




# Secrets from the Pro

## How to choose your Buoyancy Compensator ✓



The Buoyancy Compensator (BC) as a piece of equipment in your bag, is often the third most expensive item. Although, it's not uncommon that you'll find a BC that is more expensive than the average computer.

| Type                      | Pros  | Cons   | Photo   |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Jacket Style</b>       | Lots of buoyancy on surface<br>Big cargo pockets<br>Most common type around<br>Least expensive, usually   | Usually quite bulky<br>Relatively heavy for traveling<br><br>While diving:<br>More buoyancy than needed<br>Not streamlined<br>Slightly restricted movement<br>Cumbersome front/side area |    |
| <b>Back Inflate</b>       | Freedom of movement<br>Stable dive position<br>Streamlined<br>More manoeuvrable<br>More gear setup options<br>Typically lighter<br>Travel designs available<br>Usually better fit on diver                        | Smaller pockets<br>Possibly less soft cushioning<br><br>Some divers are not familiar with the buoyancy characteristics on the surface  |   |
| <b>Harness &amp; Wing</b> | Maximal range of movement<br>Stable dive position<br>Highly manoeuvrable<br>Maximum gear set up options<br>Custom fit to the diver<br>Extremely sturdy and strong<br>Suitable for virtually all dive environments | Will be heavier due to metal backplate<br>No built in pockets<br>Not comfy out of the water<br><br>May be more expensive when building out the total gear setup                          |  |

Three points to understand about the purposes of the BC in the diving of today:

- If you've been taught well by your instructor, then you will understand that the BC, is a tool that provides assistance to your establishing a neutral buoyant position during the dive, and your being positively buoyant at the surface. But, it is not the primary tool for buoyancy control.
- However the BC does provide another type of support to the diver. The BC is not only a placeholder for the tank, and providing buoyancy, the BC also provides the platform on which to set up your additional gear for whatever diving you're engaging in. (i.e. Photography; Videography; Search & Recovery; Research; Side-mount diving; Decompression diving and beyond).
- The BC should provide all of the above, and at the same time assist the diver maintaining an optimal, stable dive position, while presenting a streamlined profile in the water.

To these three points: If you as a diver, are more than a 'casual' diver, only diving on convenient intermittent occasions, then you should be going for more than the Jacket BC. The diver who regularly dives, expanding their variety of dive environments and conditions, should absolutely consider the versatile types of BC, looking at either the Back Inflate, or the Harness & Wing.

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If your diving objective is anything beyond recreational, tropical water conditions, then you need to have an in-depth conversation with an advanced instructor. One who has extensive experience in the conditions, or type of diving, you're wishing to participate in.