



Media Contact: Jonell S.T. Kaohelaulii
Information & Education Specialist
Phone: 808- 245-5461
Mobile: 808-755-5432
Email: jkaohelaulii@kauaiwater.org

Water has no substitute...Conserve it!

News Release

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DOW encourages all to practice prevention for COVID-19

LIHUE – As statewide efforts for prevention and protection from COVID-19 evolves, the Department of Water’s (DOW) commitment to provide safe, affordable and sufficient water service to our communities remains unchanged. Customers can be assured that water is safe to drink and that there are no water service advisories issued at this time. Water is tested on a continuous schedule and continues to meet state and federal drinking water requirements. DOW is proactive in providing awareness and preventative health measures at their Lihue offices through increased sanitization efforts in work environments and customer service areas. Customers are also encouraged to consider utilizing DOW’s online Customer Account Portal (CAP) to manage, monitor and make payments on their water service accounts, in lieu of frequent visits into the DOW’s Lihue office. Customer service inquiries are also available by phone and email.

“Water is an essential part of our health and we are dedicated towards meeting customer needs while doing our part to keep you, our employees and our communities safe,” said Kurt Akamine, Chairman of the Kaua’i Board of Water Supply. “The Department’s online services and resources are designed for customer convenience. We encourage all customers to join us in this proactive effort by using online services whenever possible.”

The CAP allows customers who prefer to minimize contact in public settings to take care of their water account needs online. Alternative bill payment methods also include; mail-in payments, scheduling automatic bill payments and utilizing the payment drop box located just outside of the DOW office in Lihue. DOW will continue to service customers who wish to visit the office during normal business hours, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday, except on observed holidays.

DOW’s personnel are closely monitoring the guidance of the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Health (DOH) regarding the spread of the virus and will continue to be proactive in our response. To keep our communities informed, a list of frequently asked questions relating to water service is provided below:

Is my drinking water safe?

Yes, your water is safe to drink. Water is tested on a continuous schedule regulated by the Department of Health’s Safe Drinking Water Branch and continues to meet state and federal drinking water requirements. The Department of Water maintains compliance with all state and federal drinking water standards in order to ensure your drinking water is safe.

Should I be concerned about COVID-19 in my drinking water?

According to the US Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person in the following ways:

- *Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).*
- *Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.*
- *It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. However, according to the CDC, "this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads."*

How would COVID-19 affect our water service?

The Department of Water operates over 400 miles of water line to serve our customers island wide. Our employees are essential to the operation of these water systems to ensure services are maintained in all types of emergency situations. During a potential COVID-19 outbreak, the availability of essential personnel could impact the Departmental functions such as; timely repairs and maintenance of the water system, delayed response to reported service issues, may limit administrative and fiscal services and if necessary could result in temporary water service outages.

How should I prepare for a water service emergency?

During a planned or scheduled water service outage, being prepared with the recommended amount of water storage in your emergency preparedness kit can help provide the water you need and minimize the inconvenience during a temporary service disruption. The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency's recommended water storage amounts include 1 gallon of water per person, per day for up to 14 days to use for essential needs.

DOW reminds the community to practice preventative awareness and actions being offered by health officials; which includes simple water-related reminders such as hand washing and increased sanitization efforts, in addition to drinking the recommended amount of water to support a healthy immune system. At DOW's recent community outreach education participation event at Kekaha Elementary School, personnel featured step-by-step demonstrations on effective hand washing techniques and shared the importance of water in our communities.

For a full list of prevention and protection measures and additional information relating to COVID-19 visit www.kauai.gov/COVID-19

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Photo by Department of Water

Photo captions: (Above) DOW personnel demonstrate proper hand washing techniques with families at Kekaha Elementary School's Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts and Math event in March.

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