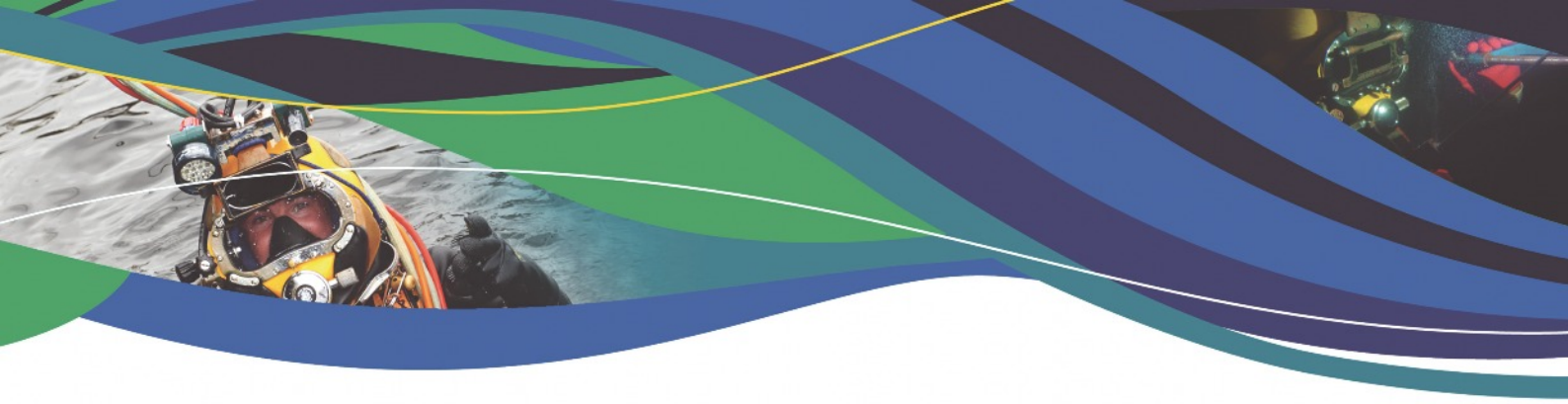

IMCA Assistant Life Support Technician (ALST)

Life Support Technicians (LSTs) carry out a range of important support duties. Divers living in decompression chambers need to be closely monitored, as does the chamber's environmental conditions – this is the role of the LST. From the chamber panel, the LST will control factors, such as oxygen content of breathing gas, concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, temperature and humidity to ensure all are at optimum levels.

An LST can operate high pressure equipment, mix heliox diving mixtures, monitor the decompression chamber environment, carry out pressurisation and decompression, identify and treat decompression illness and other pressure related injuries and is competent to deal with a variety of emergency situations. LSTs also spend time tending the divers to make sure there is adequate water supply to the chamber, organise food and maintain chamber hygiene, for example.

Training for LSTs begins with the IMCA (International Marine Contractors Association) Assistant Life Support Technician qualification. After gaining sufficient experience, an ALST will sit the LST exam, after which they can progress to Life Support Supervisor (LSS).

Initially an ALST will build panel experience under the guidance of the Life Support Supervisor (LSS). After gaining sufficient experience, an ALST can sit the IMCA LST theory exam. Progressing to the position of LST and finally to LSS involves an increasing amount of responsibility in vital tasks, such as maintaining the optimum chamber environment.

To qualify for work as an ALST you need to complete the IMCA ALST course. This qualifies you for work around the globe and is an internationally recognised qualification.

The course takes two weeks to complete and includes classroom based lectures covering the important aspects required by the IMCA regulations for this vital top-side role.

Summary of course contents

Some of the subjects you will cover during this 2 week (10 day) course are:

- Physics of gas
- Physiology
- Legislation and regulations
- Dive system requirements
- Diving techniques, physioligy and illnesses
- Anatomy and physiology
- Decompression chambers and systems
- Emergency procedures
- Gas toxicity and handling / mixing gasses.

Pre-requisites

There are no specific entry requirements for the course but competence at basic mathematics and some understanding of physics would be useful.