



HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
Ke'ena Ho'omalu Pōulua O Hawai'i

Laulima

Working Together

A Quarterly Newsletter for Our Partners and Community | 'Apelila/April 2025



At work, with Kīlauea

Credit: USGS-Hawaiian Volcano Observatory

The world's most active volcano – Kīlauea – is erupting on the island of Hawai'i. Concentrated in the Halema'uma'u Crater on Kīlauea's summit, the current eruption has been active since December 23, 2024. Sixteen eruptive episodes, ranging from 13 hours to eight days in length, have emitted 17.3 billion gallons of lava. With this extraordinary event comes elevated care and attention

by scientists and emergency managers to the threats that an eruption can pose.

"Kīlauea and Mauna Loa are two of the world's most active volcanoes, and Kīlauea is, by far, the most active in the world based on the volume it erupts," says Dr. Ken Hon, Scientist-in-Charge at the United States Geological Survey's (USGS) Hawaiian Volcanoes Observatory (HVO) in Hilo.

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Administrator's Message

By James DS. Barros

You can see from the pages in this issue of *Laulima* how busy our state's emergency managers are. We are a proactive, industrious group. Much of our effort goes to sharpening our procedures and positions so that we are prepared when a disaster strikes.



This winter, we activated and deployed resources during the Kona Low storm at the end of January. We also sent two HIEMA team members to California during the Los Angeles wildfires. Our assistance compacts are vital to our strength. California helped us during the Maui fires, and we were ready to help them.

However, preparedness is truly sown at the grassroots. As we move towards summer, a time of elevated hurricane and wildfire risk, check on your neighbors – especially our kūpuna and those who may be more vulnerable.

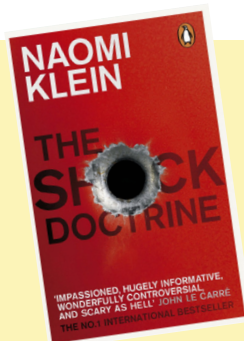
Mahalo!

Tracking the \$\$\$ in disaster contracts

Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism – by Naomi Klein

Review by Jake Bateman, HIEMA
Operations Specialist Chief

Shock Doctrine was recommended to me by a friend and former



coworker who taught me a lot about justice and equity in emergency management. Credit to Debbie for a great recommendation!

Stormy Weather BOOK CLUB

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The basic premise of the book is that modern free market policies create an environment where corporations can take advantage of disasters (both natural and man made) to make incredible profits supporting response and recovery efforts, often at the expense of local needs and interests.

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ISLANDS REPORT

Hawai'i Island

Aloha, friends. Civil Defense has had an eventful winter. On December 23, Kīlauea began erupting. It has



Talmadge Magno, HCCDA

since gone through 16 phases of eruptions, all contained within Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, creating a spectacle for tourists and

residents.

HCCDA activated the EOC from January 28 to 30 for the Kona Low. This event resulted in approximately 94 downed trees island wide, and several inches of rainfall resulting in localized flooding.

We conducted an evacuation exercise in Waikōloa Village in February, resulting in approximately 395 people taking the Hulu Street evacuation route onto Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway.

On March 7, Civil Defense hosted a Mass Care symposium with various partners on island, discussing shelter operations, feeding plans, and health services in the event of a large-scale disaster.

Kaua'i

Aloha from Kaua'i! At KEMA, we're always working to keep our island prepared and resilient. Recently, we teamed up with the Department of Defense and FEMA to strengthen emergency response efforts. We also helped install Ni'ihau's first outdoor warning siren – an important step for a community without cell service or other alert systems.



Elton Ushio, KEMA

funding challenges.

Another big focus is updating the Kaua'i Multi-Hazard Mitigation & Resiliency Plan, which helps us plan for hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and more. Community input is key, and we look forward to hearing from you!

Mahalo to everyone working alongside us to keep Kaua'i safe and ready.

Maui, Moloka'i & Lāna'i

Aloha mai kākou! A lot is happening at MEMA. We're expanding – welcoming new team members to key positions and strengthening our efforts.

