

CHAPTER 8

Honolulu
Emergency
Services
Department

Chapter 8 Honolulu Emergency Services Department

The Honolulu Emergency Services Department (HESD) provides pre-hospital emergency medical care and advanced life support emergency ambulance services for the city and county. The department also provides a comprehensive year-round ocean safety program which includes lifeguard tower services and dispatched emergency response services utilizing all terrain vehicles, rescue craft, and rapid response vehicles that service the beaches and ocean waters for ocean rescue and emergency medical situations.

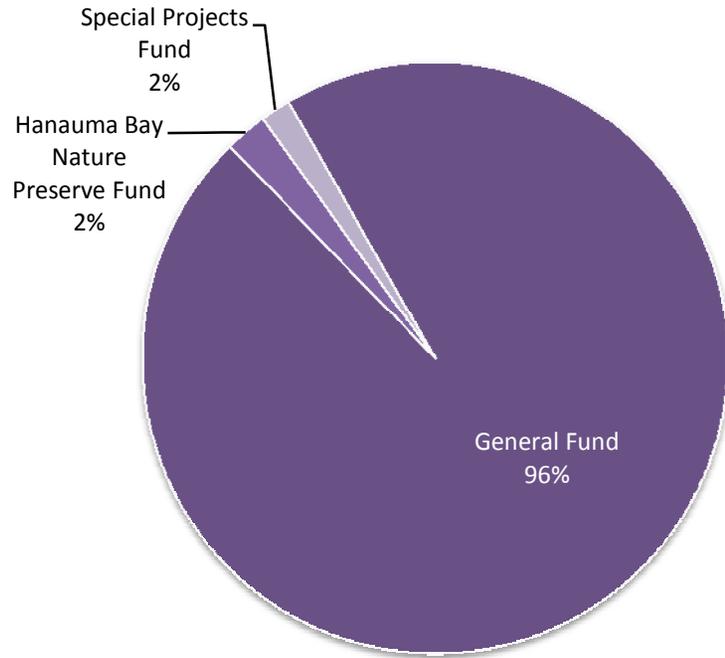
The department's goals are to:

- Provide quality emergency medical services on O`ahu and continue to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of these services.
- Provide adequate beach protective services at O`ahu beaches with properly trained and appropriately equipped lifeguard personnel.
- Coordinate the emergency medical services and ocean safety activities between the divisions within the department, and with other city, state, federal, and private organizations.

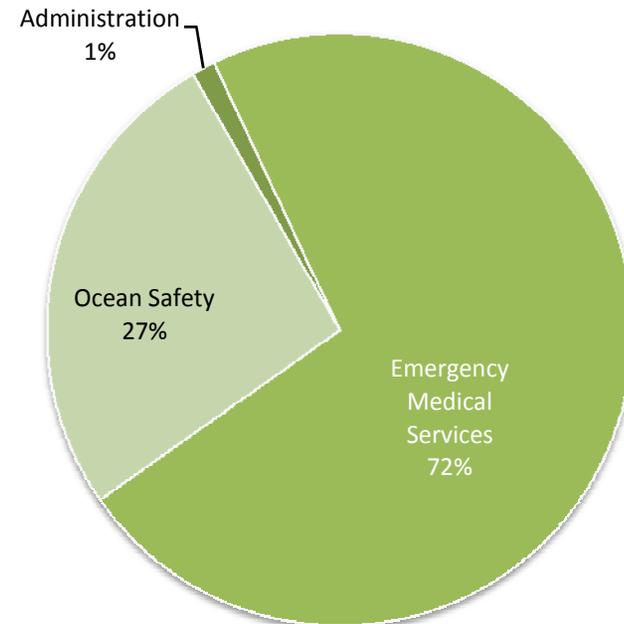
To develop programs and deliver exemplary services related to emergency medical services and lifeguard services on the island of O`ahu.

- Mission Statement

Funding Sources



Funding Uses



	Total Revenues (\$ million)	Total Operating Expenditures (\$ million)	Staffing			Overtime Expenditures ²	
			Total Authorized FTE	Total Vacant FTE	Cost Per FTE ¹	Total (\$ million)	Non-Holiday (\$ million)
FY 2009	\$30.3	\$32.7	445.7	70.5	\$73,352	\$6.4	\$5.8
FY 2010	\$33.0	\$32.8	445.7	55.5	\$73,668	\$5.5	\$5.0
FY 2011	\$33.4	\$32.5	445.7	61.5	\$72,812	\$5.4	\$4.9
FY 2012	\$33.3	\$33.3	456.2	59.5	\$73,070	\$5.8	\$5.2
FY 2013	\$32.0	\$34.8	450.8	52.0	\$77,255	\$5.7	\$5.1
Change from last year	-4%	4%	-1%	-13%	6%	-2%	-3%
Change over last 5 years	6%	7%	1%	-26%	5%	-11%	-13%

Source: Executive Operating Program and Budget (FY 2010-FY 2015), Department of Budget and Fiscal Services, and Honolulu Emergency Services Department. ¹Cost Per FTE = Total Operating Expenditures/Total Authorized FTE. ²Overtime pay is established by bargaining unit agreement, as applicable.

