



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE JOINTLY BY:



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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Hawaii Department of Health and U.S. EPA Advise Public to Take Precautions at Keehi Lagoon and Waiopili Stream *Warning Signs Posted Today at Both Areas on Oahu and Kauai*

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) is providing public notification of the potential health risk associated with recreating in and on Keehi Lagoon, Oahu and Waiopili Stream, Kauai by posting warning signs in these areas today.

The signs posted at both areas notify the public to use caution before recreating on or in the water, due to high bacteria levels. Children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems or open wounds are the most likely populations to develop illnesses or infections after coming into contact with polluted water, usually while swimming. DOH is not closing the areas for recreational use, but advising people to take precautionary measures.

DOH and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are concerned about elevated counts of bacteria in Keehi Lagoon in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Darby, and at Waiopili Stream near Gillin's Beach. Bacteria levels found at both areas exceed water quality standards and may pose a potential health risk to recreational users of these waters.

A specific type of bacteria (*Enterococcus sp.*) is used as the indicator of the potential presence of pathogens which are harmful to humans. The posting of warning signs is based on the test results for this indicator bacteria.

DOH and EPA will continue to work together to improve the monitoring of Hawaii's recreational waters, including specific standard protocols for public notification and posting of recreational waters with warning signs when bacteria levels exceed standards established to protect public health.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/beaches/learn-human-health-beach>

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