



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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**SULFUR DIOXIDE LEVELS ELEVATED ON HAWAII ISLAND
RESIDENTS ADVISED TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS**

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) is urging Hawaii County residents to take precautions to protect their health from elevated levels of sulfur dioxide (SO₂). The 24 hour average for SO₂ in Pahala exceeded the federal ambient air quality standard on Sunday, March 30, and Monday, March 31, 2008. The standard for SO₂ averaged over 24 hours is 0.14 parts per million (ppm), and the DOH Pahala air monitoring station recorded a 24-hour average of 0.181 ppm on March 30 and an average of 0.154 ppm on March 31. Results in March 2008 are:

DATE	PLACE	24-HOUR AVERAGE
		0.140 ppm = standard
March 19, 2008	Pahala	0.149 ppm
March 30, 2008	Pahala	0.181 ppm
March 31, 2008	Pahala	0.154 ppm

Communities near the Kilauea volcano are particularly affected by increased levels of SO₂ caused by the recent volcanic activity. The DOH continues to monitor the SO₂ levels in five Hawaii County communities: Kona, Hilo, Mountain View, Pahala, and Pahoa.

As required by federal rule, public notice will be issued when elevated levels of sulfur dioxide exceed the 24-hour average standard. All further notices and updates will be posted at <http://hawaii.gov/health/environmental/air/index.html> and will also be included in the County of Hawaii Civil Defense daily Kilauea Eruption Update.

Elevated levels of SO₂ can cause breathing problems in individuals especially those with pre-existing respiratory conditions, such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis. Anyone with respiratory conditions

(more)

who lives or works in an area impacted by SO₂ or vog should consider taking precautionary measures. The following are general recommendations from the American Lung Associations:

- Stay indoors and use an air conditioner, if available.
- Do not smoke and avoid second-hand smoke.
- Limit physical exertion.
- Drink plenty of fluids to loosen mucus. Warm beverages seem to work best.
- If you take medications, always have an adequate supply and keep them readily available in a convenient place.
- Contact your physician as soon as any respiratory problem develops.

While these recommendations are intended primarily for persons having respiratory or chronic lung disease, they are also useful for healthy persons during vog episodes. For additional information on respiratory health, contact your personal physician or the American Lung Association of Hawai'i at (808) 537-5966.

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