



Protecting our Hawai'i communities from natural disasters, disease pandemics, bioterrorism and public health emergencies.

Public Health Preparedness News

June 2013

Volume 2, Issue 2

DOH Radiation team is ever vigilant

Tourists and locals, strolling through Aloha Stadium during the NFL Pro Bowl or Blaisdell Center for the Elton John show, wouldn't look twice at the casual-looking man in rubber slippers and Aloha shirt. Undercover cop? Secret Service agent?

No, he's an employee of the Hawai'i Department of Health, Radiological Response Team (DOH RAD). Providing radiation surveillance for high-profile events (while staying incognito) is just one function of RAD. Their mission is to protect the community from any radiation emergency, real or potential.



For example, many Hawai'i companies use radioactive materials for beneficial purposes, such as nuclear medicines. Despite rigid safety measures, an industrial or transportation accident could release radioactive materials into the environment. Or,

a terrorist might attempt to detonate a dirty bomb or backpack-sized nuclear fission device in a populated area.

Preventing disasters before they occur is a core activity of DOH RAD. During the 2011 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, the team worked for 60 continuous hours on radiation sweeps and surveillance, and pedestrian and vehicle security checkpoints. RAD coordinated with DOH Public Health Preparedness, U.S. Secret Service, Department of Energy, 5th and 93rd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams, local law enforcement and first responders.

After the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster, RAD worked nights and weekends to set up radiation detectors, collect and analyze samples, monitor nuclear plants in Japan, coordinate with federal and local agencies, respond to the media, and disseminate information to the legislature and public. No radioactivity was detected in marine debris that drifted toward Hawai'i beaches, but the DOH RAD team continues to collect air, milk, drinking water and precipitation samples.



The DOH RAD team

“We also provide training opportunities for Fire, Police, the 93rd CST, Public Health Nurses, Environmental Health, DOH Lab and the first responder community,” says program manager Jeffrey Eckerd. “We ourselves train in many types of hazard. Currently, the Hawai'i RAD is the only civilian state radiological response team in the nation that is capable of conducting a co-entry with a National Guard Civil Support Team.”

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No MERS-CoV in Hawai'i, Mainland

As of June 19, the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) has infected 64 people, resulting in 38 deaths. Most cases are in the Middle East; additional cases in Europe have originated in travel to the Middle East. Currently, no U.S. cases have been reported.



MERS-CoV viruses, seen with an electron microscope.

MERS-CoV has not been previously identified in humans; information is limited on its transmission, severity, and clinical impact. There is no vaccine or treatment. However, all clusters of cases appear to have occurred in healthcare settings or from close family contact.

Although there are no travel restrictions, the World Health Organization encourages health care workers to continue surveillance for severe acute respiratory infections.

Functional Exercise shows DOH strengths, resource needs

How ready is the Department of Health (DOH) to handle a public health emergency? To test the department's ability to activate the Department Operations Center (DOC) in response to a catastrophic event, the Public Health Preparedness (PHP) branch conducted a large-scale training exercise on April 10th using a "tsunami" scenario.

More than 100 staff from the DOH, District Health Offices (DHO), State Civil Defense (SCD) and City & County of Honolulu Department of Emergency Management (DEM) worked together to mobilize the DOC, assess the situation, coordinate staff and internal communications, acquire and allocate resources, and distribute information to the media and general public.



Participants also practiced, in real-time, developing an Incident Action Plan, using the E-TEAM online communications tool, and carrying out a shift change. To enhance the element of uncertainty, trainers "injected" messages

and various obstacles via phone calls, faxes, and electronic updates. The idea is that capabilities-based planning always involves some uncertainty, and disasters can never be forecasted with complete accuracy. The ultimate goal is to build up an "all-hazards" readiness that can be applied to a wide variety of incidents.

"This exercise allowed an opportunity to put our written plans and protocols into action, in a realistic disaster scenario," said DOH Director Loretta Fuddy, who served as an Incident Commander.

"By testing our overall readiness and ability to coordinate staff, resources and communications, we gained valuable feedback that will help shape future training priorities. It is critical that we have these exercises on a regular basis so we will be better prepared for an actual event."

Do current DOC operations measure up? Do they align with the CDC's Public Health Capabilities,



those 15 national standards designed to guide state health departments in their preparedness goals? In a hot wash immediately after the Functional Exercise, the controllers commended DOH, SCD and DEM staff for their successful "recovery" from the mock tsunami. The trainers also identified further training requirements, resources needed, and tasks to continue to improve.

Hepatitis A outbreak linked to frozen berries

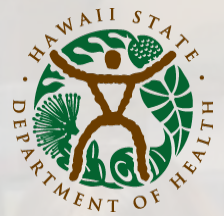
DOH is investigating hepatitis A virus-infected cases in Hawai'i, possibly linked to Townsend Farms Organic Antioxidant Blend, a frozen mixed-berry product sold at Costco stores.