In January, we activated during a severe weather event, responding alongside the County of Maui and partner organizations.



Amos Lonokailua-Hewett, MEMA

The County is updating our Hazard Mitigation Plan with ongoing meetings and working groups.

In April, we plan to launch the Genasys Protect evacuation platform. This app is another tool to alert the public for evacuations or emergencies. Community engagement remains a priority. MEMA hosts our annual Emergency Preparedness Expo on April 12, and will attend Taro Fest, Moloka'i

We hosted the 2024 IPAWS Road Show, training first responders on delivering emergency alerts quickly and effectively. On the Westside, we're keeping flood control and levee improvements a priority, despite

Resource Fair, and Pineapple Fest.

An 'ōlelo no'ēau or Hawaiian proverb that says, "A'ōhe hana nui ke alu 'ia," meaning "No task is too big when done together by all."

This embodies the spirit of shared responsibility that is vital for our community's resilience. Whether it's preparing for emergencies, supporting our neighbors, or staying informed, every action counts. Let's embrace our Kuleana and work together. No challenge is too great when we unite.

O'ahu

Aloha from Honolulu! This quarter, we want to tell about our new notification system, HNL Alert.

Starting April 1, HNL Alert officially launches as the City and County of Honolulu's system used to alert



Jennifer Walter, DEM

residents and visitors about emergencies and other important news. HNL Alert replaces the previous system, known as HNL.info.

HNL.info users will need to sign up to get HNL Alert notifications.

HNL Alert allows the City to quickly provide registered users with critical information during situations such as severe weather, evacuations, unexpected disruptions to key services, or unplanned road closures.

You choose the types of event alerts, specific location areas, and how to alert you – e.g., text message, app, email.

Go to hnlalert.gov to sign up and learn more. You can also download the app "Public Safety by Everbridge" and search "Honolulu."

Thanks for signing up!

Maui debuts new patch logo

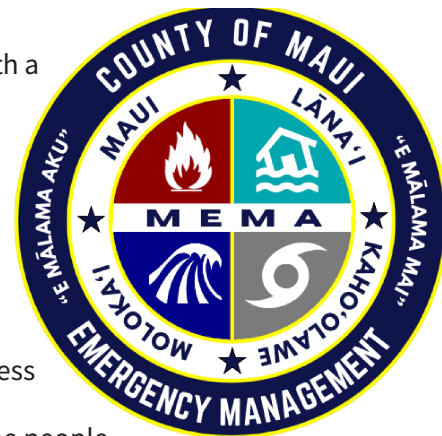
Maui Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) recently debuted a new patch logo with a symbolic, interconnected, circular design.

The large navy blue ring comprises County of Maui, Emergency Management and “E Mālama Aku – E Mālama Mai” – a Hawaiian saying and proverb that translates to “To care for and be cared for.” It emphasizes the relationship of give and take and the foundation of strong families and communities.

The white ring comprises Maui County’s four islands – Maui, Lāna‘i, Kaho‘olawe and Moloka‘i – encircled, symbolizing a “whole community” approach, unity and inclusion.

At the center of the patch are the main threats to Maui County – wildfires, hurricanes, flooding and tsunamis. Five-pointed stars represent the five mission areas of preparedness – prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery.

“This patch serves as a visual representation of MEMA’s dedication to safeguarding the people of Maui County through integrity, collaboration and a deep connection to our cultural values,” said MEMA.



Kaua‘i budgets \$16M for helicopter purchase

The County of Kaua‘i has budgeted \$16 million beginning in fiscal year 2026 for the purchase of a new twin-engine helicopter for the Kaua‘i Fire Department. Kaua‘i Mayor Derek Kawakami announced the purchase commitment in his State of the County address on March 13.

“Last year’s wildfire that threatened our beloved Kaumakani Camp served as a stark reminder of how quickly a fire can threaten homes and lives,” Kawakami said.

