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Is it safe to order scuba equipment on line? Will I get a warranty??

This is a very interesting question,

All major manufacturers have specific rules on what is needed from the dealer to become a dealer, and now with the Internet, they have addressed many Internet issues in their dealer agreements. Over all, the manufacturers have split into 2 very distinct camps concerning dealers selling on the Internet.

1. No Internet Sales.

Most manufacturers such as [Scuba Pro](#), [Suunto](#), [Aqua Lung / US Divers](#), [SeaQuest](#) and a few others have a very strict **No Internet Sales** policy. That means that any of their equipment purchased on the net will have no warranty and you are not buying it from an authorized dealer... it is gray market goods. Gray market means the equipment was obtained by the seller by some method other than through an authorized dealer.

Most all manufacturers' warranties are valid only if the equipment is purchased from an authorized dealer, and only to the original purchaser. In our above scenario, the original purchaser is **cheap__Scuba.com**, and the end consumer is actually the second owner. And when you send in a warranty card (if one even comes with the unit), when it asks you to fill in where you purchased your product, **cheap__Scuba.com** will be listed, and since they are not a dealer, the warranty will not be valid.

Beware of sites that claim they will give you *their* warranty, which is "just as good as the original manufacturers". This is normally done so serial numbers will not get forwarded to the manufacturer since they would then cut off the dealer who originally purchased the equipment for breaking the terms of their dealer agreement. The manufacturers are actively working to break the chain of gray market goods.

With no information of your purchase getting back to the manufacturer, you can have a serious and potential dangerous or deadly problem. Keep in mind in just the last couple of years; Aeries had a major computer recall due to a problem that could have the computer forget about the nitrogen accumulated during previous dives, resulting in a dangerous decompression situation. Atomic had a recall on a large number of regulators due to potential spring failure in the first stage that could cut off the air supply at depth. Registered owners of these items were notified - tracked by their warranty information on file with the original manufacturer, and problems corrected. If purchased from other than authorized dealers... the unit may never get the proper maintenance to correct these problems.

2. Internet sales are OK.

Several manufacturers like Mares, Dacor, Aries, to name a few, have decided to allow internet sales of their product. Once this policy came into place, the majority of Dive Centers across the country discontinue selling, supporting and servicing their products. We are also no longer dealers for these companies.

What's that mean to you, the customer and purchaser of these products from an online retailer? You will have to save the box's that the product was shipped with, in the event you may need service or any type of repairs. Once your local dive center is no longer an authorized dealer, they are no longer authorized by the manufacturer to do repairs/servicing on your equipment.

Sales from Overseas

While the Internet can make international commerce seem no more difficult than clicking your mouse; international sales have their own set of issues. Most international companies have distributors set up for each country, and all warranties are handled by the company in that country. So for example, if you buy a regulator from Europe, even though it is a popular brand that is also sold in the US, any warranty work and service would only be honored in the country in which it was sold... not received. Before making a purchase of life support equipment that might need to go back to the manufacturer for service or due to a recall, you may want to calculate the cost of shipping the unit back across the pond!

Actually, since there are very strict international agreements with US distributors, products coming in from overseas are illegal and can be seized by the customs department as they enter the country. Several manufacturers that I know of have petitioned the US Customs department and equipment will start be held as contraband as it hits this country. Of course the overseas sellers don't really care too much as the sale is considered legally final when the product is handed off to the international carrier, and your credit has already been charged.

Other warning signs.

There are very few manufacturers that allow the sale of their products on auction sites. This is many times an instant red flag that you will not be receiving new, warranted items.

Also, check to see if there is a physical address, and phone number to the web site you are dealing with. Let's be honest... If I told you to give me a credit card number, but you can't reach me, and I have no address, you wouldn't do it for can of coffee.... why would you ever do it for life support equipment?!

Summary

Here at Kunuku Dive & Travel, we appreciate the stance that the different manufacturers have taken concerning their products. We are proud of the reputation we have in the industry with all the manufacturers we represent. With the above, we here at Kunuku Dive & Travel and many other Dive Centers feel that mail order and internet purchases of life support products is unsafe. It is unsafe for you and any diver or student diver you would be diving with, and not in the best interest of our educational system. We pride ourselves on the health and safety of our students.

For this reason we will not allow any mail order or internet products to be used during any educational or store function here at Kunuku Dive & Travel.

If price was your reason to purchase your equipment on line, you should also inquire and purchase your lessons and experience, air fills and service from the same online retailer.

We also invite you to contact the manufacturer of the products you are interested in so you can rest assured that you are dealing with an authorized dealer and you will get full warranty on all purchases.