

Resource Sheet 11 – Forms & Backing Grids

It is often useful to take a pre-printed recording form underwater when recording objects such as guns and anchors. The form prompts the diver as to which measurement and information is required. Similarly, it can be useful to have a form when collecting survey measurements. Examples of these forms are contained in RS12.

To produce waterproof forms and grids the most successful method is to print on special materials with a laser printer. Forms printed on ink-jet printers will smudge and run underwater. Waterproof forms and backing grids can be printed on a number of different materials with a laser printer. Three different types of material have been used successfully (suppliers are listed in RS6):

Laser printable drafting film

Drafting film is available in A4 sheets suitable for printing in a laser printer. Once printed these are waterproof and easily written on with pencil. You can print any of the forms or templates supplied in RS12 or you can design your own. An A4 sheet will cost less than 0.10p. Care should be taken not to use ordinary drafting film in a laser printer as this will melt and damage the laser printer.

Waterproof paper

Laser printable waterproof paper is available from a number of sources. The most successful we have tried is Zecom. This is a white, opaque plastic coated paper. The paper takes pencil well and is very useful – its main drawback is the cost, about 0.36p per sheet

Laser Printable OHP slides

Overhead projector slides are available in laser-printable form. These are cheap and (currently) easily obtainable from large stationers such as Staples. Although durable and waterproof they cannot be written on easily underwater, so need to have drafting film taped over them. For this reason they are best reserved for backing grids. Care should be taken not to use ordinary OHP slides in a laser printer as they will melt and damage the laser printer.

Backing Grids

When making underwater scale drawings it was once customary to use waterproof graph paper as a backing grid, especially when making planning frame drawings. A better method is to print your own backing grids where each square on the backing grid corresponds to a square of your planning frame. Different backing grids will be required for different drawing scales. Backing grids for planning frames (reinforcing mesh) with 200mm squares are included in RS12 – one each for 1:5, 1:10 and 1:20 scale drawings. Using these backing grids makes planning frame drawing very easy, especially for those new to underwater drawing.

The backing grids in RS12 are included as PDF and AutoCAD files. If you have AutoCAD, use this to print the grids as you can alter the scaling to adjust for any slight distortion your laser printer may introduce. Otherwise use the PDF versions – the distortion varies from printer to printer but is rarely more than 2mm over an A4 sheet.