Townsend Farms, Inc., has issued a voluntary product recall of the 3 lb. bags. The public is advised to discard or return any remaining product. Details of the specific product lot numbers, "Best By" dates, and UPC codes can be found on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration website: www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm355166.htm

Hepatitis A is a contagious disease that causes inflammation of the liver. If you develop symptoms of infection (<http://hawaii.gov/health/DOCD/DIB/HepatitisA.html>), contact your healthcare provider.

The DOH Disease Outbreak Control Division's Immunization branch and Disease Investigation branch have posted an online FAQ (<http://hawaii.gov/health/Immunization/HepA.html>), including pharmacies that provide hepatitis A vaccine (<http://hawaii.gov/health/Immunization/Documents/AdultVaxResourceList.pdf>).





Big Island trains in disaster triage

Practicing emergency response under 'real-life' conditions builds both competency and confidence. On April 5 and 26, the Hawai'i District Health Office (HDHO) and University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UHH), School of Nursing, worked together to practice triage and treatment procedures during an emergency or disaster.

The skills-and-competencies training included setting up an "evacuation shelter" on the UHH campus, as well as adding a mock group of patients, distressed family members, media photographer and other distractions, played by the nursing students, UHH faculty and HDHO staff – all while the nurses exercised proper triage and treatment protocols.

Public health nurses from the HDHO office, along with nurse-volunteers of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), participated in the training. The nurses also had an invaluable opportunity to exercise treatment procedures on a "SimMan," or Simulation Mannequin, a highly specialized robotic teaching tool. SimMan can visually and electronically simulate various physiological functions and vital signs, such as breathing or moaning in pain.

"This training was an excellent overall learning experience," said Dan Gushiken, HDHO Public Health Educator and Big Island MRC Coordinator. "Practicing triage and treatment under 'real-life' conditions built the competency and confidence needed for nurses to respond to an actual disaster at an evacuation shelter."



Participants review protocols and procedures.



Big Island staff and MRC volunteers practice nursing procedures on a SimBaby.



UH Manoa nursing students practice how to dispense medical countermeasures.



Maui DHO Public Health Nurses train Hale Makua staff in the dispensing of antibiotics.

Maui practices mass distribution

To better understand the concepts, as well as the hands-on distribution, of medical countermeasures, the Maui District Health Office (MDHO) held a joint training with nursing students and staff from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa (UHM) and Hale Makua Health Services, a long-term-care facility in Kahului.

MDHO Public Health Preparedness staff and public health nurses participated with UHM in the "Maui Emergency Support Function Training Exercise," which was held in March at the long-term-care facility and UH Maui College.

The training provided an understanding of the need and processes involved in a mass dispensing situation. Participants also had an opportunity to practice the physical dispensing of prophylactic ciprofloxacin, doxycycline, and amoxicillin. These medical countermeasures may become operational during an anthrax release or plague outbreak.

The exercise was part of an overall plan to have individual organizations distribute medications to their own staff and persons within their jurisdiction. The strategy is the option-of-choice for quickly providing countermeasures to Maui County residents and visitors within a day of an actual incident.

"Having this training really helps us take care of our own during a disaster," said Laurie Tomas Hale, nurse supervisor at Hale Makua. "We appreciate being part of this exercise to dispense medical countermeasures to our staff and residents."

Kaua'i holds triennial exercise

Scenario: a Boeing 717 has just crash landed at Lihue airport. There are mass casualties, fires to suppress, and the task of coordinating victims, first responders, and various government agencies.

On May 9, the Department of Transportation, Airports Division, conducted a "triennial emergency response exercise" at Lihue Airport with a simulated airliner crash. The realistic exercise was a Federal Aviation Administration requirement to test airfield disaster preparedness and response.

More than 21 local, state, and federal stakeholders participated in the exercise, including Kaua'i District Health Office (KDHO) Public Health Emergency Preparedness staff and public health nurses. More than 100 volunteers from the community played "casualties" and "deployed responders." All "victims" were moulaged (had makeup applied to appear as injuries) to help with realism. The exercise included a fire suppression drill. All flight operations continued as normal during the exercise.

Participants included the Kaua'i Medical Reserve Corps, Federal Aviation Administration, Transportation Security Administration, Kaua'i Police and Fire, Kaua'i Civil Defense, Wilcox Memorial Hospital, Healthcare Association of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Air National Guard, and many others.



Public Health Nurse Kathleen Agena attended to the more seriously injured "victims."



"Our emergency plan calls for KDHO to help with the psychological effects of an actual aircraft incident," said Lihue Airport Fire Commander Donald Ouderkirk. "We definitely could use their help with pre-hospital care and treatment."

Upcoming Events

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|----------------|--|
| June | National Safety Month, www.nsc.org/nsm |
| June 28 | O'ahu Medical Reserve Corps quarterly meeting, Queens Conference Ctr |
| June 1- July 4 | Fireworks Safety Month, www.preventblindness.org |
| June 23-29 | National Lightning Safety Awareness Week, www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov |
| July 27 | Convoy of Hope, Aloha Stadium |
| August | National Immunization Awareness Month |
| October 15 | School Flu Vaccination clinics begin on all islands |



Spotlight on the HAWAI‘I MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS



MRC groups train in ESAR-VHP system

Communicating en masse to volunteers spread throughout the islands is vital to emergency response. On May 1-3, the Hawai‘i Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) hosted a training for its new Emergency System for Advanced Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP).

