



THE COUNTY OF KAUA'I

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News Release

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Female visitor dies after falling from cliff near Shipwreck Beach

PO'IPŪ – A 64-year-old visitor from Massachusetts, Karen Smith, died on Wednesday around 10 a.m. after slipping and falling from a cliff while hiking north of Keonelo Bay, also known as Shipwreck Beach, in Po'ipū. The name of the location where she was reported to have fallen is a fishing spot known as “High Cliff.”

According to a preliminary report, a bystander witnessed the incident and ran to get help at Shipwreck Beach.

Before rescue personnel arrived, a firefighter on vacation from Canada, who was at Shipwreck Beach, ran to the cliff with a set of fins and spotted the woman in the ocean who appeared to be unresponsive. He hiked down the cliff's edge to reach the water and swam out to the victim.

While he was doing so, another bystander retrieved a rescue tube from Shipwreck Beach and threw it towards them in the water to help them stay afloat.

Shortly thereafter, Kaua'i Fire Department personnel arrived on scene and proceeded down the face of the cliff to reach the victim in the ocean. Firefighters found the woman unresponsive in the water with serious injuries to her head and secured her with a rescue tube and rescue board as they began to swim her to shore.

Lifeguards from the South Roving Unit on Jet Ski arrived soon after and brought the woman safely to shore, where awaiting AMR medics and Kōloa firefighters began administering



CPR. Advanced resuscitation efforts continued while in transport to Wilcox Hospital, but the woman could not be revived and she was pronounced dead by a medical doctor.

An autopsy is scheduled to determine the exact cause of death.

Volunteers with Life's Bridges, a grief counseling service, arrived at the hospital and provided support to the woman's family. Representatives from the Visitor Aloha Society of Kaua'i are also providing assistance.

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