



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

A Disaster Resilient Washington State



False Missile Alert in Hawaii

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Before the False Alert

Time	Events
0805	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HI-EMA's midnight shift supervisor begins a no-notice ballistic missile defense drill at a shift change by placing a call, pretending to be U.S. Pacific Command, to the day shift warning officers.• The midnight shift supervisor plays a recording over the phone that properly includes the drill language "EXERCISE, EXERCISE, EXERCISE," but also erroneously contains the text of an EAS message for a live ballistic missile alert, including the language, "THIS IS NOT A DRILL." The recording does not follow the script contained in HI-EMA's standard operating procedure for this drill.• The day shift warning officers receive this recorded message on speakerphone.• While other warning officers understand that this is a drill, the warning officer at the alert origination terminal claimed to believe, in a written statement provided to HI-EMA, that this was a real emergency, not a drill.
0807	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This day shift warning officer responds, as trained for a real event, by transmitting a live incoming ballistic missile alert to the State of Hawaii.• In doing so, the day shift warning officer selects the template for a live alert from a drop-down menu, and clicks "yes" in response to a prompt that reads, "Are you sure that you want to send this Alert?"



After the False Alert

Time	Events
0808	• Day shift warning officer receives false WEA on mobile device
0809	• HI-EMA notifies Hawaii Governor of false alert
0810	• HI-EMA to U.S. Pacific Command and Honolulu PD: no missile launch
0812	• HI-EMA issues a cancellation, ceasing retransmission over EAS, WEA
0813	• HI-EMA begins outreach, but its phone lines become congested
0820	• HI-EMA posts on Facebook, Twitter – “NO missile threat to Hawaii”
0824	• Hawaii Governor retweets notice that there is no missile threat
0827	• HI-EMA determines that an EAS, WEA Civil Emergency Message (CEM) is the best vehicle for correction
0830	• FEMA confirms HI-EMA's view on CEM; Hawaii Governor posts correction on Facebook
0831	• HI-EMA supervisor logs into alert system, begins to create false alert correction
0845	• HI-EMA issues correction through EAS and WEA that there is no missile threat



Since the False Alert

- **FCC Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau has issued a preliminary report:**
 - **Combination of human error and inadequate safeguards**
 - **Lack of preparation for how to cancel false alert**
- **Vern Miyagi, Hawaii Emergency Management Agency Administrator resigned.**
- **One warning officer has been fired. A second warning officer has been suspended without pay.**



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Washington State EOC Alert & Warning Center

- Execution of attack warning procedures (exercise or real) subject to supervisory approval
- Review of attack warning procedures together with FEMA Region X:
 - Public alert origination at federal level
 - Safeguards commensurate with warning significance/consequences

