

Community Questions from the 8/14/18 Meeting in Pahoā With County of Hawai'i Responses

1 Q&A

- **Can we get a copy of the questions and the answers?**

Answer: Yes.

2 Incident Management

- **Which agency is responsible for the official response for this event?**

Answer: County of Hawai'i Civil Defense is the responsible agency. The Incident Commander is Mayor Harry Kim.

3 Restricted Access Policies

- **What is rationale behind policies in Leilani?**
- **People have been displaced since May 3. There is an intense craving for a return to normalcy. Authorities don't seem to be taking it into consideration. Policy sounds like military martial law. Displaced households not getting any assurances that policies are being reconsidered, showing no respect. Need assurance that changes will be considered when warranted.**
- **Please move mandatory evacuation line. Let us open community center. We'd like to invite CD to Labor Day celebration at the center. We want to see action demonstrating reconsideration of policies.**

Answer: All emergency management policies are based on hazard assessments. The policies for the Leilani Estates subdivision were established in response to hazards resulting from volcanic activity in and near the neighborhood, including cracking, fissures, active eruptions, rapid lava flow, toxic gas, and tephra.

Policies are adjusted as hazardous conditions change. Since the "pause" in eruption activity in early August, Civil Defense has been using guidance from Hawaiian Volcano Observatory to actively plan for policy adjustments.

- **Is it true that adults can return to Leilani, but kids aren't allowed?**

Answer: No.

- **Will we need a placard to return vehicles and other equipment we removed? Can those who've been evacuated be escorted in to see their properties?**

Yes, and yes.

- **"For your safety" is an issue. All share that goal. Tactics to enable safety is the issue. Residents have not been involved. Residents are some of the best experts. Use all of the resources.**

- **We want to be more involved with the various agencies that are helping us.**
- **Petition delivered today to a variety of public officials asking for greater transparency and community involvement in decision-making and planning.**
- **I've lost access to the coast. Roadblocks manned by police are expensive and unnecessary. Highest priority should be coastal access.**

Answer: It is impractical to involve residents in the development of emergency management policies. As conditions permit, residents will be involved in adjusting policies. Communities will also be actively involved in the development of longer-term plans.

4 DLNR Enforcement

- **Why are people in their own neighborhoods being cited?**

Answer: Citations are issued when people violate restricted access policies.

5 County Housing Assessment Updates

- **Will preliminary damage assessments be updated?**

Answer: County updates the damage assessments as conditions change (e.g., when additional dwellings were destroyed by wildfires). Updates are sent to FEMA, SBA, and Red Cross.

6 Limbo Properties

- **The "limbo" situation is caused by CD establishing mandatory evacuation areas but FEMA and insurance not providing aid or paying on claims because homes are not destroyed. How can people escape the limbo of these conflicting definitions?**

Answer: The limbo properties are those still standing in the mandatory or voluntary evacuation areas behind checkpoints. These evacuation zones are limited to Leilani. FEMA has agreed to make properties behind the checkpoints eligible for rental assistance. Anyone previously denied assistance by FEMA should request a reinspection.

7 Catchment Water Quality

- **Is SO2 creating acid rain? Is it safe to take a shower using catchment water?**

Answer: Please consult water catchment expertise available through the Hawai'i Rainwater Catchment Program (<https://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/hawaiirain/>).

8 Cell Phone Coverage

- **Emergency cell tower for improved cell cover was promised: What's the status?**
- **No cell coverage. ATT looking into COW for Leilani and other communities, but what about our smaller communities?**

Answer: Since the eruption “pause,” the cell phone providers have refocused their attention on restoring power to existing cell towers in Leilani Estates and near PGV, which would improve coverage in the Waa Waa/ Government Beach Road areas. Hurricane Lane is impeding those efforts.

9 Helicopter Noise

- **Appreciate the govt overflights but oppose the high volume of helicopter tour operators.**
- **Evacuated May 3. Moved back home a month ago. Problem now is helicopter overflights and related noise. They need to show more respect.**

Answer: Flight restrictions have been in place in the vicinity of the disaster zone. Many of the flights are part of disaster management operations, so as operations are scaled down, noise levels should drop.

Complaints regarding commercial helicopter operations can be filed at <http://hawaiihelicopterassociation.org/> or by calling ne (808-639-5566).

10 Utilities

- **When will HELCO and telecom be allowed back in?**

Answer: Options are being considered to correspond with possible adjustments in restricted access policies, but no firm plans have yet been made.

11 Elections

- **What is legal residency when you’re displaced by a disaster?**

Answer: State law (Hawai’i Revised Statutes §11-13) defines residency as a function of both intention and physical presence. It states, in part:

- (1) The residence of a person is that place in which the person’s habitation is fixed, and to which, whenever the person is absent, the person has the intention to return;
- (2) A person does not gain residence in any precinct into which the person comes without the present intention of establishing the person’s permanent dwelling place within such precinct;
- (4) The mere intention to acquire a new residence without physical presence at such place, does not establish residency, neither does mere physical presence without the concurrent present intention to establish such place as the person’s residence.

In other words, if a person is displaced by a disaster but has the intention to return, residency does not change.

12 Cost Forecast and Legislative Request

- **Why didn’t Puna get any money?**

Answer: The vast majority of the draft budget of forecasted needs is targeted to Puna, including housing, infrastructure, and economic development. The principal exceptions are strategies to diversify

and improve tourist destinations and amenities in East Hawai'i. These are proposed to improve economic resilience and reduce dependence on Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

13 Long Term Planning

- **What's the long-term plan for the "no return zone"? How will the boundaries of that zone be defined?**
- **How will policies (including acquisition) being determined?**
- **Long term, are authorities considering restrictions of living in Lava Zone 1? Will those of us with homes live there be able to go back?**

Answer: No long-term plans have yet been established. The community will be involved in that planning process. Current efforts focus on securing the funding and expertise needed for the planning process.