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**DOH Advises Caution for Residents Returning to West Maui Area**

LAHAINA, MAUI – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) urges caution for residents and business owners who are being allowed to return to their properties in the Lāhainā area. DOH recommends the following tips for those returning to the area.

- **Keep children away – children should not help with clean-up efforts and should not play in areas with ash or debris.**
- **Protect yourself** – People should wear protective face masks, goggles, gloves, longsleeves, pants, socks and closed-toed shoes (to avoid skin contact with ash).
- **Protect others** – We recommend changing clothes and showering before being in contact with sensitive groups like children, pregnant people, people with asthma or COPD, and kūpuna.
- **Avoid heat stress** – Be careful of over-exhaustion. Stay hydrated, take breaks, and consider bringing shade.
- **Masks** – Cloth masks only partially protect you from ash. Instead, DOH recommends wearing a tight-fitting respirator mask – look for the words NIOSH or N95 printed on the mask. N95 masks are best but paint, dust, and surgical masks can also be used during clean-up.
- **Ash** – Ash may cause irritation of the skin, nose, and throat, and may cause coughing. Ash and dust (particularly from burned buildings) may contain toxic and cancer-causing chemicals including asbestos, arsenic, and lead.
- **Ash pits** – Ash pits are holes full of hot ashes, created by burned trees and stumps. Falling into ash pits or landing in them with your hands or feet can cause serious burns.
- **Ash clean up** – Avoid washing ash into storm drains. Do not use vacuums or leaf blowers that will push more ash into the air.

- **Debris** - Broken glass, exposed electrical wires (whether or not they are “live”), nails, wood, metal, plastics, and other solid objects commonly found in areas of fire damage can cause puncture wounds, cuts, electrical injuries, and burns from smoldering materials. Please use caution.
- **Propane tanks** – Maintain a safe distance from any propane tank that may have been impacted by heat or fire.
- **Remaining structures** – Unstable buildings and structures may contain hazardous materials and could collapse and cause injury. Please check with authorities before entering any remaining structures.
- **Stored materials** – Containers could have moved into unstable positions and be at risk for falling and causing injuries. Please approach with caution.
- **Salvaged items** – Anything found that can be salvaged should be washed carefully with clean water and soap.

In a crisis like this, it’s also important to take care of your mental health. When people experience a disaster, they may be in shock and experience a wide range of emotions. The DOH [is offering crisis mental health services](#) and expanding hours to those experiencing emotional or psychological distress as a result of the Maui wildfires.

- To receive emergency services on Maui, contact DOH at (808) 984-2150 or via email at [mauiwellness@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:mauiwellness@doh.hawaii.gov) or in person at 121 Mahalani Street in Wailuku. Clinic hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- DOH will have expanded clinic hours on August 12 and 13 to accommodate immediate needs from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- The Hawai’i CARES crisis line is available 24/7 by calling 808-832-3100 or 1-800-753-6879, or calling, texting, or chatting 988.

DOH will continue to coordinate with federal, state and county officials to ensure the safety of residents and visitors as they return to the affected area.

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