

The Hawaii Nuclear Alert: How did people respond?

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Context

→ In 2017 nuclear tensions were high

→ Chance of war between North Korea and the US
- 15 to 50%




→ Monthly public drills were being conducted

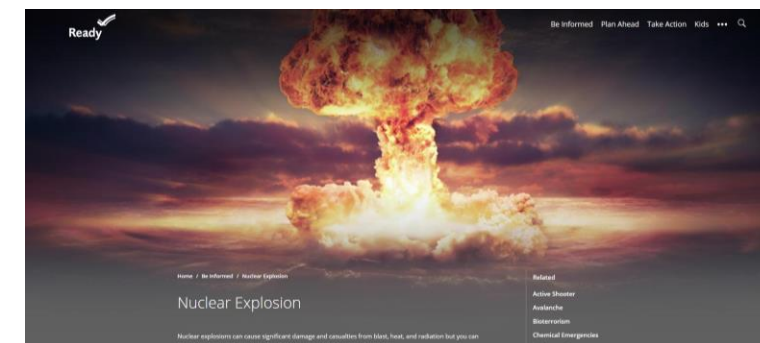
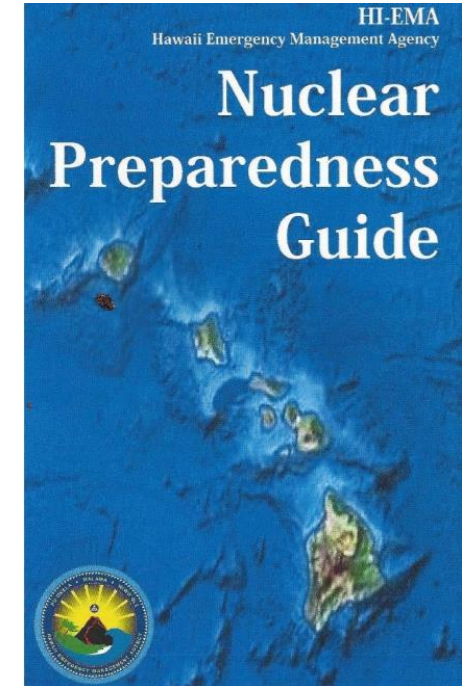


Hawaii Emergency Management Agency

GUIDANCE SUMMARY for COORDINATED PUBLIC MESSAGING
Nuclear Detonation

Revised: 27 JUN 2017.4

Triggers	Mnemonic	Immediate Action	Rationale
<p>Sirens sound <i>Attack-Warning</i> signal</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>If you are indoors</u>, stay indoors well away from windows. <u>If you are outdoors</u>, seek immediate shelter in a building preferably a concrete structure such as a commercial building or parking structure. <u>If you are driving</u>, pull safely to the side of the road and stop. If a shelter is very close, shelter in that structure. If not, remain in your vehicle and lay on the floor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surviving the immediate effects of a nuclear detonation (blast, shock, thermal radiation, initial nuclear radiation) requires sheltering in resistant structures You may have only minutes to take protective action – take immediate action without delay There are no designated blast or fallout shelters in Hawaii
<p>Emergency Alert System (EAS) advisory</p> <p>Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system advisory</p> <p>Brilliant white light (flash) is observed</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Remain sheltered until you are told it is safe to leave or two weeks (14 days) have passed, whichever comes first. You may be advised that it is safe to leave your shelter for short periods of time to locate food, water and medical care. Electrical, water and other utilities may be severely disrupted or unavailable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the detonation, sheltering from radioactive fallout for up to 14 days is critically important Public may need to briefly leave their shelters to locate essential supplies and equipment Emergency Management will assess residual radiation levels and advise when sheltering can be discontinued
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to local AM-FM radio stations for official information. Cell phone, television, radio and internet services will be severely disrupted or unavailable. Small portable walkie-talkies may give you communication with nearby shelters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local AM-FM broadcast radio is most survivable and may be useful in advising the public post-detonation Other communication technologies may be damaged by weapons effects such as EMP¹ FRS² and GMRS radios are widely available in the community and may be useful in keeping people in communication with one another



The message



EMERGENCY ALERTS



Emergency Alert

BALLISTIC MISSILE THREAT INBOUND TO HAWAII. SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER. THIS IS NOT A DRILL.

