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Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency

Emergency Managers, Officials Will Conduct Makani Pāhili Hurricane Exercise

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HONOLULU — The State of Hawai'i will conduct the annual Makani Pāhili exercise from Thursday, May 4 through Friday, May 12, to test statewide hurricane preparedness and response capabilities.

The events will include an activation exercise this Thursday and Friday to test the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) and other systems for the approach and impact of the simulated "Hurricane Makani of 2023."

The training and exercise effort is coordinated by the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) and includes participation by other state government agencies, county emergency managers, the National Weather Service, and other federal, private and nonprofit partners. Activities will test key elements of the state's response to a simulated major hurricane, including the activation of the state and county emergency operations centers.

"I look at it like a controlled scrimmage that gives us and our partners a chance to test parts of our emergency playbook and make sure it's strong, so we're ready when lives are on the line," said James Barros, HI-EMA administrator. Participants began preparations Wednesday morning with a briefing that laid out the "forecast" and potential track for the imaginary Hurricane Makani.

As part of the exercise, the State Emergency Operations Center inside Diamond Head crater in Honolulu will be activated on Thursday and Friday, May 4 and 5. Events associated with the activation are not expected to impact the public, but there is a possibility that individuals monitoring radio broadcasts on certain channels may hear radio chatter by participating HAM Radio operators or other participants.

Participants have been instructed to ensure that Makani Pāhili communications include the phrase "Exercise, exercise, exercise" to reduce the risk of confusion with a real emergency.

A safety officer will be on hand to monitor activities. In the event of an injury during the simulation or a real-world emergency, the exercise will be halted so that emergency workers can respond to the real incident.

Makani Pāhili, meaning “strong winds” in Hawaiian, is the state’s annual hurricane preparedness exercise. In addition to the SEOC exercise this week, emergency managers and partners will work with state and county leaders, and conduct tabletop exercises to test elements of the state’s plans for damage to ports, debris management, and other aspects of Hawaii’s disaster response and recovery systems.

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