

ENVIRONMENTAL BRIEFINGS

GUIDELINES FOR BOAT, DIVE AND SNORKEL BRIEFINGS

Outline:

1. Environmental boat briefing
2. Environmental dive briefing
3. Environmental snorkel briefing (applicable for free diving)

These instructions are to be added to your regular safety and dive briefings.

ENVIRONMENTAL BOAT BRIEFING

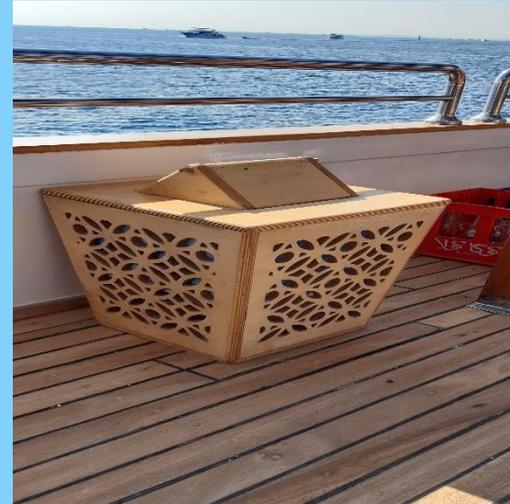
What do you need to tell the guests for their first day on a boat?

1. Waste disposal

The guide must inform the guests:

- To dispose of their waste in the **bins**.
- To dispose of their cigarette filters in the **ashtray**.
- To make sure that non of their personal items can fly into the sea.
- **To not litter** in the sea.

SHOW THE GUESTS
WHERE ARE THE
BINS AND
ASHTRAYS



Plastic pollution is harming marine life

- Cigarette filters
- Plastic bags & wraps
- Plastic cups & straws
- Fishing lines
- & more

Plastic takes anywhere from **5 to 450 years** to decompose naturally.

Inform guests that they can help by **reducing** their plastic consumption & waste.



OVER 90% OF SEABIRDS HAVE PLASTIC PIECES IN THEIR STOMACHS

MORE THAN 8 MILLION TONS OF PLASTIC ARE DUMPED IN THE OCEAN EACH YEAR!

2. Reusable cups & bottles

The guide must inform guests:

- Use the **reusable cups** for coffee & tea.
- Refill their water bottle at the **dispenser**.

Single-use plastic cups and straws are banned from boats in the Red Sea. Use biodegradable items when possible.



** Note: to apply once the COVID-19 pandemic is over.

3. Marine toilets

The guide must inform the guest:

- **To not throw toilet paper** into the toilet. Dispose of it in the bin.
- **To avoid** using the toilet while **moored** onto a dive site or coral reef.



**BLACKWATER IS SEWAGE
WATER COMING FROM
TOILETS CONTAINING
HUMAN FECES.**

The effects of blackwater on the marine environment:

- Nutrients such as Nitrogen which are present in human feces cause **eutrophication** which **harms the corals**.
- Blackwater can spread human **diseases** such as E. Coli and Salmonella. The guests can become **sick** by swallowing blackwater while next to the boat.

