

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'AINA



MAJOR GENERAL KENNETH S. HARA  
DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

JAMES DS. BARROS  
ADMINISTRATOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA

*Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency*

## AS SIREN TEST SCHEDULE RESUMES, HI-EMA CLARIFIES SIREN-ACTIVATION PROTOCOLS

**For Immediate Release: September 27, 2023**

**Release No. 2023-0027**

**HONOLULU** — The aftermath of the August 2023 wildfire disaster in Hawai'i included discussion about the state's all-hazard outdoor siren system, who is responsible for activating the sirens, and in what situations.

In the interest of public clarity, the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) consulted with the leaders of our emergency management partners in each county to produce a summary for major hazards in the state. The attached summary covers elements such as which organizations have primary and secondary responsibility for activating alert systems, and factors to consider in making the decision.

"These protocols haven't changed," said James Barros, HI-EMA Administrator. "The sirens are an all-hazard alert system, and the state and county emergency plans address how to use all our alert and warning tools. This summary collects information about many different hazards and puts it on one page to help ensure the public has a clear understanding of how these complex decisions are made, sometimes in a very short amount of time."

The summary covers elements such as:

- Who informs emergency managers about a hazard to the public
- What information is typically weighed in deciding whether to activate sirens or other alerts
- Who typically makes the decision on siren activation
- Who is responsible for activating sirens (primary and secondary)
- Where sirens typically would be activated for specific hazards
- What other alert systems may be used instead of or along with sirens

The summary shows the diverse factors that go into decision-making about siren use, from the location of the hazard to whether it will begin to impact the public in daylight or darkness.

“We’re always looking to improve our response to emergencies, and the review of the Maui fire response may lead to changes, but for now it’s important that Hawai‘i’s residents know that the sirens are an alert system that means ‘seek more information,’” Barros said.

HI-EMA canceled the September test of the siren system. Siren testing will resume on the first business day of October, and a separate nationwide test of alert systems for radio/television and mobile devices will take place in early October. HI-EMA will issue separate news releases regarding those tests.

# # #

**Media contact:**

Adam Weintraub  
Communication Director  
Hawai‘i Emergency Management Agency  
[adam.b.weintraub@hawaii.gov](mailto:adam.b.weintraub@hawaii.gov)  
808-620-5417