



# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the course of five months in 2018, Hawaii experienced an unprecedented series of disasters. Also unprecedented was the degree of county, state and federal collaboration required to respond to these events. State and federal support resources had to be identified and integrated into overtaxed local response efforts. Joint decision-making on response strategies and priorities was required in key areas where state and county agencies shared responsibility, such as public health and transportation. This coordination required a sustained flow of information between state and county EOCs and agencies.

After-action reports, both formal and informal, revealed opportunities for improvement. A common theme was that state agencies with county-based operations each operate very differently in terms of how they coordinated with the local EOC. Increased pre-incident communication is required to clarify assumptions and expectations and enhance mutual understanding of one another's response capabilities and procedures.

The purpose of the State/County Operation Coordination Seminar is to provide a venue where these discussions can begin. The agenda includes a joint presentation by the counties highlighting how outside support can best be coordinated with their operations, and presentations by state and federal agencies with county-based operations on how they plan to interface with local EOCs. A discussion period will follow each presentation.

## Areas for Improvement Identified in State After-Action Report on the 2018 Disasters

### Issues with State Agency Representatives in County EOCs

- Counties did not understand authorities of state agency reps in their EOCs (e.g. DOT; DOH). What decisions could be made locally and what needed to be made on Oahu was unclear and varied by agency.
- Some state agency reps in county EOCs "forgot" they are representing a state agency when coordinating with the county and did not report the decisions they made to their main office.
- Some state agencies had personnel on neighbor islands that would have been helpful to use in county EOCs but they had no training.

### State Unfamiliar with County Emergency Organization

#### Lack of Coordination Between County Agencies and State Emergency Support Functions

- No pre-established links between SESFs and counterpart agencies at the county level. Almost all issues were directed through limited/overwhelmed county EM staff creating bottlenecks.
- State and county EOCs were coordinating with different counterparts from the same agency at the same time.

