



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE CORPS BASES JAPAN
CAMP SMEDLEY D. BUTLER, OKINAWA
UNIT 35001
FPO AP 96373-5001
AND
III MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
UNIT 35601
FPO AP 96606-5601

MCBJ/III MEFO 5101.1
4SAF
11 MAY 2011

MARINE CORPS BASES JAPAN/III MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE ORDER 5101.1

From: Commander, Marine Corps Bases Japan
Commanding General, III Marine Expeditionary Force
To: Distribution List

Subj: RECREATIONAL WATER ACTIVITIES

Encl: (1) U.S. Military Sea Condition Information for Okinawa
(2) Hazardous Marine Life

1. Situation. Between 2000 and 2010, 36 water-related mishaps involving Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) personnel occurred in open water in and around Okinawa and Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Iwakuni. Twenty three of these mishaps caused fatalities, and the remainder required military and/or host nation emergency rescues.

2. Mission. To reduce the number and severity of SOFA personnel water-related mishaps in Japan, publish regulations and policies promoting safe open water recreation.

3. Execution

a. Commander's Intent

(1) To preserve military readiness, protect the military force, and promote public safety, publish regulations and policies to ensure SOFA personnel in Japan safely recreate in open water (e.g., territorial seas, navigable waters, lakes, ponds, and reservoirs) with proper education, training, and equipment necessary for their activities.

(2) Recreational water safety regulations published in subparagraphs 3.b and 3.c below constitute punitive general orders, and any Marine Corps Bases Japan (MCBJ) or III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) military personnel violation of the severable prohibitions and requirements may result in prosecution under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and/or other appropriate administrative action.

(3) MCBJ and III MEF members of the civilian component and dependents shall consider the recreational water safety regulations in subparagraph 3.b and 3.c as instructive policy for safe open water recreation.

(4) The recreational water safety regulations in subparagraph 3.b and 3.c shall not be construed to prevent any MCBJ or III MEF commander or the Director, Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS), from establishing recreational water safety orders or equipment rental and other commercial policies necessary to: (a) operate, safeguard, and control any MCBJ facility

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or area; (b) protect public safety on any MCBJ facility or area; (c) respect the laws of Japan.

b. Recreational Water Safety Regulations

(1) All MCBJ and III MEF military personnel participating in recreational activities in open water shall use the "buddy system" so that two or more persons operate together to monitor and assist each other in the water.

(2) All MCBJ and III MEF military personnel participating in recreational activities in open water shall comply with restrictions and other requirements associated with applicable sea conditions established by United States military authorities. In Okinawa, personnel shall not enter open water during "Sea Condition Danger."

(3) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel shall not enter open water to recreate without wearing or using safety devices/equipment required by law, regulation, contract, or vendor use policy for their specific water-related activities.

(4) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel participating in recreational self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (SCUBA) diving in open water must be properly certified or participating in certification training by a internationally recognized recreational SCUBA diver training organization.

(5) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel shall not intentionally touch, cover, uncover, collect, move, or disturb underwater unexploded ordnance. Personnel discovering such ordnance should mark or note its location and report it to local police or military police as soon as practicable.

(6) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel participating in recreational kiteboarding or kitesurfing are required to have completed a certification training program sponsored by an accredited International Kiteboarding Organization.

(7) To prevent risk of shallow water blackouts caused by cerebral hypoxia, MCBJ and III MEF military personnel shall not intentionally hyperventilate before breath-hold diving or submerging under open water.

(8) To maintain buoyancy and facilitate any necessary rescue, MCBJ and III MEF military personnel snorkeling and free diving away from open water areas under lifeguard supervision shall wear appropriately-sized personal floatation devices (e.g., snorkeling vests).

(9) To prevent surfboard loss or strikes to other surfers following any "wipeout," MCBJ and III MEF military personnel must use surfboard leashes when surfing or wind surfing with any surfboard variation, including longboards, shortboards, and funboards.

