

# 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

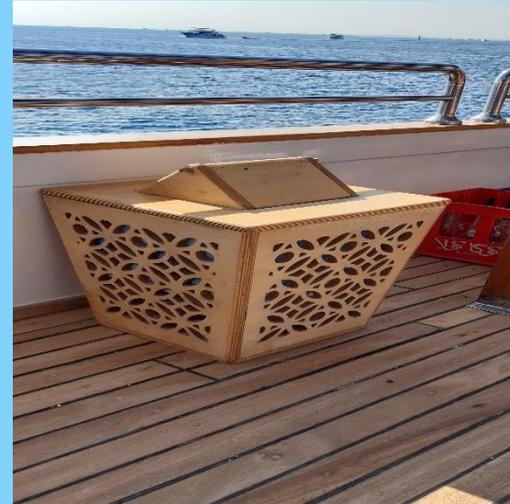
What do you need to tell the guests for their first day on a boat?

# 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 none 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.

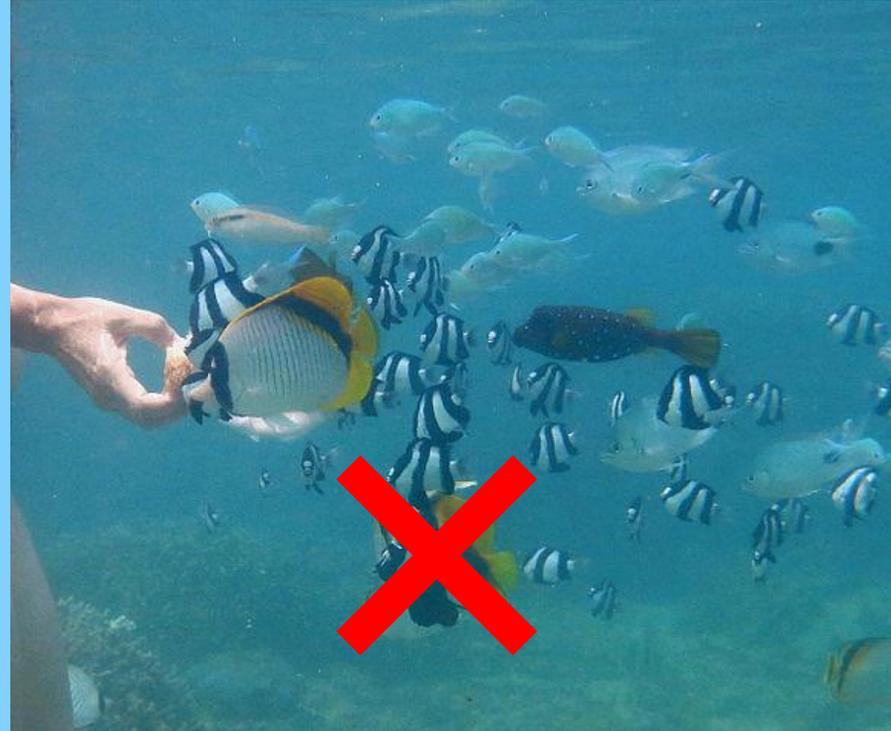


**EUTROPHICATION IS AN ALGAE BLOOM CAUSED BY EXCES NUTRIENTS DUMPED IN THE WATER. ALGAE BLOOMS SUFFOCATE AND KILL CORAL REEFS BY BLOCKING THEIR ACCESS TO SUNLIGHT.**

# 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 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: 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.

