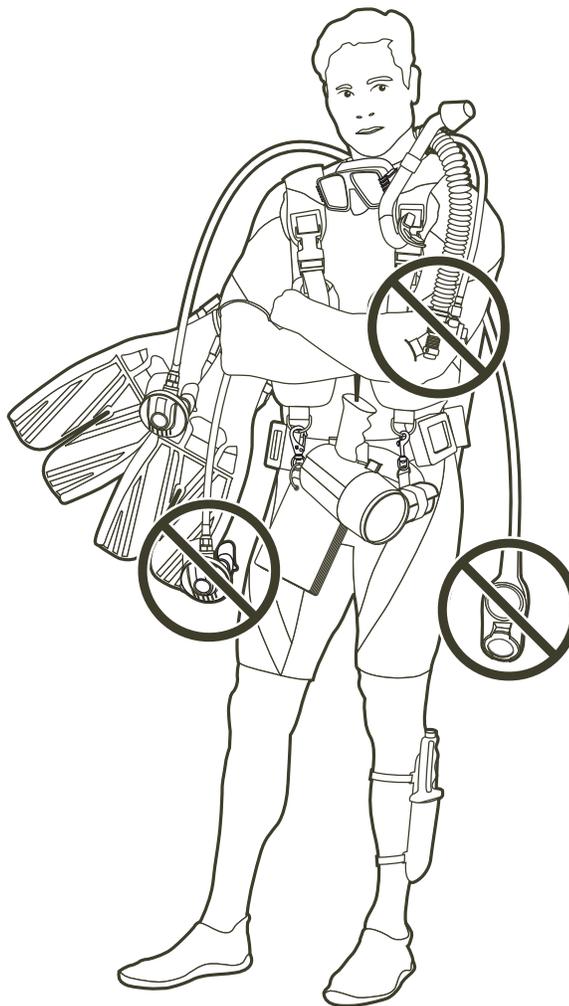




Defeating the “Danglies”

by Harry Averill



Instrument consoles, alternate air source second stages and other equipment items that dangle needlessly below divers create several problems. Among them:

Environmental Damage: Dangling equipment can easily hit and damage or destroy delicate coral formations and other aquatic life. One swipe of a large console has the potential to take out several years of coral growth in the blink of an eye.

Equipment Damage: Constant impact with the bottom can also damage or destroy expensive instrument and alternate air source second stages.

Lack of Safety and Convenience: When needed, it is important to be able to quickly locate items such as alternate air source second stages and consoles.

Imagine a diver who runs out of air because he could not easily locate his console and thus regularly monitor his air

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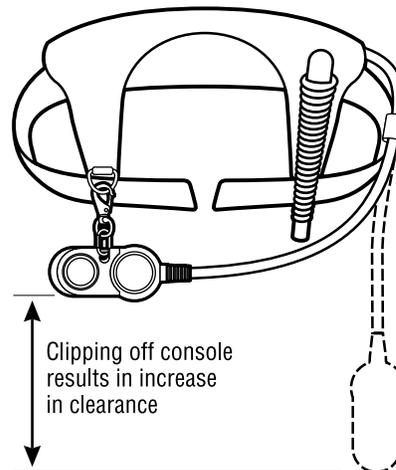
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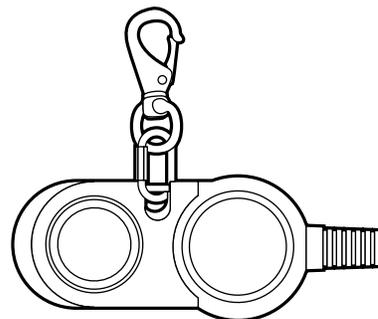
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supply. Upon bottoming out his tank, he swims furiously to his buddy and gives the “out of air” signal. The buddy hunts for several anxious seconds to find his alternate air source second stage — only to discover it is damaged and clogged with mud, due to constant contact with the bottom.

The illustration below depicts a typical dangling-equipment situation, and its cure.

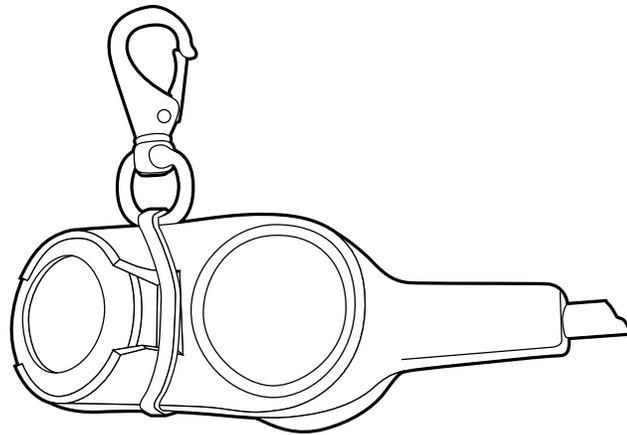


The easiest cure for this situation is to install a snap or clip on the console, and to use that snap or clip to fasten the console to an accessory D-ring somewhere on the BC.