The fire burned 1,000 acres in Hanapēpē and Kaumakani last July. No lives or homes were lost, but Kawakami said the fire “highlighted the fact that our aging, single-engine helicopter is ill-equipped for large wildfire suppression and rescues in dangerous terrain.”

“Our island has seen an increase in rescue service and fire response since Air 1 was purchased in 2011,” he said. “An upgraded helicopter not only enhances our firefighting capabilities, but drastically improves safety. Our rescuers risk their lives for others and we must do everything in our power to reduce their risk.”

Kaua‘i’s new helicopter will be acquired on a lease-to-own basis at approximately \$2.75 million per year over seven years, with a 4.8% interest rate, according to Kaua‘i Public Information Officer Alden Alayvilla.



Upgraded capabilities include a redundant twin-engine design that is more reliable than its single-engine predecessor; increased water capacity of up to 300 gallons (previously 95); faster response times with increased speeds of up to 130 miles per hour; larger fuel tanks which extend flight time; and more personnel capacity.

Air 1, Kaua‘i’s current helicopter, must leave a rescuer behind if a patient is airlifted. The new model is expected to fit all personnel and patients to return together.

“The twin-engine helicopter offers superior performance, safety and reliability – especially in challenging weather conditions and rugged terrain,” Alayvilla said. “The aircraft will bolster firefight-

ing efforts” and “enhance search and rescue operations.”

“This investment is a testament to Kauai’s proactive approach to disaster preparedness and ongoing commitment to public safety,” Alayvilla said.

UH tsunami video link!

April is Tsunami Awareness Month! Scan the QR code for HIEMA’s favorite video, from Dennis Hwang at the University of Hawai‘i.



Shock Doctrine—Continued from page 1

We see this every day in emergency management, especially in Hawai'i. Every time we have an incident that brings in FEMA and federal dollars, we are inundated by mainland and international companies that vie for our checkbook to support response, recovery, and reconstruction efforts. On top of that, investors seek to buy up damaged and destroyed properties for pennies on the dollar, and out-of-state lawyers seek clients to represent in class-action suits. If left unchecked, these businesses would divert much needed recovery money out of our state, reducing greatly the benefits we could have received had the awards gone to local companies.

Our federal, state, and county leaders deserve credit for fighting to stop and reduce such exploitation. During our ongoing response and recovery from the DR4724 Wildfires, objectives found in our Incident Action Plans and Integrated Strategic Plans focused on the cultural competency of responders, the inclusion of native Hawaiian and other local voices in recovery, and the need to protect our communities from predatory financial behavior. Governor Green even went so far as to ban unsolicited offers to buy land in Lahaina, and for a short

time sought to ban property sales in Lahaina outright, all in an effort to protect its residents from the investors and property flippers looking to make a quick buck off of a tragedy.

HIEMA sits at the crossroads of these competing interests. As dollars flow through us, we can help to direct that flow to people, businesses, and initiatives that amplify local voices and invest in local growth and resiliency. The needs of our residents reflected in their bumper stickers ("Keep the Country Country," "Hawaiian Lands in Hawaiian Hands," "Kū Kia'i Mauna," "Ola I Ka Wai," and others) do not stand in conflict with our own Core Values of Mālama, Po'okela, Wiwo'ole, Laulima, and Kūpono.

Life lessons from a Special Forces legend

Full Battle Rattle: My Story as the Longest-Serving Special Forces A-Team Soldier – by Changiz Lahidji and Ralph Pezzullo

*Review by Brandon Hill, HIEMA
Limited English Proficiency Specialist*

On a Friday evening in October 2021, after a hard week of studying Korean at the Defense Language Institute, a white-bearded man approached my table at Ttobongee Chicken, the only Korean fried chicken joint in Pacific Grove, California. After some friendly banter, I asked him and his

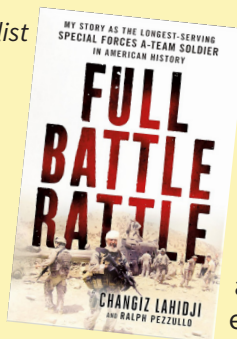
wife to join me, not knowing that I had invited retired Army Master Sergeant Changiz Lahidji – the longest-serving Special Forces A Team soldier in American military history – to dinner.