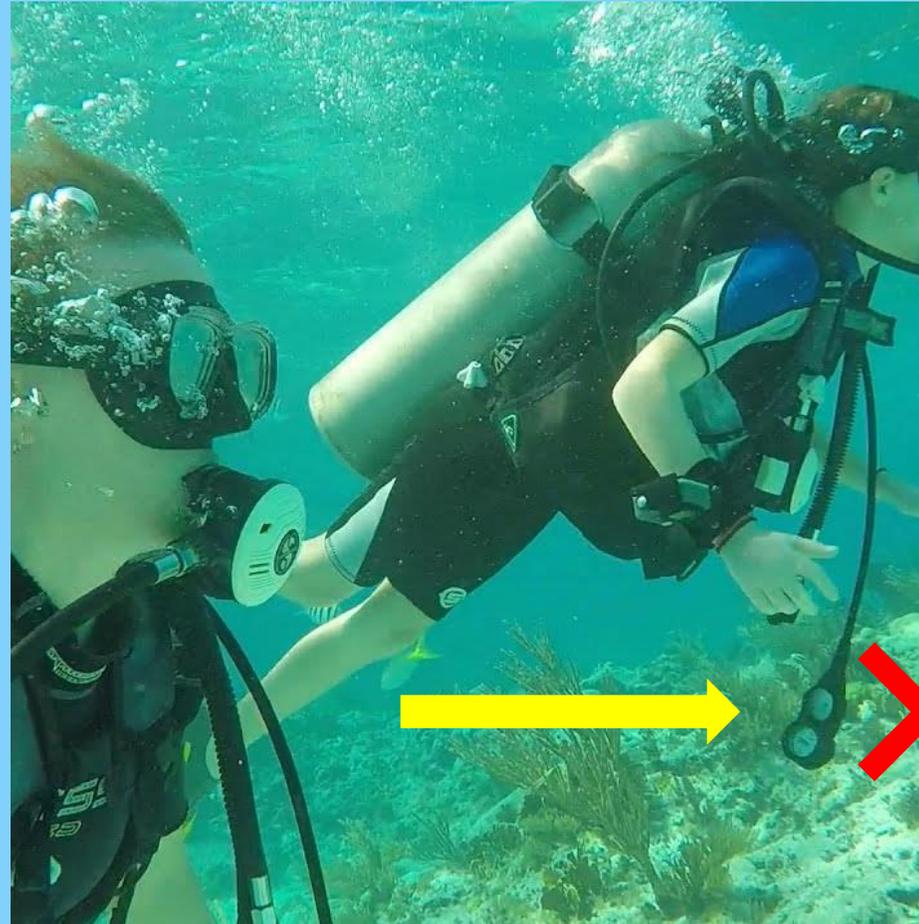


IF DIVERS LOSE BUOYANCY CONTROL, THEY CAN USE **THEIR FINGER** AND STEADY THEMSELVES WITH A ROCK OR SAND OR DEAD CORAL.

# 3. Before entering the water: equipment

The guide must inform the guests:

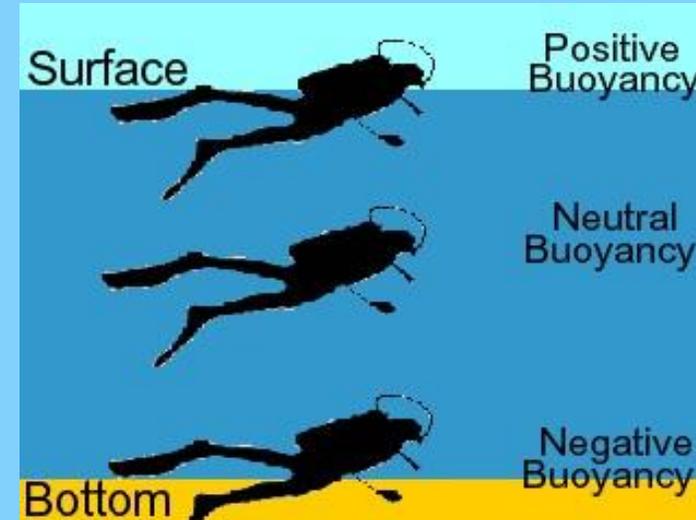
- To secure their dive equipment properly by using BCD clips. The pressure gauge, second stage octopus, SMB, camera must not be dangling from the diver.
- Securing the dive equipment prevents coral damage.
- To inform the buddy teams to check that the equipment is secured during the buddy check.
- To 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.
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## 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:

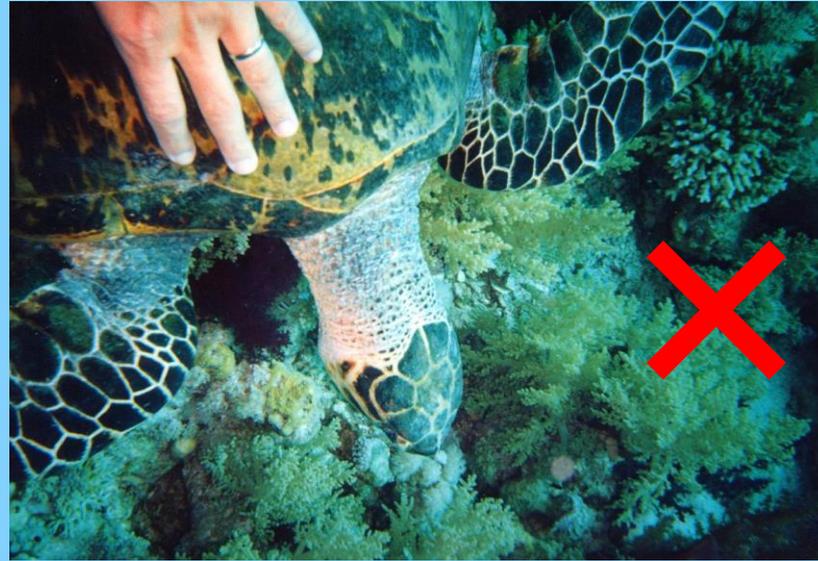
- To enter and exit the water at the **designated area**.
- To avoid **stepping or touching** the corals while entering or existing the sea.
- If they are tired, they should **float using their life jacket** and not by standing on the corals.
- Coral reefs are sensitive animals, stepping on them can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



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# 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](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.