


<b>7030.02</b>	<b>HFD Shark Attack and Sighting Policy</b>	
<p><i>This procedure is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The procedure should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this procedure, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.</i></p>		
<p><b>Referenced documents:</b> Policy 2016-041;</p>		
<p><b>Major policy affecting employee relations:</b> No</p>	<p><b>Union(s) to consult:</b> N/A</p>	
<p><b>Responsible for Update:</b> 1<sup>st</sup> Safety Specialist; 2<sup>nd</sup> Special Ops; 3<sup>rd</sup> WSO V</p>		

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of these policy is to establish accepted actions governing the response of Hawai'i Fire Department (HFD) personnel to a shark attack or sighting incident.

**II. APPLICABILITY**

This policy shall apply to all HFD personnel who may respond to a shark attack or sighting incident as part of their normal duties. Shark sightings are becoming increasingly more common near the shoreline off the Big Island. During the course of the normal work shift, HFD personnel may be required to respond to assist a shark attack victim or to identify and confirm the presence of a shark.

**III. PROCEDURES**

In the event of any shark sighting or possible sighting by a member of the public, the Water Safety Officer, HFD personnel, or other Public Safety Official shall interview all of the witnesses with claims of the shark sighting, gather and document the following information:

- Size
- Shape
- Color
- Approximate distance from shore
- Location last seen
- Direction heading and behavior (feeding etc.)
- Any actions taken by the Water Safety Officer, HFD personnel, or other Public Safety Officer

**A. Confirmed Shark Sighting**

The procedure for a "Confirmed Shark Sighting" at a beach that has HFD Ocean Safety Lifeguards on duty is as follows:

For the purpose of this policy a "confirmed shark sighting" will be defined as presence of a shark by either of the following:

- Water Safety Officer
- Hawai'i Fire Department personnel
- Other Public Safety Official (DLNR, HPD etc.)
- Any credible witness after an interview by a Water Safety Officer or other Public Safety personnel

Upon a confirmed shark sighting, the Water Safety Officer on duty shall evacuate all patrons from the water, post "shark sighting" signs on the beach, and prevent any further access by the public.

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1. The Water Safety Officer shall notify the Water Safety Officer IV Captain or designee who will notify the Special Operations Battalion Chief of the confirmed sighting and any actions taken by the Water Safety Officer. If the WSO IV Captain or Battalion Chief cannot be contacted, the Water Safety Officer shall contact the Fire Communications Control Center (dispatch) directly.
2. Fire Dispatch shall contact the respective Operations Battalion Chief on duty who will arrange to do a helicopter surveillance up to one mile along the coastline in both directions from the last sighting and up to 200 yards offshore or to the end of any extended reefs. This surveillance to be done at least 2 hours after the initial sighting. The helicopter crew shall report all findings to dispatch for all information gathered as stated above. Dispatch shall then notify the Special Operations Battalion Chief or the Water Safety Officer IV Captain of all findings.
3. Dispatch shall notify the appropriate authorities identified below to advise them of the situation and of the actions taken.

**Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Aquatics Division:**

John Kahiapo - 938-8265 or 934-7210 and the DLNR office - 961-9530

DLNR- Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE)  
Office:

- East Hawai'i Office: 933-3460,
- Waimea Office: 887-6198,
- Honokohau Office: 327-4961

If no contact is made, call the respective district supervisor:

- East Hawai'i: James Weller - 960-8978
- West Hawai'i: Dale Vilorio- 987-9019
- North Hawai'i: Verl Nakama- 217-1056

If still no contact is made, call Lino Kamakau, DLNR Branch Chief- 987-4616

**Civil Defense:**

Ed Teixeira- 935-0031

After hours contact HPD dispatch at 935-3311. HPD will contact the appropriate CD personnel following their call list.

**Department of Parks and Recreation:**

Clayton Honma-961-8311, 937-9873, or 960-6634

James Komata - 961-8311, 936-8681, or 936-0200

**Hawai'i Police Department:**

Dispatch - 935-3311

A helicopter surveillance shall be repeated at 1300 hours if the time from the last sighting was longer than two hours. If at that time the helicopter surveillance reveals no shark sighting, the Water Safety Officer on duty may reopen the beach. If the helicopter surveillance reports a sighting of sharks in the area, the beaches will remain closed for the remainder of the day. If



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Upon receiving a report of a shark attack, the procedure for a "confirmed shark sighting" will be used with the exception of the following:

1. Activate 911 immediately and respond the appropriate engine company and ALS medic unit available.
2. Assess victim and treat all life threatening injuries.
3. Obtain all evidence including personal items involved and keep it secure for DLNR inspection.
4. Close the beach and park for the entire day and do a helicopter surveillance of the area. Conduct another helicopter surveillance the next day at 1100 hours. If there are no shark sightings at that time, the beach may be reopened at 1200 hours.

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