Cancellation



Governor David Ige ✓
January 13 at 10:30am · 🌐

NO Missile threat to Hawaii

204 Likes 152 Comments 41 Shares



Hawaii EMA ✓
@Hawaii_EMA

NO missile threat to Hawaii.

10:20 AM - 13 Jan 2018 from [Honolulu, HI](#)



Gene Park ✓
@GenePark

Follow

LOOK AT THIS STUPID LONG GAP BETWEEN "Hey nuclear missile incoming" vs "Sorry we screwed up." @Hawaii_EMA



10:50 AM - 13 Jan 2018

Methodology



→ Risk Frontiers utilized unstructured interviews from media articles

→ Media articles were sourced from global online media outlets

→ Interviews with 207 individuals were analysed

How did people react?

A large, light blue warning sign icon with a white exclamation mark inside a triangle, positioned behind the main title text.

Most respondents received the alert via the official text message (n=89)

A minority were informed by someone else for example a family member (n=17)

Most interpreted the alert in the context of existing nuclear tensions

How did people react?

People were in varying locations when the alert came through including:

- In a hotel (n=39)
- Awake at home (n=38)
- At home in bed (n=11)
- At work (n=10)
- In a car (n=10)
- At the beach (n=7)



How did people react?

A large, light blue warning sign icon with a white exclamation mark inside a triangle, positioned behind the main title text.

Some chose to validate the warning and did so via:

→ Social media (n=26)

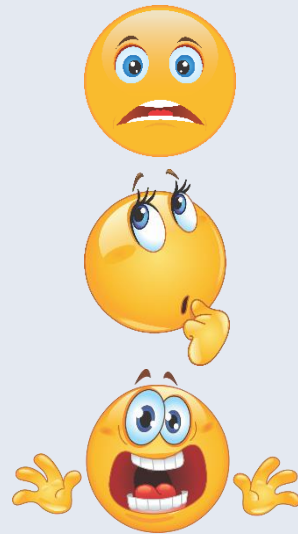
→ Making contact with others (n=16)

→ Watching TV (n=11)

→ Calling authorities (n=3)

How did people react?

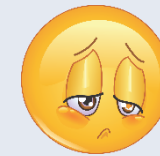
Most people described their emotions as:



fearful (n=51)

concerned (n=23)

panicked (n=21)



upset (n=13)



calm (n=13)

How did people react?

A large, light blue warning sign icon with a white exclamation mark inside a triangle, positioned on the left side of the slide.

Most frequent responses were:

- Attempted to seek shelter in a building were they were located (n=43)
- Called or text others to alert them (n=23)
- Called or text others to express their emotions (n=22)
- Packed emergency items (n=17)
- Gathered family members (n=16)
- Attempted to leave their building to seek shelter somewhere else (n=15)
- Left an open space to seek shelter (n=12)

How did people react?

A large, light blue warning sign icon with a white exclamation mark inside a triangle, positioned behind the main title.

Those that sheltered reported to shelter in their home (n=34), most commonly in the bathroom (n=18)

Others sheltered in their hotel (n=19)

Some didn't know where to shelter (n=18)



How did people react?

People most often saw others:

Attempting to seek shelter (n=50)

Crying (n=26)

Running (n=25)

Calling or messaging others (n=13)

How did people react?

A large, light blue warning sign icon consisting of a triangle with a thick border and a central exclamation mark, positioned behind the main title.

Those that did not respond thought:

- there was nothing that could be done (n=7)
- the warning was a false alarm as sirens did not sound (n=4)
- the missile would be shot down or would miss (n=2)
- warning was a joke or a hoax (n=2)

How did people react?

A large, light blue warning sign icon with a white exclamation mark inside a triangle, positioned behind the main title.

People most often discovered the alert was false through:

Social media (n=21)

Via text message from authorities (n=12)

People described their emotions after the alert as:

Relieved (n=23)

Concerned (n=7)

Upset (n=7)




Aftermath



Oliveira Report




Hara Report



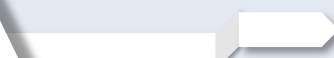
Federal Communications Commission




Summary



Context in which warnings are delivered is important



The message was effective in achieving action



Community education is a challenge