



# STOP!

**The spread of  
harmful invasive species  
and pathogens**

## **Disinfection of Scuba Diving Equipment**

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) and fish parasites or diseases are readily transferred from one water body to another on diving gear, boats and protective clothing. These can be very damaging to resident fish stocks, the aquatic habitat and the general environment. In order to ensure that invasive species and fish diseases are not inadvertently transferred into Ireland's freshwaters from abroad or within the country from an infested area to one that is free from these organisms, it is essential that all diving equipment is routinely inspected and disinfected following each diving trip.

Items of diving equipment that require attention might include:

Diving suits, BCDs, diving cylinders, weights, weight belts, regulators, gauges; diving accessories such as masks, snorkels, fins, hoods, gloves, SMBs and reels; and boats, outboard motors and trailers.

Prior to leaving any dive site following a diving trip, the diver should routinely visually **inspect** all equipment that has been used in or exposed to the water. **Remove** and safely **dispose** of all attached plant or animal material. **Clean** and **disinfect** the equipment at the water's edge or later, as appropriate, making reference to the suggestions below.

**The best method of disinfection is drying equipment thoroughly for a minimum period of 1 week.**

### **Diving suits, BCDs, regulators, diving cylinders and accessories**

- Thorough visual inspection for organic debris including in the pockets of the diving suit and BCD. Remove and dispose of any debris found, gently dry brush and hose down exposed surfaces with clean freshwater in a biosecure manner.
- Drain the BCD bladder.
- Immerse and lightly scrub equipment in an appropriate proprietary disinfectant solution following the manufacturer's guidelines, then rinse in clean freshwater and allow to dry out thoroughly.
- Rinse the inside of the BCD bladder in the same manner.
- When choosing an appropriate disinfectant to use, ensure that this does not have the potential to degrade the material integrity of the particular diving item being treated and does not invalidate any equipment warranty.



Be biosecurity aware! To avoid the risk of introducing and/or spreading harmful aquatic invasive species or pathogens, please clean and disinfect any equipment that has been used or come into contact with water. For best practice guidelines refer to:

<http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/invasive-species/invasive-species.html>

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### **Boats, Outboard Motors and Trailers**

- Visually inspect the boat, outboard motor and trailer once this equipment has been removed from the water. Remove all adherent plant and animal material and dispose of these in sealed bags.
- Visually inspect and thoroughly clean the anchor, ropes and any other equipment used in the boat during the diving trip. These should also be immersed in disinfectant solution (e.g. 1% solution of Virkon Aquatic or another proprietary disinfection product) and dried thereafter.
- Drain all water from the boat and from the outboard motor before moving to a different water body.
- Where possible, power hose the interior and exterior of the boat using heated water (60 °C/140 °F). Where this is not possible, the boat should be washed before leaving the water body and not reintroduced to any water for a period of 5 days.
- Cooling water should be drained from the outboard motor and, where possible, it should be flushed with disinfectant solution.



Protective gloves should always be worn when handling disinfectant and the manufacturers' guidelines should be rigorously adhered to.

**To learn more about invasive species visit [www.caisie.ie](http://www.caisie.ie)**