

RC/PIO News & Notes 2-16-2024



FROM Eric Jens, GA DPH Risk Communicator
Contents may be FYUO – FOR YOUR USE ONLY

News and Notes

Much of Georgia spent the first half of the week cleaning up after storms caused downed trees, power outages, washed out roads and localized flooding. Disasters are often excessive floods, but also excessive fire. We have more on early reports from Hawaii to highlight this week.

Maui Wildfire 2023

The Emergency Management and Response – Information Sharing and Analysis Center reported on early findings in a review of last year's major fire in Maui. Of particular note, is page 23 of the 98-page preliminary after-action report, along with appendix B that highlight the threat of mis/dis/mal information:

On Aug. 8, 2023, Pacific hurricane winds intensified fire behavior in a series of wildfires that occurred on the island of Maui in Hawaii. The wind-driven wildfires destroyed more than 2,200 structures and caused about \$5.5 billion in damage. The most significantly impacted area was the historic district of Lahaina, where more than 100 lives were lost. The August 2023 Maui wildfires now rank as the fifth deadliest in U.S. history and the worst natural disaster in Hawaii's history. (Last week), the Maui Police Department (MPD) released a [preliminary after action report](#) focused on the police response to the Maui wildfires, primarily in Lahaina.

The preliminary report makes 32 recommendations to improve Maui's police response to future natural disaster response efforts. Some recommendations call for better equipment and updates to technology. For example, two recommendations were to provide officers with better earpieces to use when high winds make it hard to hear police radios and to equip all patrol cars with breaching kits to remove downed trees or utility poles from roadways.

Other recommendations focus on improving communications between emergency personnel and officers themselves, such as stationing a high-ranking officer — a lieutenant or higher — in the communications center to help relay information to police commanders. The report also suggested giving officers in the field more briefings during recovery efforts.



DPH Annual Risk Communicators meeting

The DPH Risk Communicators annual meeting will be held March 19 at the Dougherty County Health Department. There is still room on the agenda for additional topics and speakers so if you have suggestions, please pass them along. We are also looking into virtual options for this meeting. Updates on that will be sent directly to district risk communicators and Public Information Officers.

Media / CERC training

Registration remains open for the March 20, DPH Media / Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication class at the Dougherty County Health Department. Once registration closes, everyone registered will receive an agenda and short pre-test. If anyone needs an agenda sooner for travel purposes, please reach out. So far we have 46 registered to attend. A wait list will be established if we get to the point where we are over capacity, but at this point there are still open seats.

Register here: <https://ga.readyop.com/fs/5aoH/3d2c8fb9>



Next Week Preview

Next week there are multiple calls, meetings and webinars related to Communications and/or Emergency Preparedness.

About "News & Notes"

"News & Notes" is a weekly communication aimed at risk communicators and public information officers within Georgia's 18 public health districts. The goal of the communication is to increase preparedness through the exchange of information about significant events, training, and other planned activities. Some information herein may be considered FYUO or For Your Use Only. Please be judicious when forwarding. For questions, comments or to submit information for inclusion, contact Eric Jens at Eric.Jens@dph.ga.gov