



Underwater Clean-up Guidelines

- Trash in our oceans and waterways is a serious problem that threatens the marine environment and dependent livelihoods.
- **80%** of marine trash comes from **land-based** sources.
- It is an entirely man-made problem but it is also entirely preventable.
- **Refuse** single-use items. **Reduce** your waste. **Reuse** items. **Recycle** trash.
- As well as collecting trash on every dive, run **clean-up events** and include your guests, staff and fellow dive community to raise awareness about the issue of marine debris.
- Record **data** on the trash you collect to influence long-term solutions and decision making.
- Become part of the **solution**. Make a difference!

Please follow these simple guidelines to avoid damaging the environment. This will ensure the act of removing marine debris does not cause further damage to the reef. Ensure all participants are thoroughly briefed on the following information before you go diving.

- Maintain good **neutral buoyancy**.
- Watch your **fins**.
- **Touch only trash**.
- Ensure equipment is attached, **streamlined** and gauges are tucked in.
- Assess the environment before beginning removal (heavy swell or currents will make avoiding environmental damage during collection very difficult).
- Hold your trash bag so that nothing trails or touches the bottom.
- Dive in a **head down** position to avoid stirring the sediment or contacting the bottom with your fins.
- Work slowly and carefully.
- Work in a **buddy team**.
 - a. One person should wear gloves and collect the trash.
 - b. One person should hold the trash sack.
- Adjust your buoyancy throughout the dive as trash becomes heavier to stay clear of the reef.



- Avoid removing items that cannot easily be lifted e.g. tyres or car batteries.

Equipment

In addition to your standard SCUBA gear you will need:

- Mesh sacks for collecting trash.
- Gloves for protection from trash and sharp objects.
- Scissors or shears for cutting items such as fishing line or tin cans. Scissors are preferred to dive knives.

What to Remove

Please remove all **non-biodegradable** items, such as those listed below. Marine animals easily confuse items such as plastic bags with their normal food source and consequently suffocate.

- All plastic:
 - Plastic bags
 - Food wrappers
 - Plastic bottles
 - Bottle caps
 - Plastic containers
 - Plastic 6-pack rings
- Clothing
- Bags and rice sacks
- Fishing gear e.g. line, nets or broken fish traps:
 - Never try to pull fishing line free:
 - Cut and remove it in sections to avoid damaging organisms growing around it.
 - Use scissors or shears rather than a knife. Wind the line around an object to control it.
- Batteries
- Glass bottles
- Tin cans
- Cigarette butts

What to Leave

Check all trash before removal. Do not remove any items that contain marine life or that have already become incorporated into the environment and are supporting life in any way. Cut tin cans open to make sure there is nothing living



inside.

- Glass bottles covered in growth.
- Sand and silt contained inside cups or cans. (Hold these close to sandy parts of the seabed and shake out the contents carefully.)
- Anything that is stuck or encrusted with growth.
- Anything, no matter how ugly, that has become overgrown with marine life.
- Anything that may be dangerous or cause injury.
- Heavy items. (Never use your BCD to lift heavy objects.)
- Metal drums or containers that may contain hazardous materials.