Full Battle Rattle is Changiz's autobiography, written with Ralph Pezzullo. It's an episodic first-person narrative of his extraordinary life, from his childhood growing up in Tehran, Iran, to the 24 years he served in the U.S. Army Special Forces. Changiz gets into the nitty gritty of some of his more than 100 combat missions, including his one-man spy mission in Operation Eagle Claw in Iran, the "Blue Light" hostage rescue team in Beirut, his involvement in the "Black Hawk Down" incident in Somalia, and his undercover mission (dressed as a farmer) to locate Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan.

As the first Muslim Green Beret, Changiz recalls discrimination and backward opposition from his leadership and peers, and reflects that no matter the opponent, he would not be stunted in exercising his passion for service with his brothers in arms.

He writes, "I've come to realize that you can be a bad [expletive] when you serve in your unit, but underneath, be a thoughtful, kind, fun-loving and compassionate man."

Changiz's story is great for anyone seeking to develop that extra drive in life, towards any endeavor. He shows that it all comes down to the attitude one has within.



Upcoming Events

MEMA's Emergency Management Preparedness Expo is April 12

Maui Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) hosts its Emergency Management Preparedness Expo on Saturday, April 12, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Queen Ka'ahumanu Center in Kahului. The expo features over 30 partner agencies and community resources with preparedness programs and speakers, information on disaster readiness strategies, prizes and giveaways. It's free. Info: 808-270-7285 or mauicounty.gov/MEMA.

HIEMA career fairs in April

Job seekers are invited to learn more about working at Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency and meet HIEMA's Human Resources team during two public events in April. Bring your resume and have your schedule and availability handy. You can meet HIEMA HR at:

- Operation Hire Hawai'i Recruitment Event on Friday, **April 11**, from 1 to 6 p.m., and Saturday, **April 12**, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Hawai'i Convention Center in Honolulu. Info: www.dhrd.hawaii.gov/OHHI.
- The *Star-Advertiser's* Career Expo 2025 on Wednesday, **April 30**, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Blaisdell Center in Honolulu. Info: www.hawaiicareerexpo.com.

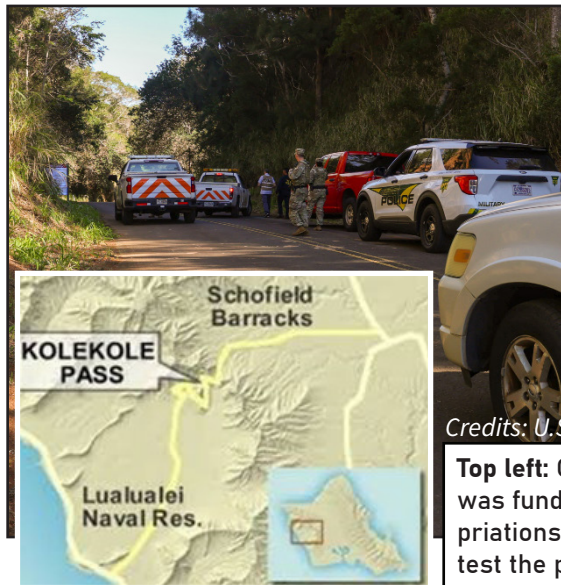


Military preps Kolekole Pass for West O'ahu emergency route

The U.S. Navy, U.S. Army and the City & County of Honolulu conducted a full-scale, multi-agency exercise to test the Kolekole Pass as a potential evacuation and emergency services access route for the West O'ahu communities that are serviced by Farrington Highway. The exercise on February 5 simulated a disaster at Hawaiian Electric's Kahe Power Plant that required the shutdown of Farrington Highway and tested the flow of emergency response vehicles from Schofield Barracks in central O'ahu to the leeward coast through the Wai'anae mountains via Kolekole Pass.

