HMS recommended diving practices in the event of shark activity

When there is evidence of shark activity at or near a dive site it is recommended that diving operations be cancelled for the day. Extreme circumstances may call for restriction of research diving activity in the area over several days. Notification will be made to divers by e-mail and posted in the Hopkins dive lockers. When subsequent diving at the site and in adjacent areas is necessary, it is advisable to incorporate as many of the recommendations listed below as operationally possible:

- Do not dive in areas with recent shark activity (sightings or attacks)
- Utilize boats whenever possible rather than surface swimming.
- All divers, boat operators and shore contacts should be made aware of the inherent hazards associated with operations during times of shark activity and be especially attentive to surroundings during the operations. Pay attention to marine mammal behavior. Avoid diving in poor visibility or near fishing activity.
- All boat operations should have a person on the boat at all times that can render immediate aid (bring an injured diver into the boat and provide first aid) and should be able to operate all aspects of the vessel. Emergency procedures and diver recall strategies should be discussed prior to departure. Cell phone as well as VHF radio, O₂ kit and first aid kit should be on board.
- Boats should be anchored well into the kelp bed - avoid anchoring in open water.
- Surface and midwater swimming should be minimized. Know compass headings back to the anchor line and to shore. Make sure you have enough air to navigate underwater to your exit point. If the situation dictates a direct ascent to the surface, do not make a safety stop but ascend as slowly as you safely can with your buddy. Be prepared to enter the vessel as quickly as possible, ditching BC and weight belt if necessary.
- Buddy teams should stay within touching distance at all times, especially on the surface.
- **As is always the case divers need to assess the risk of each dive and make their own decision as to their ability to safely conduct the dive. Any diver may refuse to make a dive, even if his/her decision will lead to the cancellation of the day's activities**