RVOC Safety Committee
Update for UNOLS Council

April 29, 2026

Jon Swallow
Safety Committee Chair

Safety Committee Activities

since May 2025 RVOC Meeting

- New members
- New Safety Chair email (safetychair@unols.org)
- Dive Safety Subcommittee established
- Appdx B – waived compliance for OHS < 1000lb breaking strength (NBL)
- Appdx A – wire termination SOPs and testing (full compliance by 1/01/2028)
- RVSS Chapter 6.1.4 Harassment Prevention update
- Safety Chair / Safety Committee members sub-meeting at RVTECH

Safety Committee Membership

1. Chair: Jon Swallow (prior UDEL and NOAA): 2025 - 2028
2. Doug Baird/UAF: 2018 - 2027
3. Kerry Strom/WHOI: 2018 - 2027
4. Drew Cole/UNOLS Tech: 2021 - 2027
5. Ash Hayden/URI: 2021 - 2027
6. Erich Gruebel/URI, RVTEC Rep: 2024 – 2027
7. Matt Durham/SIO: 2019 - 2028
8. Quentin Lewis/BIOS: 2016 - 2028
9. Lindsay Kurelja / OSU: 2026 - 2029
10. Robert Freels / SIO: 2026 - 2029

Subject Matter Experts (continuing):

Aaron Davis/SIO – West Coast NSF Winch Pool
Rick Trask/WHOI – NSF Wire Pool
Josh Eaton/WHOI – East Coast NSF Winch Pool

RVSS Appendix A change Summary

- Winch wire and cable have extensive procedure, documentation, and testing requirements, though the wire terminations do not.
  - Cable and Wire Terminations are often changed by Techs and Crew due to equipment requirements or damage from use.
  - Terminations can be the “weakest link” and break first.

- Appdx A was revised to include requirements for operators to have Termination Standard Operating Procedures and Testing by Jan 1, 2028.

- Goal is to have the best practices in the Fleet reflected in the documentation and used consistently across the Fleet.

RVSS Appendix B change Summary

- Appdx B Section B.1 was revised to waive the significant Overboard Handling System documentation requirements for small systems with a tension member breaking strength of 1,000 pounds or less.
    - Exempts hand held and other small winch systems with minimal risk of personnel injury or equipment damage.
    - Routine pre-deployment risk assessment is still required.

Key Topics for RVOC Safety Meeting

- High Voltage Electrical Safety
- Lithium Battery Safety
- RVSS sections on Harassment Prevention
- Hurdles to Appendix B compliance
- Science Party Rest Requirements
- Safety and Near Miss Incidents
  - How can we better communicate these to the Crews and Techs in the Fleet?
  - Goal is to impact awareness and behavior.