(10) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel operating or riding on personal watercraft (e.g., "Jet Ski," "Waverunner") shall wear United States Coast Guard approved (or a Japanese Industrial Standards Committee compliant vest), appropriately-sized, life vests.

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(11) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel operating personal watercraft shall each use a tethered lanyard or cord to disable the watercraft ignition should the operator fall off.

(12) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel shall not jump or dive into open water from trees, cliffs, bridges, towers, or any other natural objects or man-made land fixtures higher than six feet from the water surface.

(13) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel operating or riding in sea kayaks, canoes, and other small boats on open water shall wear United States Coast Guard approved, appropriately-sized, life vests (or a Japanese Industrial Standards Committee compliant vest).

(14) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel shall not enter open water affected by floods or tsunami waves.

(15) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel shall not enter open water while drunk from alcohol or impaired by any controlled substance or prescription drug. The words, "drunk" or "impaired," mean any intoxication sufficient to impair the rational and full exercise of the mental or physical faculties.

(16) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel shall not enter open water from closed beaches or coastal areas.

(17) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel shall not enter on or in frozen open water.

c. Self-contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus (SCUBA) Diving

(1) Certified scuba instructors approved by the local MCCS Scuba Program Office may train, instruct or certify personnel aboard MCBJ and MCCS Okinawa facilities only when conducting courses for the MCCS Scuba Program Office.

(2) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel participating in recreational SCUBA diving in open water must be properly certified or participating in certification training by an internationally recognized recreational SCUBA diver training organization.

(a) Each diver will only rent equipment for his or her own personal use (one regulator system, one Buoyancy Compensator Device (BCD) and a maximum of four SCUBA cylinders).

(b) At no time will an individual be allowed to rent more than one set of scuba life support equipment unless they are:

1. A certified scuba instructor approved by MCCS Program Office.

2. A spouse, parent or legal guardian who is certified diver renting equipment for a certified minor child or spouse. (C-Cards must be presented for each set rented.)

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(3) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel are prohibited from loaning, renting or purchasing any SCUBA equipment for, or to, any individual who is not a certified diver or a student diver enrolled in a course of instruction.

(4) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel shall SCUBA dive within their certification level.

(5) Required minimum equipment for MCBJ and III MEF military personnel open water dives:

- (a) Mask with tempered safety glass lens.
- (b) Snorkel.
- (c) Fins.
- (d) BCD with low pressure inflation system, manual inflation system.
- (e) Quick release weight system.
- (f) Gas regulation system first and second stage.
- (g) Alternate Breathing Source (i.e. pony bottle, spare air, octopus).
- (h) Submersible pressure gauge (either electronic or mechanical) for each cylinder of breathing gas.
- (i) Depth gauge (either electronic or mechanical) or dive computer.
- (j) Timing device (watch) or dive computer.
- (k) Audible signaling device (whistle).
- (l) Dive Tool (either a dive knife Per Ref (a) or line cutter).
- (m) Compass.
- (n) Two dive lights (when participating in night diving).
- (o) A visual signaling device, e.g., Safety Sausage (when participating boat diving).

(6) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel are prohibited from using SCUBA equipment that is unserviceable and poses a risk to the user.

(7) MCBJ and III MEF military personnel are prohibited from recreational SCUBA diving in the following areas:

- (a) Within 500 yards of Chimu Wan anchorage (Camp Courtney).

(b) Within the MCAS Iwakuni port zone and surrounding restricted areas.

(c) Within 500 yards of any pier, dock or wharf in use.

(d) Any established swimming beach where scuba diving is prohibited by beach regulations.

(e) Within 1000 yards of ammunition demilitarization areas.

(f) Within any body of fresh water such as a river, lake, reservoir or dam.

(g) Within 500 yards of any sewage or storm outlet.

(h) Any underwater caves.

d. Laws of Japan

(1) All SOFA personnel shall be licensed in accordance with the laws of Japan to operate privately-owned boats in Japan.

