

After hours beneath the waves, capturing the vibrant underwater world with your camera and **underwater camera housing**, your adventure doesn't end when you surface. In fact, the first steps you take immediately after your last dive are critical to preserving your gear for many more trips to come. Saltwater is harsh, and the delicate components of your housing— *buttons, dials, hinges, and electrical connections*—need careful attention to prevent corrosion, salt crystal buildup, and ultimately, flooding.

In this post, I'll walk you through exactly what you should do right after your last dive with your camera housing. I'll focus on key themes like **freshwater rinse housing**, removing **salt crystals from buttons and dials**, handling your equipment safely in shared rinse tanks, and maintaining a **dry workspace before opening the housing**. I'll also cover how to create a reliable backup workflow so your precious images are safe, and why immediate care can save you from flooding one day—trust me, I've learned this the hard way.

1. Initial Freshwater Rinse: The Most Important Step

Saltwater is the enemy of every underwater camera housing. When saltwater evaporates, it leaves behind tiny salt crystals that can jam buttons, corrode metal parts, and compromise the seals of your housing. Before you even think about opening the housing, start with a thorough **freshwater rinse housing**.

Why Rinse Before Opening?

If you open your housing [best desiccant for housing](#) while salt crystals are still present on the exterior, you risk introducing salt inside the housing. Salt inside means corrosion on your camera contacts and lens elements, and the nightmare scenario: a flooded housing.

The Proper Rinse Technique

- **Use clean, fresh water:** If you are diving from a liveaboard or dive shop, find their rinse tank or fresh water source. Avoid using questionable sources that could contain dirt or particles.
- **Rinse before removing the housing from the camera tray or rigging:** This helps protect the camera and your housing.
- **Use a gentle flow:** Avoid high pressure that could force water into small crevices.
- **Pay special attention to buttons, dials, hinges, and electrical connection points:** These areas often trap salt crystals.

2. Safe Handling in Shared Rinse Tanks

Shared rinse tanks on dive boats or at dive shops are lifesavers but also present hazards if everyone's gear is dumped in together. I've seen housings banged up against each other, scratched, or even jostled enough to dislodge o-rings.

Tips to Keep Your Housing Safe

- **Never let housings bang together:** Use float straps, padded covers, or dedicated hooks to keep your housing separated.
- **Keep your housing upright:** Placing it on its back or side near other gear increases the risk of scratches and damage.

- **Rinse your housing soon after surfacing:** Don't wait while your gear soaks in the tank, because salt deposits become more stubborn as water evaporates.
- **Use a separate rinse bucket if available:** If you want more control, carry your own small rinsing bucket on the boat.

3. Dry Before Opening: Prevent Corrosion and Salt Intrusion

I've seen this play out countless times: thought they could save money but ended up paying more.. One cardinal mistake I've seen many divers, including myself early on, make is opening their housing while it's still wet on the outside. This invites stray freshwater or saltwater droplets into your carefully sealed housing, potentially ruining your electronics and camera. So, you must let your housing dry before opening.

How to Dry Your Housing Properly

1. **Pat It Dry with a Microfiber Cloth:** Use a clean, soft microfiber cloth to dry all exterior surfaces carefully.
2. **Inspect Buttons, Dials, and Hinges:** Use a tiny flashlight dedicated to o-ring inspections to check for salt crystals. If you spot any, gently remove them with a damp brush or cloth, then dry again.
3. **Leave the Housing in a Shaded, Well-Ventilated Space:** Avoid direct sunlight as it can degrade rubber seals and plastic parts.
4. **Wait Until It's Dry Completely:** That means no visible water droplets or condensation before attempting to open the housing.

Label Your Chargers and Cables

A personal quirk of mine that might help you too is to **label chargers and cables with masking tape** before your trip. This habit reduces fumbling in the drying and maintenance phase, so you don't mix cords or lose essential gear.

4. Inspect Seals, O-Rings, Buttons, and Dials

After you rinse and dry your housing, it's time to check the key mechanical parts susceptible to salt damage:

- **Seals and O-Rings:** Inspect for any sand, hair, or salt crystals. Use a dedicated o-ring lubricant and a soft cloth after cleaning.
- **Buttons and Dials:** Salt crystals can jam these controls. Use your tiny flashlight to check for hidden salt residues.
- **Hinges and Locks:** Ensure these function smoothly and apply a very minimal appropriate lubricant if recommended by your housing manufacturer.
- **Electrical Connections:** If your housing has electrical contacts or bulkheads, check that they are clean and dry before opening or charging.

5. Two-Device Backups and Verification

A piece of advice I can't stress enough is never to rely on just one storage device for your images. I've been annoyed when people format their memory cards on day one without checking backups—and I was lucky to recover from a flooded housing once thanks to immediate backups.



Backup Workflow After Your Dive

- 1. **Transfer images from your underwater camera housing memory card to at least two independent devices:** This can be two external hard drives or one laptop plus a portable SSD.
- 2. **Verify both backups are complete and readable:** Don't just copy files and assume all data is intact; open and preview images.
- 3. **Keep the backups in separate locations if possible:** Protect against physical damage or theft.
- 4. **Avoid editing images extensively before making your second backup:** Editing first can slow down backups and raises risk of losing original files.

This two-device backup method provides peace of mind. After all, the effort and memories underwater deserve secure handling on the surface.

Summary Table: Post-Dive Camera Housing Care Checklist

Step	Action	Reason
1	Rinse underwater camera housing with freshwater before opening	Remove salt crystals, prevent corrosion inside housing
2	Handle housing carefully in shared rinse tanks; avoid banging housing against others	Prevent scratches, damage, and o-ring displacement
3	Dry exterior thoroughly with microfiber cloth and allow to air dry	Prevent water/ salt intrusion during housing opening
4	Inspect seals, o-rings, buttons, dials, hinges, and electrical connections	Ensure proper function and no salt buildup for long-term reliability
5	Transfer image files to two devices and verify backup integrity	Safeguard precious images against data loss

Final Thoughts

Taking just a bit of extra care right after your last dive can save you from the nightmare of a flooded housing or corrupted photos later on. Remember, saltwater residue on buttons and dials isn't just unsightly—it's a ticking time bomb for your equipment.

Keeping your freshwater rinse housing routine consistent, practicing safe handling in rinse tanks, establishing dry workspace habits, and having a thorough backup strategy are all part of being a responsible underwater photographer. These steps reduce wear, keep your **buttons, dials, hinges, and electrical connections** in prime condition, and protect your memories for years.

And one more tip from experience: label your chargers and cables with masking tape and keep a tiny flashlight handy specifically for inspecting o-rings!

Happy diving and shooting!

