The purpose of the rules is to make the freediving disciplines: safe, measurable, and comparable. Aida educated judges work as a witnesses for the dives and verify that the diver has respected all the Aida competition rules.

In all disciplines there is a safety protocol after the dive containing 3 simple things:

- removal of the face equipment (mask or goggles and nose clip)
- ok hand sign
- and a verbal " I am ok "

And this all has to be done within 15 seconds of surfacing in this specific order.

After the surfacing post-blackout mechanical movements (PBMM) or fainting (black-out) is not allowed. PBMM can be observed after a freedive and is for example dropping or nodding of the head repeatedly as an athlete loses and regains consciousness for short moments over and over again. In these both incidents the dive will be disqualified.

In all depth disciplines the safety lanyard is mandatory. The safety lanyard connects the freediver to the diving rope line. In all depth disciplines dive depth has to be announced beforehand.

Judges have use of three different cards to score the dive:

- white card = ok (no deductions)
- yellow card = ok with some penalty points
- red card = disqualified

A card will be shown by the judge no earlier than 30 seconds after surfacing The judge may elect to hold the card up to one minute to ensure the consciousness of the athlete. Prior to that, the athlete may not be touched or the dive is disqualified!

There are 3 different kinds of competitions: national, international and world championships.

There are also world record attempts. World records can be accepted only if there are no penalties in the attempt. For example; the diver must present a tag.

Discipline specific rules

STA (static apnea)

- pool discipline
- breath holding on the surface
- timing begins when airways goes below the surface

DYN (dynamic apnea with fins)

- pool discipline
- diving (swimming) underwater as far as possible (lengths of the pool)
- diver has to start from the end of the pool (touch) and the diver must completely submerge before 150 cm from the end of the pool
- Grabbing, pulling, touching the bottom prior to surfacing; will result in penalty points

DNF (dynamic apnea without fins)

- pool discipline
- diving underwater as far as possible
- diver has to start from the end of the pool (touch) and the diver has submerge completely before 150 cm from the end of the pool
- surfacing has to be done by diving. No grab, pull etc or penalty points will be incurred

CNF (constant weight without fins)

- open water discipline
- dive as deep as possible
- tag (small plate or card) will be brought on the surface from the announced depth
- weight must remain constant during the dive

CWT (constant weight)

- open water discipline
- dive as deep as possible
- tag (small plate or card) will be brought on the surface from the announced depth
- weight must remain constant

FIM (free immersion)

- open water discipline
- diving with the aid of a rope for propulsion
- dive as deep as possible by pulling the rope
- tag (small plate or card) will be brought on the surface from the announced depth
- propulsion devices are not allowed

VWT (Variable weight)

- open water discipline but not a competition discipline!
- only for record attempts
- dive as deep as possible with weights and the return to the surface is by swimming/kicking or pulling on the rope

NLT (No limits)

- open water discipline but not a competition discipline!
- only for record attempts
- in this discipline there are few rules. Almost all types of equipment are allowed except that the diver may not use tanks for breathing during the dive

More detailed rules information can be found in the Aida competition regulations section which is available in the download area at this site.