



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Hawai'i Beach Safety Week highlights lifeguard and snorkel safety events

HONOLULU – In recognition of drowning prevention efforts across the state, Governor David Ige has proclaimed July 29 – Aug. 4 as Hawai'i Beach Safety Week. Highlights of the week include Hawai'i island lifeguard rescue demonstrations at Hapuna, a press conference near the Rock Bridge at Hanauma Bay on O'ahu, and snorkel safety briefings with Maui lifeguards. The week culminates with the annual Ocean Safety Conference and Junior Lifeguard Championships, this year to be held on Kaua'i.

According to the Hawai'i Department of Health, ocean drowning is the leading cause of fatal injuries for Hawai'i visitors and the fifth leading cause for residents in the state. From 2013-2017, there were 383 deaths from ocean drowning in Hawai'i. On average, one visitor dies by drowning each week in the state. Visitors drown while snorkeling more often than during all other activities combined. Ocean related activities are the second most common cause of spinal cord injuries in Hawai'i, with the majority of these injuries (80 percent) occurring to visitors.

"We would like to remind the public that ocean conditions can change in an instant," said Cary Kayama, ocean safety operations manager on Maui and active Drowning Advisory Committee member. "It is important to pay close attention to your surroundings and consult a lifeguard about ocean conditions: If in doubt, don't go out."

The Hawai'i Drowning and Aquatic Injury Prevention Advisory Committee is coordinated by the Hawai'i Department of Health and is a collation of organizations working to prevent water

related tragedies in the state. The Advisory brings together organizations from all four counties, as well as state and non-profit groups.

Hawai'i Beach Safety Week activities include:

- Tuesday, July 31 (10 a.m.-2 p.m.): Snorkel safety briefings at Kaanapali Beach Hotel on Maui. Contact Cary Kayama at (808) 757-4314.
- Tuesday July 31 (10 a.m.-1:30 p.m.): Lifeguard rescue demonstrations at Hapuna Beach Park on Hawai'i Island. Contact Gerald Kosaki at (808) 443-4150.
- Wednesday Aug. 1 (11 a.m.): Shoreline safety press conference at Rock Bridge near Hanauma Bay on O'ahu. Contact Shayne Enright at (808) 777-9608.
- Thursday Aug. 2 (10 a.m.): Child water safety demonstration at Kalapaki Beach on Kaua'i. Contact Kalani Vierra at (808) 241-4984.
- Thursday, Aug. 2- Friday, Aug. 3: State Ocean Safety Conference at the Kaua'i Marriott Resort. Contact Kalani Vierra at (808) 241-4984.
- Saturday Aug. 4: State Junior Lifeguard Championships at Kalapaki Beach on Kaua'i. Contact Kalani Vierra at (808) 241-4984.

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