



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO MONITOR
NEW YEARS AIR QUALITY:
Public advised to prepare for a smoke-filled New Year's Eve**

HONOLULU - The Hawaii State Department of Health's Clean Air Branch will be monitoring Hawaii's air quality during New Year's and comparing it with national ambient air quality standards. The heavy use of fireworks during the annual holiday celebration significantly impacts the air quality across the state, especially on Oahu.

"Last year, due to the light winds and high humidity we reported high levels of smoke in Hawaii's atmosphere during the New Year's firework celebration," said Wilfred Nagamine, Clean Air Branch Chief. "We are hoping for more cooperative weather this year but we are still encouraging the public to be properly informed and prepared."

Firework smoke consists primarily of particulate matter that can aggravate conditions such as asthma, emphysema, and chronic bronchitis. If you suffer from one of these lung conditions you may want to take certain precautionary measures. The Department of Health offers some of the following guidelines:

- On New Year's Eve, stay indoors and close your windows and doors.
- Check that your air conditioner or air purifier is working properly; change filters if necessary.
- Do not smoke and avoid second-hand smoke.
- If you take medication, make sure you have an adequate supply and use them as directed by your physician.
- Contact your physician if you need more medication and get clear instructions on what to do if your lung condition suddenly worsens.
- Avoid people who have colds and other lung infections and wash your hands thoroughly.
- Drink plenty of fluids to loosen mucus. Warm beverages work best.
- Get plenty of rest and limit physical exertion.

While these suggestions are intended primarily for persons with respiratory or chronic lung disease, they are also useful for healthy persons during air pollution episodes such as particulates, firework smoke or volcanic haze.

For further information regarding air quality you may contact the Clean Air Branch at 586-4200. If you wish to obtain additional information on respiratory health you may contact the American Lung Association of Hawaii at 537-5966, or contact your personal physician.

The ambient air quality data collected during the New Year's celebration is expected to be available next week.

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