



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

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NEW YEAR'S AIR QUALITY IMPROVES FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

HONOLULU - The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) Clean Air Branch measured significantly lower levels of smoke from fireworks during the 2012 New Year period, with particulate levels on O'ahu showing improvement over past years. The decrease coincided with reduced fireworks activity resulting from the ban on certain fireworks on O'ahu.

The DOH measures particulate levels at four air monitoring stations on O'ahu (Honolulu, Pearl City, Sand Island, and Kapolei), one on Kaua'i (Niumalu), and one on Maui (Kihei). Fireworks smoke consist primarily of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), which can penetrate into the lungs and aggravate existing respiratory conditions such as asthma, emphysema and chronic bronchitis. The PM_{2.5} national standard is 35 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) averaged over 24 hours.

During the 2011 New Year period, the highest recorded particulate levels were 36 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in Pearl City and 32 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in Kapolei. During the 2012 New Year period, the particulate levels were measured at 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ or lower in those areas. Another change from 2011 to 2012 was that Honolulu and Sand Island now produced the highest levels on O'ahu, but even their levels remained well below previous years not exceeding 15 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

This was the first year monitoring was conducted on Kaua'i, where the 24-hour highest values were 8 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ on December 31, 2011, and 16 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ on January 1, 2012.

The use of fireworks during the New Year's celebration will always affect the air quality, but the degree of impact for any location is greatly influenced by weather conditions such as wind and rain, the amount

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New Year's air quality improves from previous year

of fireworks burned in the area, and the configuration of the land. New Year's data is also available at the Clean Air Branch website at: <http://hawaii.gov/health/environmental/air/cab/index.html>

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