For the roughly 50,000 residents of Mākaha, Wai'anae, Maili, Nānākuli and Ko'olina, Kolekole Pass could be a vital lifeline in an emergency.

"This is the only alternate route into



Credits: U.S. Army Garrison Hawaii

Top left: Construction of the Kolekole Pass was funded by the Emergency Relief Appropriations Act of 1935. **Above:** Multiple agencies test the pass for evacuation purposes.

and out of the West side other than Farrington Highway," says Nathan Wilkes, external communications chief at U.S. Army Garrison Hawaii. "Without this option, isolation could pose several dangers to West O'ahu, including limited access to emergency services, increased vulnerability to natural disasters, and decreased food and water security."

Wilkes called the exercise "successful" and says it "served as a proof of concept that the route could be used effectively in a crisis. It also highlighted the great partnership and collaboration of all the agencies involved."

The Kolekole Pass road traverses the Wai'anae Range to connect the Lualualei Naval Magazine on the leeward coast to the Army's Schofield Barracks installation near Mililani. Under a Memorandum of Understanding, the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA) and the City & County of Honolulu can

request access in times of crisis.

Hazards and risks still exist on the mountain road: Blind curves, steep and sharp turns, dangerous rock overhangs, and an absence of guard rails and streetlights.

"Traffic management in the event of a real evacuation would pose a big challenge," Wilkes says, "due to the steep grade and several choke points along the route. An evacuation would take a considerable amount of time, especially if a vehicle were to break down along the route and need to be cleared."

Despite the risks, Kolekole Pass is now available for emergency use, Wilkes says.

"We will continue to refine our emergency operations plans and work with our agency partners to ensure that we can respond in the event of a real crisis."

Kīlauea—from page 1

"The Hawaiian Island chain of volcanoes were built in an 'assembly line' process that is driven by tectonic plate motion and the Hawaiian Hotspot, a plume of hot material deep within the Earth, which has been active for at least 70 million years," explains Dr. Hon. "Kīlauea is closest to the hot spot and is in its shield-building stage, receiving magma from the hot spot below, erupting many low-viscosity, fluid lava flows on its surface and building its shield."

For Hawai'i Island residents, lava flows are a very real threat. Since 1983, Kīlauea had been erupting at its Pu'u'ō'ō Cone. In 2018, after 35 years of activity, Pu'u'ō'ō's summit collapsed. Magma traveled eastward

towards Cape Kumukahi and Lower Puna communities near Pāhoā, emerging from fissures in the earth's surface as seismic activity proliferated. More than 700 homes were destroyed in the lava flow, 2,000 residents displaced, and 874 acres of new land created where lava entered the sea at Kapoho Bay.

The movement of magma away from the volcanic edifice below Pu'u'ō'ō and Kīlauea's own summit triggered the sinking and collapse of the Halema'uma'u Crater, increasing its depth from 280 feet to 1,600 feet. The current eruptions in Halema'uma'u are now building the crater, Kīlauea's "shield," back up.

...

Meanwhile, officials at Hawai'i County Civil Defense Agency (HCCDA) consult with HVO scientists to assess emergency management issues and public safety

threats that rise from mighty Kīlauea.

"Long before any eruption occurs, we are in communication with HVO," says HCCDA Administrator Talmadge Magno. "Their monitoring of the volcanoes and interpretation of the data feeds our planning and response levels."

HVO utilizes over 200 sensors to track activity, including seismometers, tiltmeters, gas detectors, infrasound, thermal cameras, visual cameras and GPS. Data from these tools helps track the movement of magma beneath the earth's surface as it causes thousands of earthquakes each year, leaving trails of seismic activity and changes in the shape of the volcano.