All Hawai‘i and Pacific Island jurisdictions of the MRC will be switching to the new system

message, and automated phone call. This improved, multi-varied alert capability will allow surge capacity personnel to get vital messages rapidly and plan accordingly.

MRC representatives from the Pacific Island



Hawai‘i State MRC Coordinator Marjorie Tayao introduces MRC volunteers to the new system.

jurisdictions (American Samoa, Guam, Palau, Marshall Islands, and Northern Mariana Islands) met with Hawai‘i MRC unit leaders to take part in two days of hands-on training.

Another day was dedicated to sharing MRC unit experiences and best practices to help strengthen and grow MRC relationships with our Pacific Island neighbors.

Terry Clark, MRC coordinator for Island County, Washington, and Vice Chair of the National Medical Reserve Corps Association, led further discussions on issues such as volunteer retention, recruitment, and training.



Pacific Island MRC leaders discuss issues of recruitment, training, etc. in their jurisdictions.

in order to better manage MRC volunteers and other surge capacity personnel.

According to the vendor, Intermedix, if a future disaster or large public health event would require the assistance of surge capacity personnel, the new ESAR-VHP system would be able to alert MRC members by email, text



Helping Lions: Big Island MRC volunteers Bobbye St. Ambrogio and Roberta Horita (on left) get just-in-time training from the Akaka Falls Lion's Club, prior to providing free vision and hearing screenings for the students of Mountain View Elementary School.

Wireless Emergency Alerts: designed to help everyone in a crisis

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) are special text messages, sent by local government authorities to notify the public of a potential health emergency. The messages are broadcast from all area cell towers, effectively reaching every cell phone, tablet and wireless device in the immediate vicinity.

WEAs are designed to warn residents and visitors in an area of an impending, extreme weather condition, such as a hurricane or tsunami. WEAs may also be issued during a bioterrorism attack or other man-made disaster, AMBER child abduction alerts, and for national emergency alerts issued by the U.S. President.



How do you know if your cell phone has received a WEA? The message will include a special tone and vibration, the type and time of alert, any action that individuals should take, and name of the government agency issuing the alert. The text messages are up to 90 characters long. No need to download an app: WEA messages are automatically received, regardless of your mobile carrier service provider or subscription type.

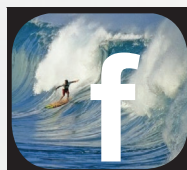
There's an APP for that!



- The **Project Lifeline** app from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services helps you share information about your wellbeing with your social networks and get help from people you can depend on.
Visit: www.phe.gov/lifeline/Pages/default.aspx
- The official **First Aid** app from the American Red Cross brings you expert advice for handling the most common first aid emergencies. Includes videos, interactive quizzes and step-by-step advice.
Visit: www.redcross.org/mobile-apps/first-aid-app
- The **Provider Resilience** app from the National Center for Telehealth & Technology can help health care providers guard against burnout and compassion fatigue. Take a self-assessment and monitor your risks over time. Includes inspiring videos.
Visit: www.t2health.org/apps/provider-resilience

How often do tornados hit Hawai'i?

Find out at the DOH Disease Outbreak Division's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/HI.DOC

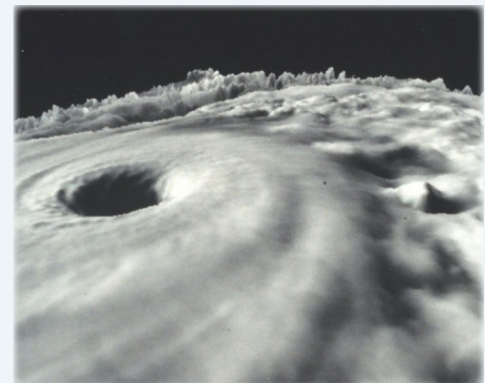


Is it a "hurricane" or a "typhoon"?

Hurricane season in Hawai'i typically runs from June 1 through October 31

"Hurricane" and "typhoon" actually describe the same thing: a large tropical cyclone, surrounded by multiple thunderstorms and extremely high-speed winds. They occur over warm waters of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Moving rapidly over open water, these weather systems can threaten huge stretches of shore and inland areas. To give coastal communities as much early warning as possible, scientists at the



Hurricane Diana, 1984. Photo courtesy of the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration.

National Hurricane Center at Florida International University track the formation and progress of all cyclones, which they refer to as "hurricanes."

If a Pacific cyclone travels away from the U.S. and crosses the International Date Line, where it threatens Asian shores, the Japanese Meteorological Agency takes over responsibility for tracking its movement. The Japanese refer to cyclones as "typhoons" – hence the two names.

Are there any differences? Typhoons can be stronger and more frequent than hurricanes, due to the Pacific Ocean's warmer water compared to the colder Atlantic. But both rotate in the same direction: clockwise in the southern hemisphere and counterclockwise in the northern hemisphere (which includes Hawai'i).