(2) All SOFA personnel shall also comply with Japan Fisheries Law and all other water-related regulations enforced by Japan's prefectures.

e. Open Water Safety Recommendations. As a matter policy for minimizing safety risk, all SOFA personnel in or around open water should:

(1) Learn to swim.

(2) Limit open water recreation to areas under lifeguard supervision when recreating as or with a novice swimmer or a swimmer possessing basic proficiency in the open water recreational activity.

(3) Supervise young children and novice swimmers under their care at all times, and when in open water, be within an arm's reach.

(4) Before recreating, notify family members, friends, or command representatives of their locations and expected return times and dates.

(5) Have immediately available or possess a cellular phone sealed in a buoyant, water-proof pouch. The phone should list preprogrammed emergency phone numbers.

(6) Stay away from coastlines during hazardous surf, typhoon conditions, and tsunami warnings.

(7) Wear head protection while surfing to guard against injuries from shallow reefs in the surf zone.

(8) Certified divers take a SCUBA Review class prior to diving if inactive from the sport for several months.

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(9) If new to local waters, certified divers should consider signing up for a Discover Local Diving excursion with a certified Divemaster prior to diving on their own.

(10) Not touch coral and hazardous marine life, including sea anemone, cone shells, box jellyfish, blue ringed octopi, sea urchins, crown of thorns, moray eels, fire coral, sea snakes, hydroids, stonefish, lionfish, barracuda, sharks, and Portuguese man-of-war.

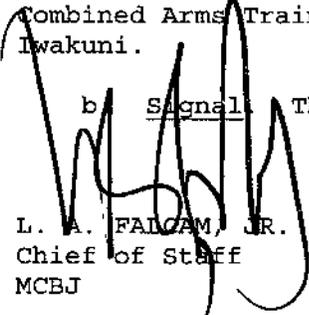
(11) Be certified or trained in basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

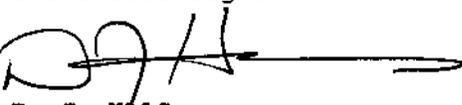
4. Administration and Logistics. MCBJ and III MEF commanders with special courts-martial convening authority shall ensure that copies of this Order are posted on their work center safety read boards, and the Recreational Water Safety Regulations within this Order are incorporated into unit Recreation Off-Duty Safety standard operating procedures.

5. Command and Signal

a. Command. This Order is applicable to members of the United States armed forces, members of the civilian component, and dependents assigned or attached to Marine Corps activities, organizations, and units on Okinawa, Combined Arms Training Center, Camp Fuji, and Marine Corps Air Station, Iwakuni.

b. Signal. This Order is effective the date signed.


L. A. FALGAM, JR.
Chief of Staff
MCBJ


D. J. HAAS
Chief of Staff
III MEF

DISTRIBUTION: LIST B/II

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U. S. MILITARY SEA CONDITION INFORMATION FOR OKINAWA

**Effective
01 April 2011**

Condition Definitions

Sea Condition All Clear (SC-AC): Conditions which are ideal for water related activities.

Sea Condition Caution (SC-C): Hazardous conditions may exist. Exercise caution when entering the water.

Sea Condition Danger (SC-D): Life threatening conditions exist. Water entry is prohibited for all activities.

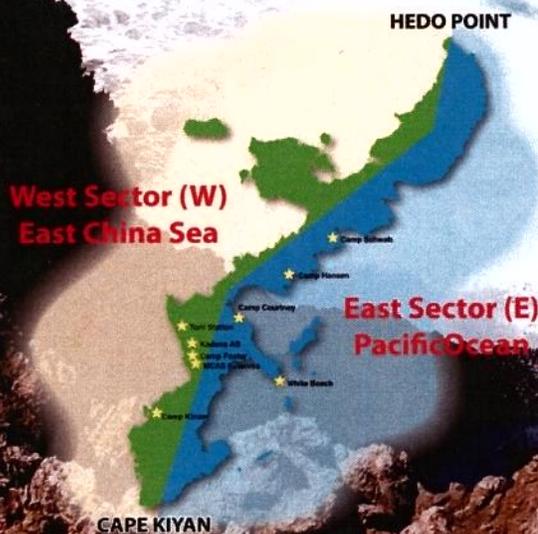
Criteria

SC-AC (All Clear): Wind speeds have been reported at less than 18 MPH (16 Knots). Locally assessed conditions are suitable for novice water enthusiasts intending to participate in the location's primary water activities.

