



DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
MICHAEL A. DAHLIG, MANAGING DIRECTOR

News Release

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COUNTY OF KAUA'I
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
TROY TANIGAWA, ACTING COUNTY ENGINEER
(808) 241-4993

Jan. 20 update on Menehune Road closure

WAIMEA – Officials are announcing the following updates for the Waimea community affected by the rockslide that occurred on Menehune Road on Jan. 4.

“Mahalo to our resilient Waimea community for your patience and understanding as we continue towards the safe reopening of Menehune Road and the long-term repairs of the historic Waimea Swinging Bridge,” said Mayor Derek S. K. Kawakami. “To everyone involved in these crucial efforts, I’ve seen first-hand the impact you have made. Please know that you are genuinely appreciated.”

Road Closure and Slope Stabilization

Menehune Road is expected to remain fully closed until the end of January. Reopening of the roadway will be based on when the slope above the roadway is stabilized and deemed safe for daily passing. Contractors are working seven days a week, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Today, Jan. 20, HiTech (the County’s contractor) is removing and hauling rock from Menehune Road and continuing scaling runs, removing rocks and boulders off the slope above Menehune Road.

Yesterday, Jan. 19, the contractor repaired the rockfall barrier mesh and added shackles to the top and bottom cables. This cable fence helps to protect the bridge from falling rock due to rock scaling work. Contractors also completed two runs of rockfall scaling, removing rocks and boulders off the slope

above Menehune Road. Yesterday's additional work included hauling out four loads of rock and removing smaller rocks from Menehune Ditch.

As the contractor scales higher up the slope, the impact on Menehune Road and the steel plates may increase due to rockfall scaling. Because of this, Menehune Road is lined with 25 yards of cushion material to prevent further damage to the road and steel plates from rockfall scaling.

While repairs are underway, large, loose boulders will continue to fall onto the roadway below. The public is reminded not to cross or approach the rockfall site at any time. Doing so could result in severe injury or death. The public is urged to heed all warnings and use the alternate route on Panini Road if you need to access the area.

Waimea Swinging Bridge

Work to repair the Waimea Swinging Bridge will start after the slope is stabilized. Given the historic nature of the bridge, officials expect this to be a long-term repair project. Understanding that the pedestrian bridge is an important point of access to Makaweli residents, officials will continue to work with residents on continued needs. Makaweli residents requiring assistance are urged to contact the Kaua'i Emergency Management Agency (KEMA) at 808-241-1800.

Refuse Service

Refuse collection is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 25. Residents are asked to leave their bagged trash in their refuse carts Monday for early-morning pickup on Tuesday. To ensure efficient pickup, please double bag your household trash and place it in your county-issued refuse carts. For those without refuse carts, please leave your bagged household waste in a covered trash receptacle at the side of the road immediately adjacent to your driveway. Trash should be double-bagged in the event manual loading into a truck becomes necessary. Trash receptacles must not exceed 50 pounds, and more than one covered receptacle may be used. Bulky items, green waste, and loose trash will not be collected at this time.

Food Distribution

Families are reporting that they have food and supplies for the time being. Supply deliveries will occur, however, on a case-by-case basis.

Officials thank the following organizations and community partners for their past and ongoing assistance with providing food and supplies to residents: The Kekaha Ag Association, E Ola Mau Na Leo O Kekaha, Hawai'i FoodBank – Kaua'i Branch (HFB-Kaua'i), Kumano I Ke Ala, KIUC, Chad Buck of Hawaii Foodservice Alliance, Waimea Hongwanji, West Kaua'i Christian Center, County officials, Kaua'i County Council Members, Hawai'i Community Foundation, Kamehameha Schools, Vandersloot Foundation, Nourish Kaua'i, Waimea High School, Senate President Ron Kouchi, U.S. Representative Kaiiali'i (Kai) Kahele, 'Āina Ho'okupu O Kīlauea, state DLNR-DOFAW, and local farmers and fishers for also contributing to the food distribution.

Wellness Checks/Needs Assessment

While the road remains fully closed, crews will continue wellness checks and needs assessments for residents along Menehune Road and on the Makaweli-side of the river, as well as provide daily updates online at www.kauai.gov/KEMA.

Panini Road Emergency Access Route

The State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) has opened an alternate emergency access route from Waimea Canyon Drive, known as Panini Road. The Panini Road access is limited to local residents and first responders via 4 x 4 usage only. Motorists are urged to drive slowly and cautiously, as heavy machinery is in the area, and crews with DLNR are continuing to improve the road.

More Info

If anyone in the affected area requires assistance during work hours, please call the Kaua'i Emergency Management Agency (KEMA) at 808-241-1800. After working hours, please call Kaua'i Police Dispatch at 808-241-1711. If you have an emergency and require immediate assistance, please call 911. If you have a kupuna needing assistance from the Agency on Elderly Affairs, please contact their office at

808-241-4470. If you have a school-aged child who needs assistance with distance learning options, please contact KEMA at 808-241-1800.

Those wishing to provide services or resources are asked to coordinate with KEMA.

A daily newsletter with up-to-date information will continue to be posted online. To view, visit www.kauai.gov/KEMA and click on the blue button at the top of the page labeled “Waimea Valley Rockslide.”





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