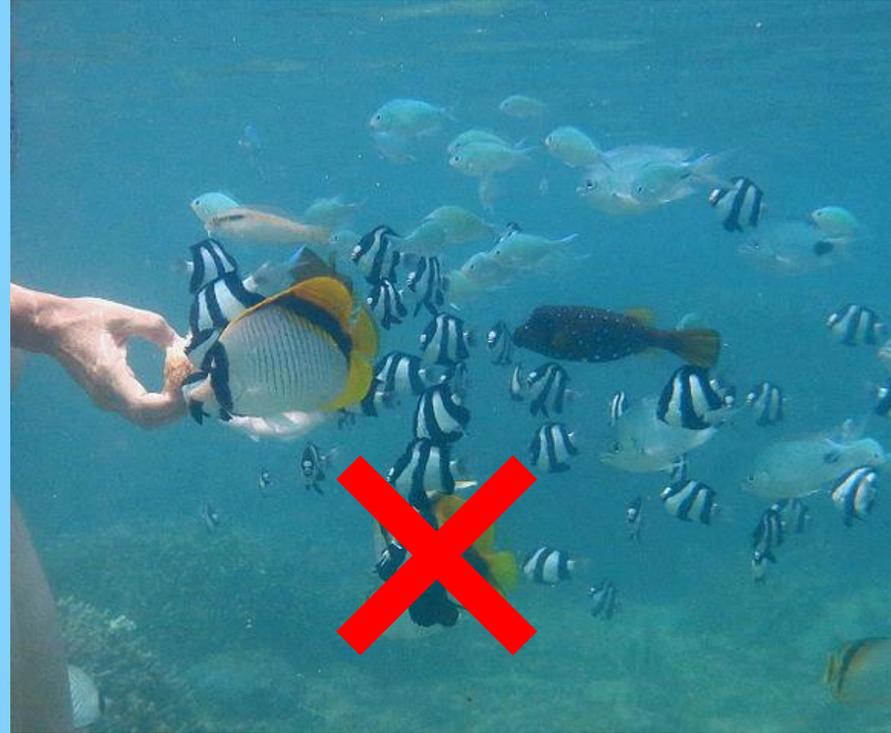


EUTROPHICATION IS AN ALGAE BLOOM CAUSED BY EXCES NUTRIENTS DUMPED IN THE WATER. ALGAE BLOOMS SUFFOCATE AND KILL CORAL REEFS BY BLOCKING THEIR ACCESS TO SUNLIGHT.

4. No fish feeding

The guide must inform the guests:

- Fish feeding attracts the fish away from their **natural food source** and **disrupts the balance** of the marine food chain.
- Fish and sharks can become **dependent** on food coming from boats.
- The fish stop eating their natural food causing algae to grow on the coral reefs. Excess algae **damages the corals**.



HABITUAL FISH
FEEDING CAN MAKE
FISH **UNHEALTHY.**

ENVIRONMENTAL DIVE BRIEFING

What do you need to tell the divers before entering the water?

1. Before entering the water: sunscreen

Did you know?

Most sunscreen contain chemicals that are **toxic to coral reefs**.

These chemicals alter the coral's DNA causing growth **deformations**.

The main two chemicals are called **OXYBENZONE AND OCTINOXATE**.



Reef Safe Sunscreens

The guide must inform the guests:

- To **not put** toxic sunscreen directly before entering the water.
- It is preferable for them to use reef safe sunscreens that are **certified ocean-friendly**.
- If the guests don't have access to reef safe sunscreens, they can wear a **rash guard** and a hat or **wash off** the toxic sunscreen before entering the water.
- The center can inform guests to **bring reef safe sunscreens** when they book the trip.



REEF SAFE SUNSCREEN
DOESN'T CONTAIN
OXYBENZONE AND
OCTINOXATE CHEMICALS. IT'S
MADE FROM ORGANIC
PRODUCTS AND NATURAL OILS.

Up next: no gloves

2. Before entering the water: no gloves

The guide must inform the guests:

- Gloves provide protection to the hands which can encourage divers to **touch** marine life.
- The Chamber of Diving & Water Sports and Green Fins advise against the usage of gloves to protect marine life.
- Gloves should only be worn while diving on **wrecks**, in very **cold** conditions or if the guests needs gloves for a **medical** reason.

