FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
BALLISTIC MISSILE PREPAREDNESS

Is there really a threat?

Q. Why now?
A. According to the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA), the State of Hawaii began making preparations for the North Korea missile and nuclear threat in 2016 when it was suggested that early preparations should be initiated. Hawaii has maintained plans to cope with missile testing since 2009. HI-EMA conducts a Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) every year. This process examines potential hazards and threats to the State of Hawaii including natural (hurricane, tsunami), technological (cyberterrorism) and man-made (acts of terrorism) hazards.

Q. I have heard that planning for a nuclear attack from North Korea is futile because many assume that most of the population will be killed or critically injured. Is this true?
A. No. According to the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA), current estimates of human casualties based on the size (yield) of North Korean nuclear weapon technology strongly suggests an explosion less than 6 miles in diameter. More than 90% of the population would survive the direct effects of such an explosion. Planning and preparedness are essential to protecting those survivors from delayed residual radiation (fallout) and other effects of the attack such as the loss of utilities and communication systems, structural fires, etc.

Missile Alerts and What to Do

Q. How will the public learn of a possible missile launch from North Korea?
A. Currently and according to the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA), approximately 5 minutes into the launch sequence, the U.S. Pacific Command will notify the Hawaii State Warning Point (SWP) that a missile is en route from North Korea. The SWP is staffed 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Upon receipt of the notification, the SWP will activate the ‘Attack-Warning’ signal on all outdoor sirens statewide (wailing sound) and transmit a warning advisory on radio, television and cellular telephones within 2 minutes.

Q. What should Hawaii residents and UH Mānoa faculty, staff and students do when they hear the ‘Attack-Warning’ siren and/or receive a missile alert by radio or cell phone notification?
A. All residents, including the UHM community, must immediately seek shelter in a building or other substantial structure. Once the sirens sound, you will have between 12 and 15 minutes before missile impact.

Q. Where is the safest place to go on campus if I receive a missile alert? How do I know if my building is safe?
A. No matter where you are, the safest action to take is to: GET INSIDE. STAY INSIDE. STAY TUNED. We recommend seeking refuge in any interior hallway, restroom, offices in central corridors (with no windows or exterior walls), or basement areas (if available.) If these options are not present in your building, and you have enough time to move to another building, then do so immediately—keeping in mind that many campus buildings are locked in the evening and on weekends. If you do not have time to move, close and lock all windows and doors, and try to stay away from entrances, exits, exterior walls and windows. Be sure to turn off all air conditioners and fans. If you are in your car and cannot get to a building, pull to the side of the road and lay down on the floor. If you are walking outside, seek refuge in the nearest building.

Q. Are there designated shelters on campus?
A. There are currently no designated shelters in the State of Hawaii at this time. The short warning time (12 to 15 minutes) would not allow for residents or visitors to locate such a shelter in advance of missile impact.

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Post-Emergency Information

Q. How long do we need to remain sheltered following a nuclear detonation?
A. According to the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA), this could be as little as a few hours or as long as 14 days.

Q. What is radiation (fallout) and how long will it persist?
A. Debris including soil, fragments of destroyed buildings and other material will be drawn into the cloud of a nuclear detonation and propelled into the sky. This debris will begin to settle back to earth within hours. This debris includes residual radiation that poses a significant health risk to humans and animals. Radiation from nuclear detonation in the form of fallout decays very rapidly. According to HI-EMA, this is usually a period of days to weeks.

Q. How will HI-EMA and the University communicate with the public post-impact?
A. According to HI-EMA, when a nuclear weapon detonates, one of the direct effects produced is called an Electromagnetic Pulse (or EMP). EMP has the potential of destroying electrical devices and telecommunications systems. It may also disrupt electrical power and other essential utilities. Broadcast stations many miles distant from the explosion (such as on another island) will survive EMP effects. HI-EMA’s current plans are to utilize AM and FM broadcast radio stations on unaffected islands to provide essential information to the public. This means you should include a battery-powered AM/FM radio in your 14-day survival kit (see below for more information). DPS has direct contact with HI-EMA and will communicate with those on-campus through Public Address (PA) systems if safe to do so and if other communication sources, such as UH Alert, are unavailable.

