

## During the Hike

### Stay on the Trail

Most accidents happen when hikers leave the established trail and disregard warning signs. Staying on the trail greatly reduces your chances of having a serious fall or getting lost. Hawaiian forests are not like mainland forests—the growth is very dense, and it is easy to become disoriented. Thick overgrowth can mask dangerously steep drop-offs. Thin, sharp lava rock can crack beneath your weight above deep holes or lava tubes.

### Stay Together

Hikers separated from their partners are more apt to make a wrong turn or lose the established trail. Keep track of each other, and regroup periodically, especially near junctions or when the trail gets obscure. Monitor everyone's condition. Dehydration, sunstroke, hypothermia, and fatigue can hit even experienced hikers.

### Avoid Undue Risks

Climbing waterfalls and following narrow ridgelines or gulches off the trail can place you in danger. Rock climbing is extremely dangerous due to the crumbly and porous nature of the volcanic rock. There have been fatal accidents from crumbling rock...don't take the chance.

### Monitor the Weather

Keep an eye on the sky. When hiking into valleys or crossing streams, be mindful of rain conditions along the mountain top or ridges that can suddenly raise the water level in the stream. Use extreme caution if attempting to cross a swollen stream...rushing water is very powerful. It is better to find an alternative route, or wait until the water subsides.

### Watch the Time

Hawai'i does not have daylight savings time, and night falls quickly in the tropics. Getting a late start increases the possibility of getting caught in the dark. Know your turnaround time and stick to it to allow enough time to return. If you're caught by darkness, stay put unless you are very familiar with the trail and have a flashlight.

## In An Emergency

**Call 911:** Ask for Fire/Rescue. Tell them which trail you're on and what happened.

**Be Visible:** Wear or wave a brightly colored item in an open area during the day. At night, use a flashlight or camera flash.

**Be Noisy:** Use a whistle to attract attention.

**Stay Calm:** Objectively assess your situation before making any decision. Stay calm and positive.

**Stay Put:** You will be found more quickly and reduce the chances of getting into further trouble, especially after dark, by staying in one place. This is why it is important to notify someone of your hike location and destination.

**Stay Warm:** Wind and rain can drain your body of warmth, and be life-threatening. Get out of the wind and use your rain gear or extra clothes to stay warm.

This brochure is subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and offers all persons the opportunity to participate in programs or activities regardless of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability. Further, it is agreed that no individual will be turned away from or otherwise denied access to or benefit from any program or activity that is directly associated with a program of the recipient on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex (in educational activities), or disability.

### When might you need emergency assistance?

- When an injury or illness prevents walking.
- When extremely bad weather hits.
- When it's too dark to see.
- When you're extremely fatigued or dehydrated.
- When you're disoriented or lost.
- When you're stranded, scared, and unable to move.

## What is Na Ala Hele?

Na Ala Hele (NAH) is the State of Hawai'i Trail and Access Program. NAH was initially created in response to public concern about the increasing loss of access to trails and the threat to historic trails from development pressures. Currently, NAH is also increasingly engaged in multiple trail use and management issues such as regulating commercial use, conducting trail improvement for resource management, improving user safety, disseminating trail-related information, and determining the current ownership of historic government trails in efforts to protect these routes for potential use by future generations.

Na Ala Hele deeply appreciates any public interest and desire to assist in the stewardship of trails in Hawai'i. Trails require continuous attention to insure the quality of the trail experience, the safety of the trail users, and for the proper management of the natural and cultural resources. Na Ala Hele relies frequently on community volunteers for providing the essential person-power to conduct trail restoration or construction projects. For more information, contact the Na Ala Hele staff on your island:

O'ahu:	(808) 973-9782
Maui, Moloka'i, Lāna'i:	(808) 873-3508
Kaua'i:	(808) 274-3433
Big Island:	(808) 974-4217

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Na Ala Hele Website  
[www.hawaiitrails.org](http://www.hawaiitrails.org)

State of Hawai'i  
Department of Land & Natural Resources  
Division of Forestry & Wildlife  
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 325  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
(808) 587-0166  
[www.state.hi.us/dlnr/dofaw](http://www.state.hi.us/dlnr/dofaw)



# Hiking Safely

## IN HAWAII



[www.hawaiitrails.org](http://www.hawaiitrails.org)

## Why Should You Read This Brochure?

Because it may save your life or someone else's, prevent an injury, or maybe just save you from significant embarrassment! Public recreational demand for trail experiences in Hawai'i continues to increase. A trail and park survey conducted in 2000 indicated that approximately 78% of the users surveyed were out-of-state visitors. Rescue personnel are now more frequently responding to missing or injured hikers than ever before, indicating the need for trail users to be better informed and prepared. Rescuing careless or reckless hikers places others at risk and increases costs to Hawai'i taxpayers.

This brochure will provide you with a comprehensive list of trail safety tips, fundamental equipment, appropriate behavior in an emergency situation, and other important information.

Further information is available from the State of Hawai'i, Division of Forestry & Wildlife, Na Ala Hele (NAH) Program. NAH has an extensive informational website on features under its jurisdiction at: [www.hawaiitrails.org](http://www.hawaiitrails.org).

