any emergency during operations, must immediately be intimated to TSET / Coast Guard/ Port Control/Police Control Room on designated V/UHF frequencies immediately by the site manager or any of his staff.
- viii. The 'Area of Operation' and 'Anchored Floating Platform' shall be utilized for *bona fide* purpose only, and same shall not be misused for any other purposes. The authorities/agency/Personnel authorized by Nodal Department in this behalf may inspect and check anytime to ensure that it is being used for authorized purpose only.
- ix. The Sub-scooter can only be launched from a platform equipped with appropriate launching arrangements certified by the OEM/Approved agency/competent person authorized in this behalf by the nodal department from time to time.
- x. The operator should submit an "Air Quality Analysis Certificate" of the Air supplied to the "Driver(s)" from an authorized and competent agency approved by Nodal Department in every Six months.
- xi. The operating hours for the activity should preferably be between 07.00 hrs to 15.00 hrs.
- xii. **Sea condition** - The "Operator"/ "Site Manager" shall assess the sea conditions throughout the day, both on the surface and underwater, to determine if conditions are safe for conduct of activity. The activity shall not be carried out during inclement weather condition/ cyclone warning or under any other adverse conditions particularly when current or wave action may adversely affect the ability of participants to drive the sub-scooter, or maintain their balance under water or if underwater visibility is less than **3 meters**.
- xiii. The operator and the site manager shall be held responsible for any negligence or incident or accident during the activity;
- xiv. All staff should be familiar with the "Emergency Action Plan" (EAP) to be followed in case of emergency.
- xv. The operator shall conduct an emergency mock drill every month involving all staff during which staff will demonstrate their ability to support on the surface and swim with a person for a distance of 30 meters up to the "Launching Platform" and remove this person

from the water without any assistance from the person involved. The operator shall keep a record of such drills conducted in the given intervals and submit drill chart to the nodal department every three months.

- xvi. Under no circumstances alcohol be brought onto the operational area/ base or consumed by any staff or participants engaged in the activity.
- xvii. Safety distance requirement from one Sub-scooter to another be maintained (**10 meter**).
- xviii. Given co-ordinates and depth of the sea are subject to certification by competent authority.
- xix. Area of Sub-Scooter operation should be secured/ netted by the operator.
- xx. The agency/committee/authority/person nominated by Nodal Department shall ensure implementation of safety standards.
- xxi. A copy of the emergency procedures manual and incident report must be kept on board the vessel at all times while in operation.
- xxii. The “Operator” must file an incident report to the “Nodal Department” immediately upon any incident involving injury or rescue which requires medical attention. The “Operator” must maintain a register of records of all such instances, including any minor incidents.
- xxiii. The maximum duration for the underwater part of the activity shall be 20 minutes.
- xxiv. **Boat traffic/right of way/passage**

At all times the “**divers down**” **Alpha flag – International Orange Colour** (with dimension 20x24 inches including a stiffener to keep the flag unfurled) or rigid replica and visible *from* at least **30** meters away and from any direction shall be fixed on the platform while the activity is being carried out. Boat traffic shall not be allowed within a distance of **30** meters from the permitted area except for transfer of tourists to the operating boat/platform and security craft. The zone shall be demarcated by the operator with floats/nets during the operation.

xxv. **Safety Equipment**

- i. A “Rescue Boat” as per specifications prescribed at **Annexure VI** with duly certified life guard and First Aid Equipments shall always be positioned at the “Operating Area” for evacuation in case of any emergency.
- ii. Operator shall use only approved items/equipments, which shall be in good working condition;
- iii. The operator/Site Manager shall ensure that annual maintenance of all equipments/accessories is carried out by the OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) or an engineer authorized by the OEM and a certificate of this effect to be submitted at the time of registration/renewal.

- iv. The operator shall ensure the following items shall be made available at all times during the activity/ operation
  - a. At least one reliable two way communication, onboard (Launching Platform / pontoon) to shore connectivity;
  - b. 2 First Aid Kits (1 for emergency and 1 for day to day use);
  - c. A back up form of communication, such as a cellular phone;
  - d. Large dry towels & blankets equaling total no. of guest that can be possibly present in the area of operation.
  - e. The platform leading down from the “Launching Platform” should be at least one meter below sea level.
- v. The audio and video briefings as per sub clause (1) shall be recorded and shall be retained for a period of atleast 90 days. The same shall be provided to the ‘Nodal Department’ or/and any government investigating agency such as police as and when asked for.
- xxvi. *All under water activities during “Driving Sub-Scooter” shall be recorded and be retained for a period of at least 90 days. The same shall be provided to the ‘Nodal Department’ or/and any government investigating agency such as police, as and when asked for.*
- xxvii. *The entire liability of safety and security of tourist undertaking such activities, including handling of emergency situation entirely lies with the operators who shall be, besides other action, be liable for criminal action in case of default.*

#### **4.6 Feedback**

The “Operator” shall maintain and make available a serially numbered Complaint/Suggestion Register at the “Launching Platform”.

#### **4.7 Inspections**

- i. The “Operator” shall have a copy of all such documents available at the “Operating Area” which are submitted with application for Registration /Renewal.
- ii. **Submersible Scooter Log Book** –A log book should be kept available at the site of the Launching Platform/pontoon, and shall, inter alia, contain signature of the Site Manager and details as per **Annexure –IV**
- iii. All filled in liability waiver forms in original, as prescribed at **Annexure- II**, for the last three months duly signed by the “Driver” and the “Site Manager” shall be kept available at the “Operating Area”/Launching Platform for inspection by “the Safety Audit Team” / The Nodal Department.

#### **5.0 Penalty clause**

- i. In the event of any breach of terms and conditions herein by the “Operator” or receipt of any complaint against the “Operator” which upon due enquiry if found to be true, the Nodal Department may, based on the gravity of violation, impose appropriate fine or cancel the permission granted for the operation of sub scooter and/or would also be at liberty to

initiate any damage claims if it is established that image of “Brand Andaman” has been dented by any act of the operator/site manager/his staff.

ii. In case of default/breach/violation of any terms and conditions a minimum of 25000/- and 15 days suspension shall be imposed in addition to sub- clause (1) of clause 5.0 above or otherwise as may be deemed fit by the competent authority of the “Nodal Department”.

iii. Any operator who causes harm/injury/death to a tourists/general public/third party because of their actions/inactions/irresponsible behavior/negligence or operation of the craft in unfit condition etc. shall also be punishable as per the existing relevant Penal Law in force. During the pendency of such trial, the permission of the operator for operating all water sport activities will remain suspended.

### **6.0 Appeal**

Any person aggrieved by an order made by the Deputy Director (Tourism) under section **5.0** of this chapter may, within fifteen days from the date of order, prefer an appeal to the Director Tourism. The order issued by the Directorate will be in force till the appeal is decided unless otherwise directed by the Secretary (Tourism)

### **7.0 Power to remove difficulties**

If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of these guidelines or otherwise also the Director (Tourism) may, with the approval of the Secretary (Tourism), issue directions/instructions from time to time .

Sd/-

**Director (Tourism)**  
**Andaman & Nicobar Administration**  
**Port Blair**