



# State of Hawai'i – Department of Defense

## Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency

The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) is the state emergency management agency for the state of Hawai'i. Operating from its headquarters buried in the crater of Diamond Head Crater, HI-EMA serves as the overall coordinating agency among the four counties (Hawai'i County Civil Defense Agency, Maui County Emergency Management Agency, City and County of Honolulu Department of Emergency Management, and Kaua'i County Emergency Management Agency), state agencies including the Hawai'i Army and Air National Guard, and federal agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and U.S. Department of Defense.

When a major emergency or disaster strikes in the state of Hawai'i, the four county civil defense agencies coordinate the initial response directly to their local communities. If those efforts exceed the capabilities of a given county, HI-EMA can provide specialized or supplemental resources, technical assistance, or other support needed to protect human lives and property. Other services provided by HI-EMA include advanced telecommunications, a statewide siren warning system, planning program, training, public information, disaster mitigation, and disaster assistance programs.

HI-EMA operates a State Warning Point on a 24-hour, 7 day-a-week basis to monitor for and respond to actual or impending emergencies.

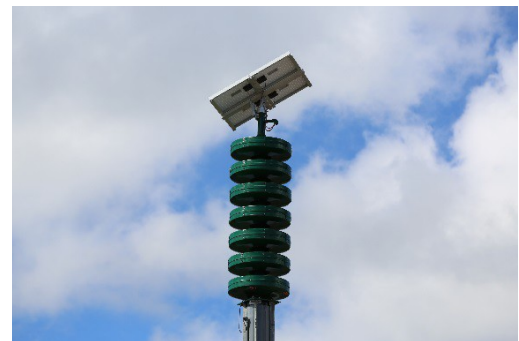


*State Emergency Operations Center activation*



*HI-EMA supports County Civil Defense Agencies during disasters such as the ongoing eruption and lava flow of Kilauea volcano.*

HI-EMA has five branches including Preparedness, Operations, Telecommunications, Logistics and Finance/Administration.



*HI-EMA maintains the largest statewide siren system in the United States*

### **Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency**

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Honolulu, Hawaii 96816-4495

Director: Maj. Gen. Ken Hara  
Administrator: Luke Meyers

*For additional information, please contact:*

Telephone: 808-733-4300

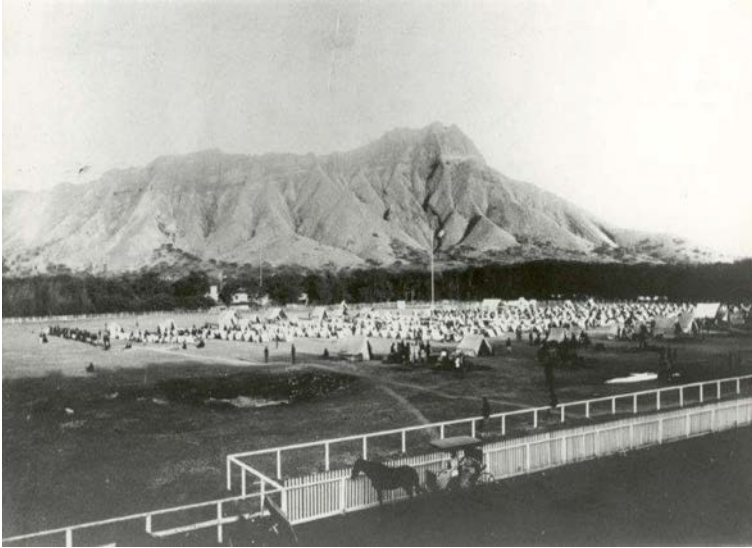
Email: [HawaiiEMA@hawaii.gov](mailto:HawaiiEMA@hawaii.gov)

Twitter: @HawaiiEMA

Facebook: Hawaii Emergency

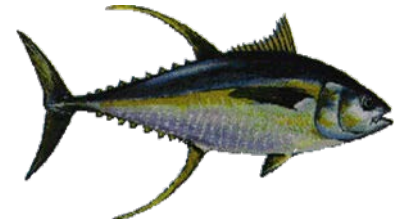
Website: [ready.hawaii.gov](http://ready.hawaii.gov)

# History of Birkhimer and Diamond Head Crater



Hawai'i's most recognized landmark, Diamond Head Crater has a history rich in both culture and military might. Legend has it the volcano crater was given the name Le'ahi by the sister of the fire goddess Pele because the shape of the summit ridgeline resembles the forehead (Lae) of the "ahi" fish.

Located near the eastern edge of Waikiki, Diamond Head or Lē'ahi was formed 300,000 years ago during a single eruption. The steep rocky slopes of the crater cover about 350 acres of land. In 1904 the U.S. government



purchased the crater and surrounding land for \$3,300 recognizing it's potential as a military asset. With it's panoramic view, the summit of Diamond Head was an ideal site for coastal defense.

Fortification began in 1906 setting the stage for protecting O'ahu and eventually proving to be imperative to the defense of Honolulu Harbor and Pearl Harbor. Five batteries were built to house artillery, and bunkers and pillboxes were constructed along the crater rim for local defense. Materials used for construction were hauled into the crater by mules. To accommodate the animals a 5 x 7 foot tunnel, referred to as "Mule Tunnel" was specifically built for this purpose. Battery Birkhimer remains buried in the crater floor and today houses the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency. The building is named after Army Brigadier General William Birkhimer, a recipient of the Medal of Honor who scouted O'ahu and advised that Diamond Head be an integral part of O'ahu's coastal defense plan.

In 1950, the U.S. Army terminated all activities in and around Diamond Head, removed the equipment, and turned land over to the Territory of Hawai'i. (Executive Order 10268, July 5, 1951)

In 1968, Diamond Head was designated a National Natural Landmark. Today more than a million visitors enjoy hiking it's historic trail with stunning coastal views. The monument, including the interior and outer slopes, encompasses 475 acres. The 0.8 mile hike from trailhead to summit is strenuous but well worth it. Once at the top, you'll see bunkers, and a large navigational lighthouse built in 1917 along with a stunning view of the shoreline that stretches from one end of the island to the other.