If you are a novice hiker, or a visitor to Hawai'i, you may want to consider a licensed commercial tour operator. An experienced guide can provide natural and cultural interpretive information, as well as increase your safety on the trails. For a current listing of NAH permitted operators, see the Na Ala Hele website.

Hiking clubs and conservation groups also provide organized hikes and volunteer outdoor service projects. Check the newspapers for a listing of weekly activities.

Trailheads are targets for theft! Any valuables should not be left inside your vehicles, even in the trunk.

## Hiking in Hawai'i

Isolated by over 2,000 miles from the nearest landmass, Hawaiian native flora and fauna evolved into highly specialized species found nowhere else in the world.

Hiking in the Hawaiian Islands offers residents and visitors many opportunities to experience a unique natural environment. Known throughout the world for a wide variety of ecosystems, trails in Hawai'i can take you to coastal dunes, shrublands, rainforests, and high alpine deserts. Certain historic trails provide a glimpse of the cultural heritage of Hawai'i as they traverse past historic and archeological sites.

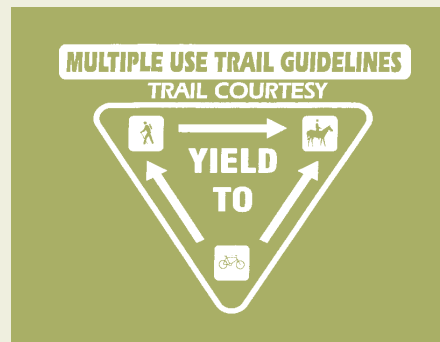
**Remember:** When you are hiking on trails in Hawai'i, you are a guest in the home of our forest creatures and Hawaiian ancestors. Please treat these areas with respect. Read and follow any official informational or directional signage that may be posted along the trail to ensure that you are not walking onto sacred sites or areas of ecological restoration.

### User Group Etiquette

For trails where multiple group use occurs (hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding), please honor the following protocol:

### Pet Owners

If you are on a trail in a Public Hunting Area, you might encounter hunting dogs along the trail, and your pet may be at risk. Make sure that your dog is leashed, and kept at a safe distance. Please be considerate of other trail users, and remove any droppings from the trail.



## Plan Your Hike

### Inform Others of Your Plans

Let someone know which trail (name and location) you plan to hike on, and when you expect to return. If something should go wrong, rescuers will have accurate information on where to start searching.

### Hike With a Partner

Don't hike alone. Frequently, people who get into trouble are alone. In case of an emergency, your partner's help can be invaluable.

### Get Information About the Trail

Learn about the trail so you will know the route, where to start, and degree of difficulty. This information can be found on the website, by contacting the NAH staff, or in a trail guidebook.

### Assess Your Capabilities

Compare your level of fitness, ability, and experience with the trail description. Be practical and realistic. There are a wide variety of trails in Hawai'i, so pick one that suits your level.

### Check Weather Conditions.

Sunny and clear mornings are sometimes followed by rain and wind later in the day. Flash floods are dangerous possibilities in the narrow gulches. Call the National

Weather Service for the latest forecast.

### Wear Proper Clothing

Dress in layers so you can protect your skin from the intense tropical sun. A hat, sunglasses and sunscreen are recommended. Hiking boots offer traction and ankle support to prevent slipping and injuries on muddy trails and slick or sharp rocks. Light raingear is good to carry because of the quickly changing weather conditions.

## Hiking Essentials

**Water is a must.** Carry at least 2 liters of water per person for a full-day hike; more if it's a long hike or on a hot day. In tropical weather, dehydration can become a serious problem.

If you have a cell phone, bring it along. Though reception is not available from all points on the islands, it is a good item to have in case of emergency.

Carry a daypack or waistpack. You will need to keep your hands free and unencumbered while hiking. Pack a brightly colored article (to attract rescuer's attention), a whistle (the sound travels farther and lasts longer than a voice), sunscreen, mosquito repellent, a small flashlight, food, and some basic first-aid (at least band-aids and antiseptic).

### Protect the Native Environment

Hawai'i has a unique natural environment with many rare native plants and animals. Unfortunately, these fragile native ecosystems are under constant threat from non-native weedy plants. One way these weeds are spread is by seeds mixed in with mud on hiking boots and gear. You can minimize this impact by scrubbing your boots after every hike, and start each hike with clean boots.

### Health Warning

*Leptospirosis* is a bacterial disease that is transmitted from animals to humans. The leptospira bacteria can survive for long periods in fresh water and mud. It can enter the human body through the eyes, nose, mouth, and broken skin. Do not drink untreated stream or lake water. If you have flu-like symptoms 2-20 days after hiking in wet or muddy areas, see your doctor immediately. Leptospirosis can be fatal if left untreated.

### Weather information:

- O'ahu 973-4380
- Maui, Moloka'i, Lāna'i 877-5111
- Kaua'i 245-6001
- Big Island 961-5582
- Website [www.nws.noaa.gov/pr/hnl](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/pr/hnl)