



Recommendations for Sanitizing KMDSI Helmets/ Full Face Masks & Man-Worn Related Breathing Equipment

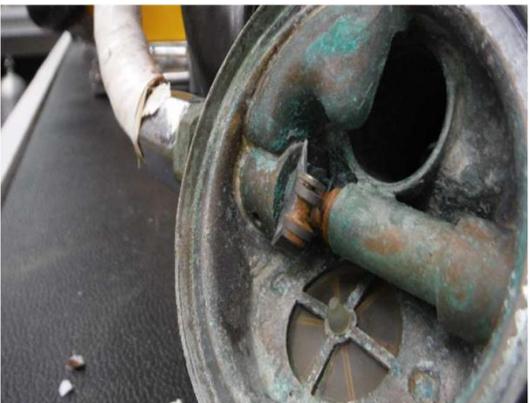
Mike F. Ward

Dive Lab has been receiving many phone calls regarding sanitizing Helmets and Full-Face masks and man-worn breathing equipment. Dive Lab recommends cleaning and sanitizing the Helmets and Masks as described in the KMDSI manuals under the *General Preventative Maintenance Guidelines*. Sanitizing should be done only after the Helmet or Mask has been cleaned with a detergent solution as described in the guidelines. After a normal detergent cleaning, the interior components as well as internal demand regulator body and exhaust ambient pressure components should be sanitized. This procedure is the standard sanitizing procedure that's been in the KMDSI manuals for over 25 years.

The most important steps in the sanitizing procedure is keeping the items in contact with the sanitizing solution for at least ten minutes and rinsing all residue. KMDSI Bulletin #3 of 2020 reiterates what is in the helmet manual, however the ending sentence in the bulletin reads, *unless otherwise directed, use the following procedure to disinfect the oral -nasal mask /regulator*. This sentence has people calling mainly because they cannot get SaniZide Plus, MSA Confidence Plus or Steramine. These products are the products of choice that over the years have shown to work well for sanitizing while at the same time, being able to be rinsed with little or no detectable residue. However, in hard times such as the Covid 19 pandemic, if these are not available, a diluted bleach solution may be used until the preferred sanitizing product can be procured. First, clean all components with a detergent solution then rinse, and clean using a bleach solution in a ratio by the guidelines set by the Center for Disease Control. Keep the bleach solution in contact with all components for at least ten minutes. While submerged, using gloves and a nylon brush or dish rag, the parts should be gently scrubbed to agitate and loosen any mucus or saliva buildup.

KMDSI as well as others, have always discouraged the use of bleach as a disinfectant because it can be difficult to rinse off without leaving an odor behind. Dive Lab recommends that if you have to use a bleach solution rinse everything thoroughly, then once again scrub and swab the helmet and components with a fresh solution of dish detergent and water same as you would wash dishes then follow up with a good rinse of all components and then check for any bleach odor. The dish detergent will help get rid of any bleach residue. This repeated detergent cleaning IS A MUST!

Repeated use of bleach can cause discoloring of the headline bag and will accelerate the ageing and deterioration of the headliner foam. If possible, each diver should have their own headliner, nose block, and oral nasal with valve. This makes things easier. As far as the O-rings, diaphragm, and valves go, bleach will not age or deteriorate these items during sanitizing as long as they are rinsed properly, and in addition, because these are being removed cleaned and inspected each day or after each use by multiple users, the visual inspection and stretching the diaphragm / valves by persons qualified, (KMDSI Certified Operator Users or Technicians) will identify any deterioration or damage. If your helmet looks similar to the ones in the pictures below, sanitizing is probably not going to make much difference in the long run, and it would probably be much better to just dig a hole and burying it.



Summary: What we would like to stress is, with this COVID 19 outbreak, we are finding at the very least that the standard Post Dive A2.6 is not being done properly, and in many cases not at all. Please review your post dive procedures for your operation. Feel free to go to the KMDSI website for free download of the A2.6 and the A2.6 power Point version.

For more information please contact:
Beijing United Sterling Trading Co. Ltd.
A-2806, No.72 Xisanhuan North Road
Haidian District, Beijing, China PC:100048
Tel. +86-10-5179 8771 or 5179 8772
Fax +86-10-5179 8770
Email mail@usfe.com.cn
Website: www.unitedsterling.com.hk