SC-C (Caution): Wind speeds of 18 MPH (16 Knots) or greater, including gusts, have been observed for at least 3 hours. Locally assessed conditions warrant that individuals participating in water activities have extensive experience both in the planned activity and at the location.

SC-D (Danger): Wind speeds of 35 MPH (30 Knots) or greater, including gusts, have been observed and are to persist for at least 3 hours or during Tropical Cyclone Condition of Readiness (TCCOR) 2. Locally assessed conditions are dangerous and warrant restricting access to the water and removal of individuals from the water. Note - Military facilities will cease rental of water recreation equipment in SC-D.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Conditions and criteria are based on a generalized evaluation and may not be consistent with the weather and sea state throughout the entire coastline of Okinawa. Therefore, personnel must make an individual assessment of the hazards for their intended activity during SC-AC and SC-C.



Sector Location

West (W) - East China Sea shoreline,
Hedo Point (Northern tip) west down
to Cape Kiyan (Southern tip)

East (E) - Pacific Ocean shoreline,
Hedo Point (Northern tip) east down
to Cape Kiyan (Southern tip)

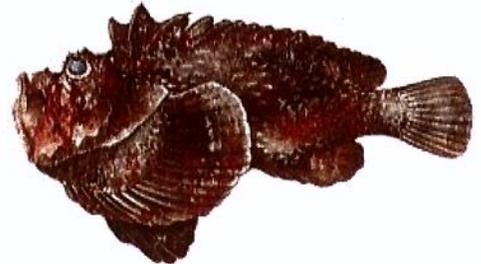
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HAZARDOUS MARINE LIFE FOUND IN OKINAWA

Hazardous Marine Life in the waters of Okinawa is the same as you will find in sub-tropical areas of the Pacific. Prior to entering the water divers should familiarize themselves with the common reef inhabitants.

STONEFISH

The chances of being stung by a stonefish, probably the most dangerous fish in Okinawa waters are fortunately not great enough to justify staying out of the ocean. The main problem is that recognizing a stonefish, even if it is right in front of your eyes, is very difficult. Their camouflage is incredibly effective and only observers with a trained eye are likely to see them. Given this natural disadvantage there are several things that you can do to reduce the likelihood of standing on, sitting on, or accidentally touching one of these highly poisonous fish. One should always wear thick-soled shoes, dive boots or reef-walking shoes while treading on the bottom. Whenever possible, swim rather than walk, thus reducing damage to the marine life and lessening the danger of being stung by a stonefish. When walking, it is a good idea to shuffle one foot in front of the other rather than to take big strides in which each foot is raised up and then placed down onto the sea bed with the risk of landing on a stonefish. The shuffle motion will increase the likelihood that you scare a stonefish away from your tracks rather than stepping on its potentially lethal spines. If a person is injured by a stonefish seek medical attention without delay.



LIONFISH

Lionfish are beautiful and deadly. Their feather-like fins are brightly-colored and tipped with strong venom. Lionfish are secretive, hiding under ledges and in caves during the day. They are nocturnal predators, actively feeding at night. Lionfish feed on crabs, shrimps and small fish. A sting from a Lionfish is extremely painful, and victims must seek medical attention immediately. Soaking the limb in very hot water is recommended for first aid. Lionfish are popular aquarium pets. Caution should be used if you plan on keeping one as a pet. If a person is suspected to have been injured by a Lionfish seek medical attention without delay.



