

Bottom Conditions & Effects Chart

TYPE	Characteristics	Visibility	Diver Mobility
Rock	Smooth or jagged minimum sediment	Generally unrestricted by diver movement	Good, exercise care to prevent line snags and falls from ledges
Coral	Solid, sharp and jagged, found in tropical waters only	Generally unrestricted by diver movement	As above
Gravel	Relatively smooth, granular base	Generally unrestricted by diver movement	Good, occasional sloping bottoms of loose gravel impair walking and cause instability
Shell	Composed principally of broken shells mixed with sand or mud	Shell-sand mix does not impair visibility when moving over bottom. Shell-mud mix does impair visibility with higher mud concentrations, visibility is increasingly impaired	Shell-sand mix provides good stability. High mud content can cause sinking and impaired movement
Sand	Common type of bottom, packs hard	Generally unrestricted by diver movement	Good
Mud & Silt	Common type of bottom, composed of varying amounts of silt and clay, commonly encountered in river and harbor areas	Poor to zero. Work into the current to carry silt away from job site, minimize bottom disturbance. Increased hazard presented by unseen wreckage, piling, and other obstacles.	Poor, can readily cause diver entrapment. Crawling may be required to prevent excessive penetration, fatiguing to diver.
Overhead	May be found in fresh or salt water, - coral, lava, solution rock or wrecks. consists of limited access through restrictions with no immediate access to surface in emergency, pathway in = pathway out. requires redundant air source	Variable with attendant darkness due to light blockage by ceiling. Also contingent on disturbance of silt, clay, mung, use of some artificial lighting essential.	Severe reduction in vertical mobility with horizontal mobility constrained by passage configurations. Use of guideline is mandatory with attendant risk of entanglement and entrapment

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