AQUARIUM EMERGENCY COMMAND CARD

FISH GASPING

Fish are crowding the surface, breathing hard, or hanging near the filter return.

ADD OXYGEN FIRST. TEST THE WATER NEXT.

DBC AQUATICS
RESCUE. SOLVE. PREVENT.

AT A GLANCE

- **O2 — ADD OXYGEN**: Aim the filter up. Add an air stone.
- **NH3 — TEST WATER**: Ammonia, nitrite, temperature.
- **FILTER — PROTECT BACTERIA**: Keep media wet and running.
- **1 — ONE CORRECTION**: Act on evidence, then monitor.

FIRST 10 MINUTES - DO THIS IN ORDER

1 ADD OXYGEN NOW

Aim the filter return upward for a steady surface ripple. Add an air stone or sponge filter if available. Confirm the filter is moving water.

2 STOP FEEDING FOR NOW

Reduce added waste while the tank is unstable. Remove uneaten food, a dead fish, or obvious decaying material.

3 TEST THE WATER

Test ammonia and nitrite. Check the thermometer against the normal range for your species. Clear water is not proof of safe water.

4 ACT ON THE EVIDENCE

If ammonia or nitrite is above 0 ppm, make a controlled partial water change with conditioned water close to the tank temperature. If overheated, cool gradually.

5 PROTECT THE FILTER

Keep biological media wet and running. Clear a clog gently in removed tank water. Never replace all media during the emergency.

6 MONITOR THE RESPONSE

Watch breathing, posture, and where fish stay in the tank. Retest later today and tomorrow. Change one thing at a time.

DO NOT DO THIS

- X Do not medicate first.
- X Do not deep-clean the tank or filter.
- X Do not rinse media under untreated tap water.
- X Do not replace all filter media.
- X Do not change everything at once.
- X Do not assume clear water is safe.

SIGNS YOU MAY SEE

- Surface crowding
- Fast gill movement
- Hanging by return
- Red or irritated gills
- Loss of balance
- Several fish affected

DBC RESCUE METHOD

Stop › Observe › Test › Diagnose › Act › Monitor › Prevent

EMERGENCY TARGETS

Ammonia	**0 ppm**
Nitrite	**0 ppm**
Temperature	**Species range. Avoid rapid change.**
Surface	**Steady movement while fish recover.**

SCAN FOR FULL GUIDE

dbcaquatics.com/fish-gasping

GET EXPERT HELP IF...

- Fish collapse or cannot stay upright.
- Severe breathing distress continues after oxygen and water correction.
- Multiple fish keep dying.

Contact an aquatic veterinarian when distress is severe or continuing.