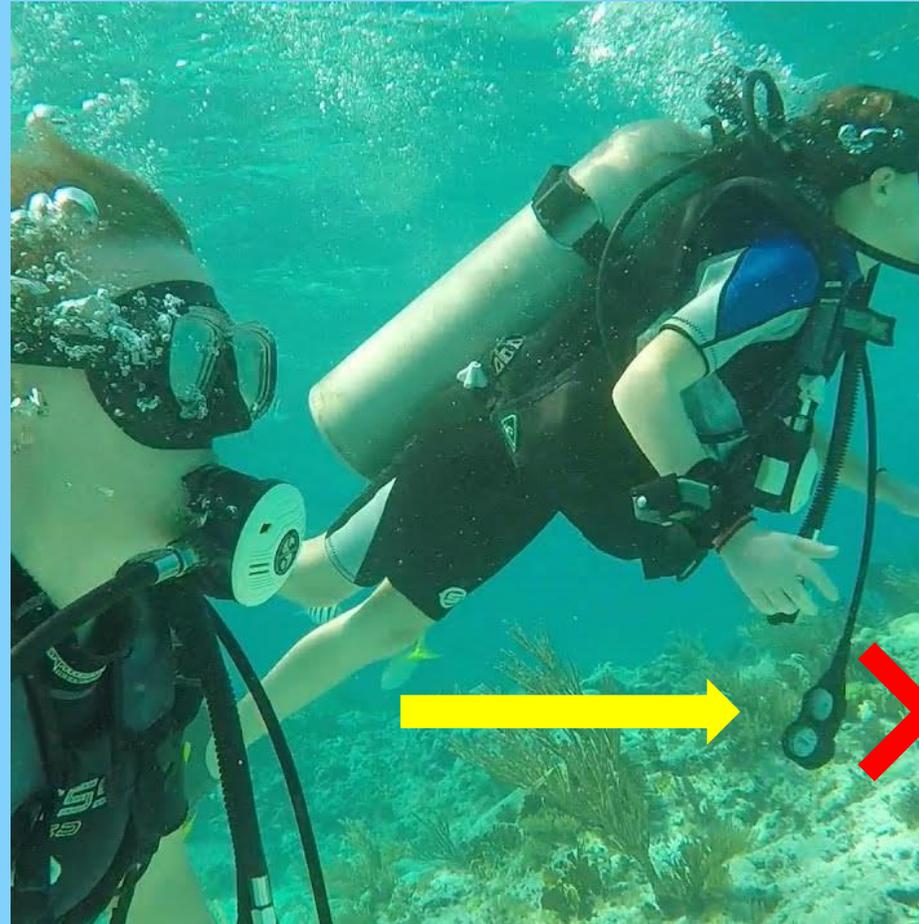


IF DIVERS LOSE BUOYANCY CONTROL, THEY CAN USE **THEIR FINGER** AND STEADY THEMSELVES WITH A ROCK OR SAND OR DEAD CORAL.

3. Before entering the water: equipment

The guide must inform the guests:

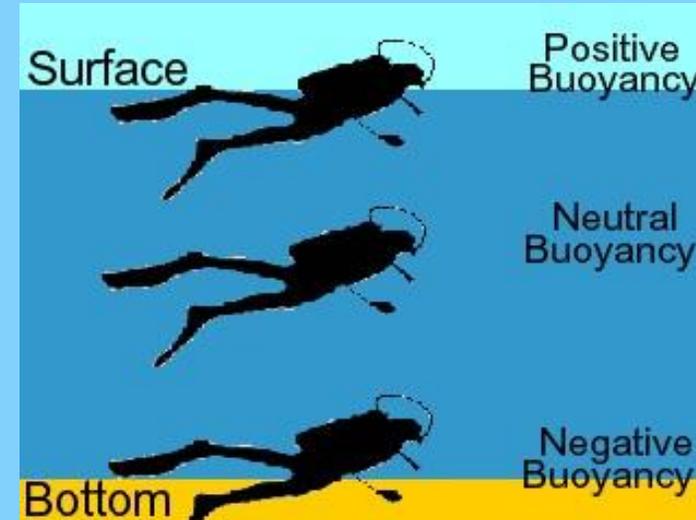
- To secure their dive equipment properly by using BCD clips. The pressure gauge, second stage octopus, SMB, camera must not be dangling from the diver.
- Securing the dive equipment prevents coral damage.
- To inform the buddy teams to check that the equipment is secured during the buddy check.
- To provide BCD clips to guests who don't have any if possible.



4. Buoyancy control

The guide must ensure the following:

- Certified divers must go through a **check dive** to evaluate their buoyancy skills before diving.
- All divers must do a **weight check** on their first dive.
- The guide should offer a course to **improve the buoyancy** of divers when needed.
- Beginner divers must only dive in designated **beginner dive sites**. The guide shouldn't recommend taking beginners to dive sites with valuable coral reefs.
- Beginner divers should stay **5meters** from the reef.
- The guide should always correct a diver's buoyancy.



BUOYANCY CONTROL IS ESSENTIAL TO CORAL REEF PROTECTION. IT REDUCES THE CHANCES OF DIVER TO CORAL CONTACT.

5. Correct diver positioning

The guide must inform the guests:

- To stay **neutrally buoyant and horizontal** with their knees bent upwards.
- When approaching a reef to observe it, they must keep at a **90* angle** and make sure their fins aren't within reach of corals.
- To always remain **calm** and if necessary, in a vertical position when encountering a large marine animal: shark, manta etc.



AVOID VERTICAL OR
BACKWARD KICKING IF
POSSIBLE.

6. Keep away from coral reefs

The guide must inform the guests:

- To keep a minimum of a **2 meter** distance from coral reefs to avoid contact or **damage**.
- Keeping the distance from coral reefs reduces the damage caused by **fins**.
- It also makes the marine life living around the reef to feel comfortable.
- Beginner divers should stay **5meters** from the reef.



7. No touching

The guide must inform the guests:

- Touching or chasing after any form of marine life is strictly **forbidden**.
- Touching coral reefs can **damage** the coral and spread diseases that may be harmful to the coral colony.
- **Touching** or **chasing** after marine animals like turtles or whalesharks for example **scares** them away. If divers harass marine animals it will scare them from approaching their feeding area, cleaning station or nesting grounds because they know they can be in danger.



