



THE COUNTY OF KAUA'I

DEREK S. K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR

MICHAEL A. DAHILIG, MANAGING DIRECTOR

News Release

For Immediate Release: July 22, 2019

KAUA'I FIRE DEPARTMENT
KILIPAKI VAUGHAN, DEPUTY CHIEF
Tel (808) 241-4980
Fax (808) 241-6508

Mayor proclaims Beach Safety Week on Kaua'i

LĪHU'E – A special ceremony was held Monday at the Līhu'e Civic Center's Mo'ikeha Courtyard as Mayor Derek S. K. Kawakami proclaimed July 21 to 27, 2019, as Hawai'i Beach Safety Week on Kaua'i.

"The unpredictable ocean environment poses many dangers which should never be taken lightly," said Mayor Kawakami at Monday's ceremony. "Through public awareness and vigilance of our professional lifeguards and partners throughout our community, I believe we can together effectively decrease drowning statistics islandwide. I'm proud to support these important efforts and I urge all beachgoers to do the same, for the safety of themselves and their keiki."

In an effort to bring awareness on drowning prevention, each county will highlight various ocean safety messages throughout Hawai'i Beach Safety Week. This year, Kaua'i's messaging is focused on the dangers of swimming at unguarded beaches.

"About 95 percent of all drownings occur at unguarded beaches," said Ocean Safety Bureau Chief Kalani Vierra. "While we strongly urge all residents and visitors to swim only at lifeguarded beaches, we recommend the following ocean safety tips when visiting any shoreline – whether a lifeguard is present or not."

The Ocean Safety Bureau recommends the following tips for all beachgoers:

1. Use the buddy system.



2. Check for the latest ocean conditions at www.hawaiibeachsafety.com.
3. Before entering the water, observe the ocean conditions for at least 20 minutes.
Take special note of any dangerous shore break or rip currents.
4. Observe for any warnings or signs posted in the general area.
5. Always have an emergency action plan.

“Remember to know your limits, know the conditions, and when in doubt, don’t go out,”
said Vierra.

Hawai'i Beach Safety Week coincides with the State of Hawai'i Ocean Safety and Drowning Prevention Conference which will be held on July 26 at the Hawai'i Convention Center in Honolulu. Following the conference on July 27, junior lifeguards from all islands will compete in the State Junior Lifeguard Championships at Makaha Beach on O'ahu.

Kaua'i Ocean Safety officials promote beach safety efforts year-round through daily surf conditions and updates on the Hawai'i Beach Safety Website, ongoing safety videos at the Līhu'e Airport baggage claim, programs for keiki and junior lifeguards, and updated beach safety guides provided at hotels islandwide. Beach safety guides are also available to the public at KFD Headquarters located at the Līhu'e Civic Center Pi'ikoi Building, 4444 Rice Street, Suite 315, Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Additionally, the Ocean Safety Bureau recently added a new roving patrol unit at 'Anini Beach on the North Shore. Starting August 1, officials will extend the hours for roving patrol coverage at unguarded beaches on our North, East, and South shores. Hours at all lifeguard towers will remain unchanged.



Above photo courtesy of County of Kaua'i. Mayor Derek S. K. Kawakami thanked all of our first responders including police, fire, ocean safety, paramedics, police dispatch, and our community, for their commitment to ensure the safety of residents and visitors at our beaches.



Above photo courtesy of Terry Lilley. Ocean Safety officials are bringing awareness to the dangers of unguarded beaches. Shown in this photo are youth playing in dangerous shore break at Lumaha'i Beach, an unguarded beach, on the North Shore in 2017.



Above photo courtesy of County of Kaua'i. Air 1 is shown conducting a search in December 2018, when a woman was swept away by a wave at Queen's Bath, an unguarded area on the North Shore, during a High Surf Warning.

###