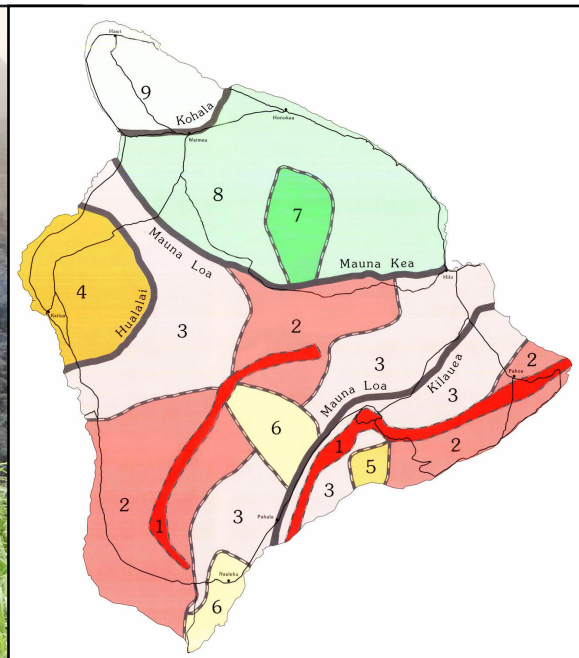
"Generally, we can see if magma

Continued on page 6



Kīlauea caused \$236M in infrastructure damage in the 2018 lower East Rift Zone eruption. **Right:** Lava flow hazard zones, with 1 being most at risk.

Credits: USGS-Hawaiian Volcanoes Observatory



Kīlauea—Continued from page 5

is accumulating in a region, perhaps over years, or if it is actively moving, in which case we generally only have a few hours or days before magma erupts,” Dr. Hon says.

Historical data also provided the basis for the USGS lava flow hazard zone map for the island of Hawai‘i. The map identifies regions where lava has erupted in the past and how close they are to potential vents, providing basic information as to how long it might take a lava flow to reach them.

“The 2018 lower East Rift Zone eruption was the most destructive eruption in the past 200 years,” Dr. Hon remarks.

It occurred in an area where lava flows have been multiple times in the past. With population growth in the area, there was increased exposure and greater impacts.

“In general, the further the eruption is from the summit, the longer it takes magma to move there, so there is more warning,” Dr. Hon continues. “But, at any given time, lava flow impact will be related to how much lava is erupting, the location of the vent, steepness of the topography, topographic features,

and whether the lava is cooler and more viscous, or hotter and more fluid.”

...

This information and communication keeps HCCDA prepared to protect lives and property as much as possible. With large lava flows, some property destruction is inevitable. But, despite an estimated \$236 million in public infrastructure damage from the 2018 Kīlauea eruption, no lives were lost.

“Depending on the jurisdiction of where the active lava is occurring, HCCDA or the Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park will close areas to maintain public safety,” Administrator Magno says. “In the case where residents and infrastructure are threatened, these areas will be evacuated.”

HCCDA has shelters identified and prepared outside of hazard zones. In 2018, Hawai‘i County provided emergency shelter for 151 days, temporarily sheltering between 150 and 450 evacuated persons at a time.

“Lava is destructive to anything in its path. Life safety is the top priority,” says Jesse Sceppe, a planner and public information officer at HCCDA. “However, you can egress equipment and resources out of the potential inundation zone for the lava flow if it has the potential to isolate or inundate those resources.”

Volcanic activity can also present cascading weather and health threats.

“Damaging earthquakes and local tsunamis could occur,” Magno says. “Lava flow will also start brush fires.

“Vog (volcanic fog) and laze (lava haze) are airborne hazards produced by gas released from the magma and molten lava coming into contact with ocean salt water. Each has a gas component and contains particulate matter that can cause health issues.”

Sceppe notes that “typically, airborne health hazards do not get bad enough to issue an evacuation. Monitoring equipment is strategically established around the island to measure these emissions. If emissions rise to an ‘unhealthy’ level, we communicate this and note that it may be hazardous to residents with respiratory problems. They can take action to mitigate exposure, such as staying indoors or relocating until levels subside.”

Magno emphasizes the importance of public information.

“A critical factor is education and information on the threats and hazards. It’s important for the community to understand and take appropriate actions when eruptions and threats occur.”