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CONE SNAILS

In the dynamic marine environments in which the cone shell resides, it has been necessary for these snails to develop an effective mechanism for immobilizing their otherwise speedy prey. The solution to the snail's lack of physical agility has been the development of a highly potent concoction of toxins that it uses to paralyze its prey. Upon contact with the prey, the snail impales the harpoon like tooth into any exposed tissue and injects the venom. Some species of cone snails can cause serious injuries and even death to humans. If you collect seashells do so with great care. If a person is suspected to have been injured by a cone snail seek medical attention without delay.



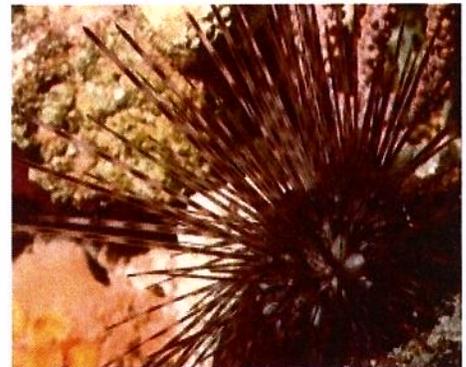
SEA SNAKES

Sea snakes inhabit the tropical waters of the Indo-Pacific and are highly venomous. Sea snakes have flattened tails for swimming and have valves over their nostrils that are closed underwater. Due to their need to breathe air, they are usually found in shallow water where they swim about the bottom feeding on fish, fish eggs and eels. Sea snakes may be inquisitive but are not considered aggressive unless threatened such as when caught in fishing net or handled roughly. If a snake should approach don't panic, simply swim away. Very few sea snake bites occur around the world and those that do, usually happen on trawlers, when the snakes are sometimes hauled in with the catch. Someone suspected of being bitten should be taken to the hospital without delay.



SEA URCHINS

Sea urchins are spiny little creatures that live along the bottom of virtually all-inshore areas of the ocean. There are several different types in Okinawa, some with short stubby spines, some with long brittle spines, and many also have venom. Generally you don't have to worry too much if you are standing on sand; these creatures like the reef and rocks. Stepping on or even touching a urchin can not only drive a spine into flesh, but the spines are so brittle that they often break off in the wound and become infected easily. Use reef walker type shoes or dive boots while walking in shallow water or along the shoreline. Do not stand or walk on coral. Not only do you kill the coral, but this is also a

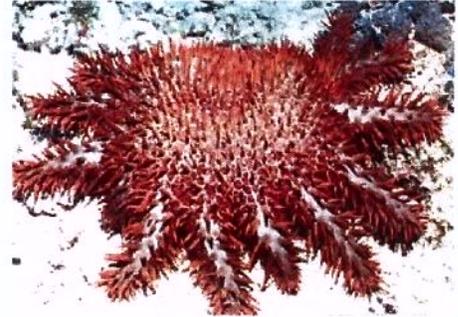


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favorite place for sea urchins to live. Should you ever find that you have stepped on a sea urchin, and have a spine embedded in your skin do not try to remove the spines with a needle or tweezers because the spines may break up and become more difficult to remove. The safest bet is to seek medical attention if spines break off under the skin.

CROWN OF THORN STARFISH

The only starfish on Okinawa to look out for would be the crown-of-thorns starfish. Their bodies are covered with sharp, pointed spines that have venom. Stepping on or bumping against these creatures will result in the spines penetrating the skin and venom injection. The pain can be intense, severe reaction may result in nausea and vomiting or shock. You may need to seek medical treatment.