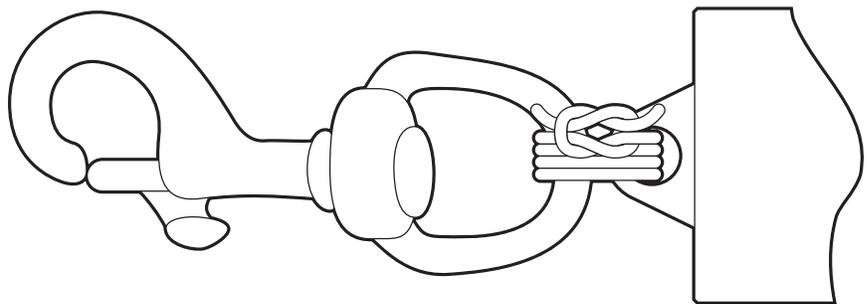
This second illustration shows a typical snap installation. In this example, we take advantage of the attachment point that most manufacturers now build into consoles. For the most secure installation, use metal fasteners, such as quick links or split rings, or use several wraps of small-diameter, braided nylon line, tied together with a square knot. (More on this shortly.)

What if the console you are working with has no attachment points for snaps or clips? The illustration on the next page shows how you can use one or more pull ties to accomplish the same thing.



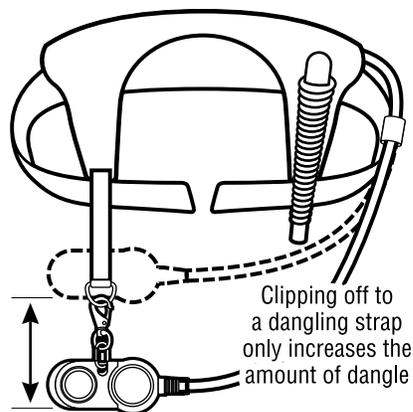
If a single pull tie is not long enough to encircle a particular console, just daisy chain two of them together. One thing to bear in mind when using pull ties to attach snaps and clips is that, sooner or later, the plastic or neoprene will break. With a console, this will not be the end of the world; the console will still remain attached to the diver by its connection to the regulator first stage. However, when installing snaps and clips on back-up lights and other items that have only a single connection point, it's a good idea to avoid using pull ties.

As mentioned earlier, a better connection can be made by using several wraps of small-diameter, braided nylon line can be incredibly strong. It has the further advantage that, should a snap refuse to open in an entanglement situation, you can still cut it free with a knife.

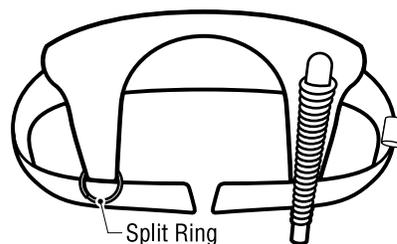


The illustration above shows how it's done. Just make several wraps with the line and tie the ends with a square knot. To keep the ends of the line from fraying, singe them with the tip of a small soldering iron.

New BCs tend to come with a wider selection of accessory D-rings (the Dive Rite Transpac, for example, has four). On many older BCs, however, the only D-rings divers may be able to find are the ones at the ends of the straps that tighten the BC's shoulders.

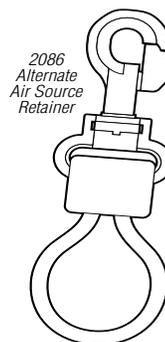


As the illustration above shows, clipping off equipment here may provide little benefit — it may still dangle nearly as far as it did when not clipped off. To create a better attachment point, try encircling the base of the shoulder strap with a number 1035, 1½-inch split ring, as shown below.



This is often all it takes to create an attachment point that reduces dangle, rather than adds to it.

Just as it is important to keep consoles under control, it is equally — if not more — important to keep alternate air source (octopus) second stages from dragging along the bottom or getting lost. For years, Dive Rite’s octopus retainers have had a reputation for being simple, rugged and reliable. More importantly, they’ve enjoyed the distinct advantage of actually doing what they are supposed to do: keeping regulator second stages securely in place when not needed; yet releasing them quickly in response to a firm tug.



In 1994, our traditional blue octopus retainer was upstaged by a significantly better model. The new Dive Rite Octopus Holder (item number 2086) offers several improvements over our original. Among them:

- The elastic shock band that encircles the second stage mouthpiece does an even better job of holding on to the second stage when needed, yet releasing it quickly in response to a firm tug.
- The low-profile, sliding-bolt snap helps keep overall “dangle” to a minimum. It enables divers to move their extra second stage quickly from one accessory D-ring to another (such as many divers do when suiting up or removing equipment). It also makes the new octopus holder perfect for use with decompression or stage bottles.

Dive Rite’s octopus retainers have always fit a wider variety of second stage mouthpieces than the plastic-dip-molded variety. You don’t have to fight to get a mouthpiece inside a Dive Rite octopus retainer — only to see it mysteriously fall out later. Some sort of alternate air source retainer is vital to creating environmentally sound equipment configurations. We suggest using ones that actually work.

“Do as I say, and as I do...”

If you teach or operate a dive store, odds are, you already knew the importance of training students to configure their equipment in environmentally sound ways. Here is a checklist to help you make certain you are doing everything you can to instill the right attitude regarding equipment configuration to your students:

- *Is your rental and teaching gear equipped with console snaps and alternate air source retainers?* — Is your personal equipment configured this way as well? Students remember what you do more than they remember what you say. Teach by example.
- *Do you regularly identify allowing equipment to dangle as unacceptable behavior?* — Many instructors are quick to jump on relatively innocuous behavior, such as placing masks on foreheads or leaving tanks standing upright. Certainly dangling equipment is an equal, if not greater, concern.
- *Do you make it easy for students and other customers to “do the right thing with their equipment?”* — Do you keep enough snaps, clips, octopus holders and attachment hardware in stock so that people can easily configure their equipment the right way, without having to wait for you to special order these items?

Helping students and customers eliminate the “danglies” is a positive step for diver safety and the safety of the environment. If you have any questions about equipment configuration, please contact us, either by phone or fax, or through our website (www.diverite.com). ■