DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY
2300 E STREET NW
WASHINGTON DC 20372-5300

IN REPLY REFER TO
BUMEDINST 6200.15
BUMED-21
24 Jun 94

BUMED INSTRUCTION 6200.15

From: Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
To: Ships and Stations Having Medical Department Personnel

Subj: SUSPENSION OF DIVING DUTY DURING PREGNANCY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 6000.1A
(b) Fife W: Women in Diving, Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society, Publication No. 71 (WS-WD), 1987 (NOTAL)
(c) MANMED art. 15-66

Encl: (1) Sample Informed Consent Release Format

1. Purpose. To provide guidance on suspension of diving duty by pregnant servicewomen.

2. Cancellation. NAVMEDCOMINST 6200.2.

3. Background. Reference (a) prohibits diving by pregnant servicewomen. Medical and scientific evidence demonstrate that the hyperbaric environment may be hazardous to a fetus, resulting in developmental anomalies or fetal death. These untoward fetal events may occur despite the absence of discernible maternal effects. Safe diving profiles that protect the fetus have not been developed. Reference (b) indicates that because of the blood gas partitioning factors of the fetus, and its lack of a degassing pulmonary circulation, the fetus is susceptible to any circulatory gas bubbles that develop. The fetus would be at an increased risk if the mother experiences a standard U.S. Navy decompression ascent or if she has to be recompressed for decompression sickness.

4. Action

a. Upon entering diving training, during the initial diving physical examination and upon periodic reexamination thereafter per reference (c), female divers will be counseled on the potential hazards to the fetus inherent in diving. This counselling shall be documented by an SF-600 health record entry.

b. At the first presumptive sign of pregnancy (e.g., missed menstrual period), the diver shall present herself to the cognizant medical authority. She shall be temporarily suspended

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from diving until pregnancy can be confirmed or an alternative diagnosis established. Upon confirmation of pregnancy, she shall be medically suspended from diving until the pregnancy ends.

c. Diving duty is strenuous, requiring strength and stamina. Adequate reconditioning is essential before resuming diving duty. After completion of pregnancy, the servicewoman shall be screened by an undersea medical officer or, if not available, a diving independent duty corpsman, who shall document in the health record whether she is fit to resume diving duty.

5. Form. SF-600 (10-75), Chronological Record of Medical Care, S/N 7540-00-634-4176 is available from the Federal Supply System through normal supply procurement procedures.

D. F. HAGEN

Stocked:
Navy Aviation Supply Office
ASO Code 103
5801 Tabor Avenue
Philadelphia PA 19120-5099

SAMPLE INFORMED CONSENT RELEASE FORMAT

(Use Letterhead of Examining Facility or Cognizant Command)

The below named individual is involved in various types of diving and has been instructed in the increased risks of congenital malformations, spontaneous abortions, and premature births felt to be associated with diving while pregnant.

The individual verifies that she has been instructed in the possibility of these untoward events occurring as a result of diving and that she understands her responsibility to present herself to the appropriate diving medical authorities at the first presumptive sign of pregnancy (e.g., missed menstrual period).

PRINT NAME (Last, first, middle)	Grade or Rate
Signature	Date

INSTRUCTION GIVEN TO THIS DATE BY:

PRINT NAME (Last, first, middle)	Grade or Rate
Signature	Date