Emergency Preparedness

Q. What food and supplies are available on campus if this type of emergency occurs?
A. It is important that our students, faculty, and staff prepare themselves for any natural or manmade disaster by keeping a supply kit. This is similar guidance for hurricane preparedness. A supply kit must last at least 14 days (per person), and include food, water, medications, a battery-powered AM/FM radio, a handheld walkie-talkie, important documents in plastic bags, whistles, blankets, a tarp, personal hygiene items, a first aid kit, and cash in small bills.

Q. What else should I be doing to prepare for emergencies?
A. In addition to building your supply kit, DPS recommends having a plan for any type of natural or man-made emergency. It is important to have plans for yourself and your family, whether you are at work, on the road, or at home when a disaster occurs. You should have multiple plans for multiple locations, and practice those plans so you are ready when or if a disaster strikes. For more information on how you can better prepare yourself for an emergency, visit the Ready.Gov website at https://www.ready.gov/.

Q. What is the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa doing to prepare for emergencies?
A. DPS has already begun assisting our building coordinators with developing site-specific emergency response plans for buildings on campus. In addition, DPS has conducted building security assessments of a number of buildings on campus in an effort to provide guidance in developing these emergency response plans. More information is available in the Resources section on the following page. In coordination with University leadership, we plan to continue assisting buildings in developing and practicing these plans and conducting evacuation and shelter-in-place drills. Participation and cooperation from our campus community is a critical component in ensuring we are all ready in the event of an emergency. DPS also provides several training sessions which are available to faculty, staff, and students. These sessions include First Aid/CPR/AED certification training, Safety & Wellness workshops, Active Shooter Awareness & Response training, and Hurricane Preparedness training. More information is available on the following page.
On-Campus Resources

✓ Security Assessment & Emergency Plan Reviews
  To request a Security Assessment of your building; or assistance in creating an Emergency Response Plan, please visit: http://manoa.hawaii.edu/dps/reviews-services.html.

✓ Workshops and Training Sessions
  In an effort to create awareness for crime prevention and safety, DPS offers training for crime prevention, awareness, and emergency management preparedness. We encourage our students, faculty, and staff to take advantage of these opportunities, including:
  • First Aid/CPR/AED Certification
  • Active Shooter Awareness & Response
  • Hurricane Preparedness
  • Safety & Wellness
  To learn more or register for a session, visit: http://manoa.hawaii.edu/dps/training.html.

✓ Emergency Response Guidebook—Available for Download!
  Safety is a responsibility that we all share. This guidebook was designed to provide quick-reference emergency procedures. Please review this book periodically so that you will be prepared to rapidly and effectively manage any emergency. Note that every emergency poses a unique and ever-changing combination of factors and challenges, so no guide can ever be complete. Plan ahead. To download our guidebook, visit: http://manoa.hawaii.edu/dps/emergencyguidebook.html

✓ Sign up for UH Alert!
  The UH Alert emergency notification system alerts the university community in the event of a natural, health or civil emergency. The information you provide will be used only in the event of an emergency that impacts the health and safety of the UH community or closures of whole campuses. Visit https://www.hawaii.edu/alert/ to learn more and sign up.

✓ Other on-campus Resources
  • Campus Safety Escort Service: http://manoa.hawaii.edu/dps/escort.html

State and National Resources

✓ Hawaii Emergency Management Agency: The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) is the emergency management agency for the State of Hawaii. In its headquarters at Diamond Head Crater, Hawaii EMA serves as the coordinating agency between the four county emergency management agencies and as State Warning Point. Hawaii EMA responds to county requests for state assistance and supplements county emergency management efforts. Visit the HI-EMA website to learn more: http://dod.hawaii.gov/hiema/