

Maui Wildfire Recovery

EPA Drinking Water Sampling

March 1, 2024

EPA is providing guidance and technical assistance to the County of Maui Department of Water Supply by conducting sampling.



Maui gives so much to the world. As guests, we are honored to give our support back.

The August 8th, 2023 wildfires caused widespread impacts to the drinking water system in Lahaina. These impacts included damage to infrastructure, loss of pressure, and potential contamination. Contamination may be released into the water from infrastructure breaking down or may occur when the smoke, hot gases, and chemicals from burning vegetation and structures are sucked into the water lines. This suction can occur when the water pressure drops due to broken water lines or water demand elsewhere in the system. The extent of impacts is unknown and requires sampling to determine the effect this damage may have on the drinking water system.

In partnership with the Maui Department of Water Supply (DWS) and Hawaii Department of Health (DOH), EPA is sampling the drinking water. These sampling efforts will inform the County of Maui of any contamination from the wildfire that may be in the drinking water pipes.

EPA's Sampling Strategy:

EPA has been sampling since the beginning of February and has two sampling strategies, one for the main distribution system and one for the lateral service lines at the meter box. Sampling the distribution system is done by collecting samples from fire hydrants, while sampling the lateral service lines involves attaching a sampling apparatus to the meter box. Both sampling efforts will inform the County of Maui of any contamination from the wildfire.

Currently, EPA is sampling from the distribution system, with crews sampling fire hydrants in areas affected by the wildfires. EPA is sampling for:

- Chlorine Residual
- Coliform bacteria
- Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)
- Semi-volatile Organic Compounds (SVOCs)



Figure 1. EPA crew member taking a distribution system sample at a fire hydrant.

Following hydrant sampling, EPA will be sampling lateral lines (pipes that carry water to and from a building to the main lines) at all properties with burned structures for VOCs and SVOCs. The results from this sampling are provided to DWS.

Impact to the Community:

Currently, the County has repressurized the majority of the drinking water system and is working to pressurize the remaining areas. EPA crews are sampling areas that have water pressure restored. This does not mean that the lines are safe or ready for use.

The County of Maui will make the determination on whether the water is potable and ready for use or that additional work is needed to get it to that point. Residents can track unsafe water advisory areas, where to access safe potable water, status updates and more at the County of Maui's website: Mauirecovers.org or by calling the county directly at (808) 270-7550.

Key Contacts		
U.S. EPA	County of Maui Department of Water Supply	Hawai'i State Department of Health:
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