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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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09/12 Notice: Amended Unsafe Water Advisory for Upper Kula

Effective September 12, 2023, the Department of Water Supply announces that the **Unsafe Water Advisory for Upper Kula has been amended to remove Zone 1 from the affected area**. Water serving homes and buildings in Zone 1 has been determined to be safe for unrestricted use. To determine if your address is in a specific zone, please refer to the interactive map at the following link: [Zone Map](#)

The interactive map has been broken down into five (5) zones for Upper Kula. Zone 1 is now in green. **If your address is in the green area, the Unsafe Water Advisory (UWA) no longer applies.**

Zones 2 through Zone 5 remain under the UWA. The advisory was issued on August 11, 2023, as a precautionary measure due to the unknown impacts of the wildfires in the area.

The decision to amend the advisory by removing Zone 1 from the affected area was based on multiple lines of evidence:

Approval of the Sampling Analysis Plan/Decision Flow Chart

Understanding the flow of water through the system and the fire impacted areas were instrumental in determining where to take water quality samples. The sampling plan and decision flow chart provide the framework and protocol for modifying UWAs for Zone 1 and for future zones; both were developed in coordination with the State of Hawaii Department of Health (DOH), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Sampling Analysis Plan and the Decision Flow Chart may be amended as evidence suggests, and both will be made available to the public.

Water Quality Sampling/Testing

The Water Quality Laboratory conducted multiple rounds of water sampling/testing at numerous sites throughout the Upper Kula water system. The test results from those samples reported as non-detectable. When tested for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), considerations were given regarding potential stagnation periods of VOCs to ensure if there were any in the system they would be detected. Although lead was detected at fire hydrants along the system after first draw samples, subsequent flush samples resulted in no lead levels above the federal action level. All sample locations and test results can be viewed in the GIS/Zone map at the following link: [Zone Map](#)

Immediate System Isolation

The homes/structures that were destroyed/damaged by the fire were isolated (closed off valves), and their water meters removed, to ensure that the potential for contamination was minimal.

Water Hydraulics

Considering the design of the system, elevation, the physics of water hydraulics and the evidence presented at this time, it was determined that the zone was isolated from impacted areas within the system and the Department is confident in its decision to amend the Unsafe Water Advisory for Zone 1 in Upper Kula. The decision also took into consideration if specific areas lost water pressure.

Regular Consultation

The Department of Water Supply met regularly with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), State of Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) and experts that have experienced wildfires and the recovery aspects involved pertaining to water systems and that they support the decision to amend the advisory.

What are the Next Steps? For those in Zone 1

The evidence makes clear that fire-related contaminants did not impact the Upper Kula Zone 1 however, there are concerns related to water that may have stagnated within homes and buildings while the advisory was in affect for the zone. To address these concerns, the Department of Water Supply recommends that customers flush their lines for at least 10 minutes. The purpose of flushing is to remove any standing water in plumbing and pipes due to non-use and replace with fresh water.

Flushing involves opening valves and faucets and allowing water to flow from each faucet for at least 10 minutes to remove any residual standing water from interior pipes and/or outlets.

Once flushing has been completed, do not be alarmed if water presents a cloudy, or milky appearance, this is natural. The cloudiness is due to tiny air bubbles in the water. Like any bubbles, the air rises to the top of the water and goes into the air, clearing up the water.

For those in Zone 2 through Zone 5: DO NOT DRINK-DO NOT BOIL YOUR WATER Failure to follow this advisory could result in illness.

Due to the Upper Kula wildfire, some structures in the Upper Kula water system were destroyed by the fire, and some areas in the water system lost pressure. These conditions may have caused harmful contaminants, including benzene and other volatile organic chemicals (VOCs), to enter the water system. As a precaution, the State of Hawaii Department of Health, and the County of Maui Department of Water Supply are advising residents of the affected area to NOT USE THE TAP WATER FOR DRINKING AND COOKING UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

In addition, residents are advised to:

- **Limit use of hot water**
- **Limit shower time/bathing (use lukewarm water and ventilate area)**
- **Use a dishwasher to wash dishes and use air dry setting**
- **Wash clothing in cold water**
- **Avoid using clothes dryers (dry laundry outdoors)**
- **Do not take baths**
- **Do not use hot tubs or swimming pools**

- **Do not use ice from automatic ice makers**
- **Use proper ventilation when using water indoors**

What should I do?

DO NOT DRINK YOUR TAP WATER – USE ONLY BOTTLED WATER. Bottled water should be used for all drinking (including baby formula and juice), brushing teeth, and making ice and food preparation **until further notice.**

DO NOT TRY AND TREAT THE WATER YOURSELF. Boiling, freezing, filtering, adding chlorine or other disinfectants, or letting water stand will not make the water safe.

Potable water is available at the following locations: Copp Road, Kula School near the cafeteria, Kula Community Center, Kula Lodge, Rice Park, Ching Store, and Ulupalakua Ranch Store.

Please bring a clean water container (5-gallon maximum capacity).

UPDATES TO THIS ADVISORY WILL BE PROVIDED BASED ON MONITORING RESULTS.

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