BLUE RINGED OCTOPUS

The blue ringed octopus is small, and rarely is larger than a few inches from the tip of one tentacle across to the tip of the opposite tentacle. It is normally light colored with dark brown bands over each of its eight arms and body, with blue circles superimposed on the dark brown bands. When the octopus is threatened the rings turn a brilliant electric-blue color, and it is this change that gives the animal its name. The blue ringed octopus is very poisonous and should never be handled. The octopus has a parrot-like beak that contains a poison that could cause respiratory paralysis. Fortunately, your chance of seeing a Blue Ringed octopus is not likely. However, a child could mistakenly pick up this interesting looking octopus while searching through a tide pool. Parents should keep a very watchful eye on the things children pick up while at the ocean. Someone suspected of being bitten should be taken to the hospital without delay.



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BOX JELLYFISH

What is the most poisonous marine animal known to man? Well, some say the Box Jellyfish (locally known as the Habu Kurage) and perhaps for good reason. The sting from this creature is very painful and could possibly be life threatening. May through September is a time when the waters surrounding Okinawa become very warm, and along with this warmth brings increase sightings of jellyfish. When heading to the ocean during periods when jellyfish maybe abundant use these common sense preventive measures:



- If jellyfish are washed-up onto shore don't enter the water.
- Don't touch a jellyfish even though it is dead. The tentacles can still sting.

FIRE CORAL

Coral is extremely sharp and the most delicate coral is often the most dangerous because of their razor-sharp edges. Coral cuts, while usually fairly superficial, take a long time to heal and can cause temporary disability. The smallest cut, if left untreated, can develop into a skin ulcer. Secondary infections often occur and may be recognized by the presence of a red and tender area surrounding the wound. All coral cuts should receive medical attention. Some varieties of coral (fire coral) can actually sting a diver since coral is a coelenterate like jellyfish. Some of the soft coral of the genus Palythoa have been found to contain the deadliest poison known to man. This poison is found within the body of the organism and not in the stinging nematocysts. The slime of this coral may cause a serious skin reaction (dermatitis) or even be fatal if exposed to an open wound. No antidote is known. If injured from contact with coral, clean wound with liberal amounts of fresh water and seek medical attention.



MORAY EEL

Eels are commonly found in holes and crevices or under rocks and coral. It is snake-like in both appearance and movement and has tough, leathery skin. It can grow to a length of 15 feet and has prominent teeth. Bites frequently result from reaching into a crevice or hole occupied by the eel. It is a vicious biter and may be difficult to dislodge after a bite is initiated. Bites from moray eels may vary from multiple small puncture wounds to the tearing, jagged type with profuse bleeding if there has been a struggle. Extreme care should be used when reaching into holes or crevices. Avoid provoking or attempting to dislodge an eel from its hole.



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BARRACUDA

Approximately 10 species of barracuda inhabit the waters of Okinawa. The barracuda is a long, thin fish with prominent jaws and teeth, silver to blue in color, with a large head and a V-shaped tail. It may grow up to 10 feet long and is a fast swimmer, capable of striking rapidly and fiercely. They have been known to attack surface swimmers and limbs dangling in the water. Barracuda wounds can be distinguished from those of a shark by the tooth pattern. A barracuda leaves straight or V-shaped wounds while those of a shark are curved like the shape of its jaws. Life threatening attacks by barracuda are rare. Barracuda are attracted by any bright object. Avoid wearing shiny equipment or jewelry (wedding rings or earrings).



SHARKS

Attacks on humans are infrequent; there have been no recorded shark attacks on swimmers or divers in Okinawan waters. Since 1965, the annual recorded number of attacks ranges from 40 to 100 worldwide with the majority occurring along the Florida coastline. Attacks, though rare, are usually provoked when the animal feels threatened. Injuries may result not only from bites, but also by coming in contact with the shark's skin. Shark skin is covered with very sharp dentine appendages, called denticles, which are reinforced with tooth-like centers. Contact with shark skin can lead to wide abrasions and heavy bleeding. Pre-attack behavior by most sharks is somewhat predictable. A shark preparing to attack swims with an exaggerated motion, its pectoral fins pointing down in contrast to the usual flared out position, and it swims in circles of decreasing radius around the prey.

