



# Safe Mermaiding Practices Statement of Understanding

Please read carefully before signing.

This is a statement in which you are informed of the established safe practices for mermaid swimming and diving. These practices have been compiled for your review and acknowledgement and are intended to increase your comfort and safety while mermaiding. Your signature on this statement is required as proof that you are aware of these safe practices. Read and discuss the statement before signing it. If you are a minor, this form must also be signed by a parent or guardian.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Print Name) \_\_\_\_\_, understand that as a mermaid I should:

1. Always mermaid swim and dive with a trained buddy and follow established mermaiding buddy practices.
2. Not participate in open water mermaiding after scuba diving on the same day.
3. Equalize my ears and mask (if worn) immediately as I descend, frequently and gently, before I feel discomfort. Never descend wearing goggles, which can't be equalized.
4. Never continue descending without equalizing. If I can't equalize, return to the surface.
5. Never attempt a forceful and/or extended equalization. A forceful, extended equalization can cause serious, permanent injuries to ears and hearing.
6. Descend with my lungs full.
7. Mermaid swim and dive in good health. Never mermaid swim and dive with a cold or congestion.
8. Even if I'm a scuba diver, not take a breath from scuba at depth while mermaiding. An exception may be an emergency, in which case the scuba diver should share air with me as we both make a scuba ascent.
9. Use relaxation to extend breathhold time. Never use hyperventilation.
10. Increase breathhold durations gradually. Gain experience slowly.
11. After descending to depth, ascend well within my limits. The deeper the dive, the sooner I should ascend.
12. Send a mermaid who blacked out underwater or who may have inhaled water at the surface to professional medical evaluation (such as at a hospital), even if apparently fully recovered.
13. For mermaid diving, weight myself so that I float comfortably at the surface after exhaling.
14. When using a snorkel, remove it from my mouth when I descend.
15. Not exhale during the dive, except when performing certain mermaid skills or immediately before breaking the surface upon ascent so I can inhale sooner.
16. Upon returning to the surface, exhale passively and gently. Inhale actively and more quickly. Do this at least three times.
17. Recover for at least three times the duration of my breathhold before starting another dive.
18. When ascending from a dive to depth, have my buddy escort me for the final part of my ascent.
19. Not start a descent until my buddy has completely recovery from a previous dive.
20. Always follow a buddy system or rotation so that there is a buddy at the surface for each mermaid underwater. Wear bifins when acting in the buddy role.
21. Assess conditions before a mermaiding session and plan my session. It is ultimately me who decides whether to go mermaid swimming or diving. I am responsible for my own safety, so only I can make the final decision to dive.
22. Avoid mermaiding in large and rough surf.
23. Avoid contact with all organisms, but especially unfamiliar ones. Know the potentially hazardous ones for the area where I'm mermaid swimming or diving.
24. Get a local orientation to a new mermaiding location and/or join a group to help learn about conditions, organisms, hazards and local procedures.
25. Protect myself from the sun and stay hydrated.

**I understand the importance and purposes of these established practices. I recognize they are for my own safety and well-being, and that failure to adhere to them can place me in jeopardy when diving.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date (Day/Month/Year)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian (where applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date (Day/Month/Year)