8. Do not stir up sediment

The guide must inform the guests:

- To avoid kicking up sand while diving on a sandy bottom or shore diving.
- There is marine life living in the sand such as gobies, snails for example. Kicking up sand can **upset their habitat**.
- Sand can cover corals reducing their ability to **photosynthesize**. This can cause disease and bleaching.



9. No collecting

The guide must inform the guests:

- It is forbidden by **Egyptian law** to collect or take any living or dead marine life from the Red Sea.
- Empty shells, corals, live animals are completely off limits.
- **What comes from the sea, belongs in the sea.** Taking things from this environment can change the ecosystem.
- **ONLY COLLECT GARBAGE AND PLASTIC WITH NO MARINE LIFE ON IT**



Did you know? Empty shells are **homes** for crabs and snails. When they grow, they go looking for a bigger shell to live in.

10. Responsible photographer

The guide must inform photographers:

- To keep a 1.5meter distance between their fins and the corals. Be aware of where and how they position the fins.
- To keep a neutral buoyancy when filming near corals. The guide should help beginner photographers to avoid coral damage.
- To not approach or chase after marine animals for a picture. If the animal doesn't come close, let it be. Keep a distance of a minimum of 3 meters.
- Marine life is sensitive to flash. The guide must tell divers not to use overuse the flash, especially with smaller marine life: octopus.



Environmental snorkel briefing

What to tell snorkelers before entering the water?

1. Before entering the water: sunscreen

Did you know?

Most sunscreen contain chemicals that are **toxic to coral reefs**.

These chemicals cause **deformations** in the growth of new corals and bleaching.

The main two chemicals are called **OXYBENZONE AND OCTINOXATE**.



Reef Safe Sunscreens

The guide must inform the guests:

- To **not put** toxic sunscreen directly before entering the water.
- It is preferable for them to use reef safe sunscreens that are **certified ocean-friendly**.
- If the guests don't have access to reef safe sunscreens, they can wear a **rash guards** and hat or **wash off** the toxic sunscreen before entering the water.
- The center can inform guests to **bring reef safe sunscreens** when the book the trip.



REEF SAFE SUNSCREEN
DOESN'T CONTAIN
OXYBENZONE AND
OCTINOXATE CHEMICALS. IT'S
MADE FROM ORGANIC
PRODUCTS AND NATURAL OILS.

Up next: life jackets

2. Life jackets

The guide must ensure that snorkelers always wear life jackets :

- For the snorkeler's safety.
- To make sure that the snorkelers keep their distance from the coral reef.
- In the case snorkelers are tired or distressed, they can comfortably float and don't have to **hold onto the coral reef for stability.**
- **Avoid swimming with the hands. Use the life jacket to keep your body afloat and horizontal in the water.**



3. Do not step on coral reefs

The guide must inform snorkelers:

- To enter and exit the water at the **designated area**.
- To avoid **stepping or touching** the corals while entering or existing the sea.
- If they are tired, they should **float using their life jacket** and not by standing on the corals.
- Coral reefs are sensitive animals, stepping on them can break and cause damage the coral.



4. No touching

The guide must inform the guests:

- Touching or chasing after any form of marine life is strictly **forbidden**.
- Touching coral reefs can **damage** the coral and spread diseases that may be harmful to the coral colony.
- **Touching or chasing** after marine animals' life like turtles or whalesharks for example **scares** them away. If divers harass marine animals it will scare them from approaching their feeding area, cleaning station or nesting grounds because they know they can be in danger.



5. No collecting

The guide must inform the guests:

- It is forbidden by **Egyptian law** to collect or take any living or dead marine life from the Red Sea.
- Empty shells, corals, live animals are completely off limits.
- **What comes from the sea, belongs in the sea.** Taking things from this environment can change the ecosystem.
- **ONLY COLLECT GARBAGE AND PLASTIC.**



Did you know? Empty shells are **homes** for crabs and snails. When they grow, they go looking for a bigger shell to live in.

For more information on environmentally-friendly guidelines:

- Green Fins: <https://www.greenfins.net/>
- Green Fins free guide e-course: <https://www.greenfins.net/green-fins-dive-guide>
- Project Aware: <https://www.projectaware.org/updates/environmental-dive-briefing-0>
- Coral snorkeling guidelines: http://coral.org/wordpress/wp-content/PDFs/guides/snorkeling_english.pdf
- Coral reefs: <https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections/marine-life-education-resources/coral-reef-ecosystems>

It's your role to protect the Red Sea
while you guide.

Lead by example.
Inform your guests.
Correct bad behavior.
Be the hero we need.