Spending and Staffing

The department consists of Administration, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division and Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services (OSLS) Division.

- Administration is responsible for overall operations which includes establishing policy, overseeing the management of budgetary issues, managing public and media relations, providing guidance and training, managing and handling labor relations issues, and long range services planning.
- EMS develops programs and delivers emergency medical care and services. The state Department of Health contracts with the City and County of Honolulu to provide pre-hospital emergency medical care and services on O`ahu.
- OSLS provides lifeguard services along the 198 miles of O`ahu's coastline. This includes ocean rescue, emergency medical treatment, mobile patrol and response, and risk reduction programs related to ocean safety.

Effective July 1, 2013, the Health Services Branch, which includes 10.61 FTE positions, will be transferred from the Department of Human Resources to HESD. The Health Services Branch conducts pre-employment, annual and position required medical evaluations for current and prospective employees, drug screening, and blood analysis for Honolulu Police Department suspects arrested for DUI. The Health Services Branch also coordinates programs that promote health, reduce risks and prevents injury.

Over the last five years, the department's operating expenditures increased 7% from \$32.7 million in FY 2009 to \$34.8 million in FY 2013. According to the department, the increase was due to restoring the 5% pay reduction from the previous year and slight increase in personnel.



Photo Courtesy of Honolulu Emergency Services Department

Total authorized staffing increased slightly while vacancies decreased 26% over the last five years. There were 70.5 vacant FTE positions in FY 2009 compared to 52 vacant FTE positions in FY 2013. The department attributes the decrease to more quality employees being hired and less employees leaving.

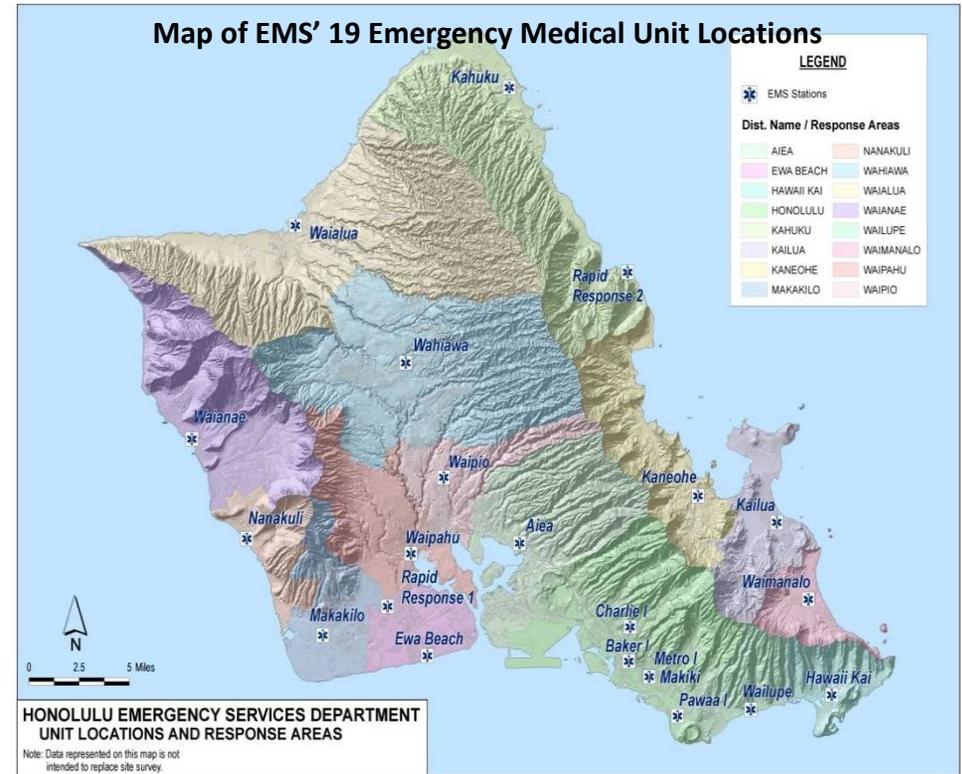
Overtime expenditures decreased 10% from \$6.4 million in FY 2009 to \$5.7 million in FY 2013. The department explained that the divisions have been evaluating and monitoring staffing needs and allocations. Critical areas are supplemented with short-term contracts.

The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division is divided into two operational districts:

- District I (West O`ahu) has 10 EMS ambulance units and one Rapid Response Unit.
- District II (East O`ahu) has 10 EMS ambulance units and one Rapid Response Unit.

All EMS units are certified Advanced Life Support (ALS) units. Each unit is staffed with two crewmembers and the Rapid Response Units are staffed with one. In addition to the field ambulance units, the EMS Division has five support elements: communications, specialty services, equipment, supplies, and vehicle maintenance. In FY 2013, division received six new ambulances to replace older vehicles.

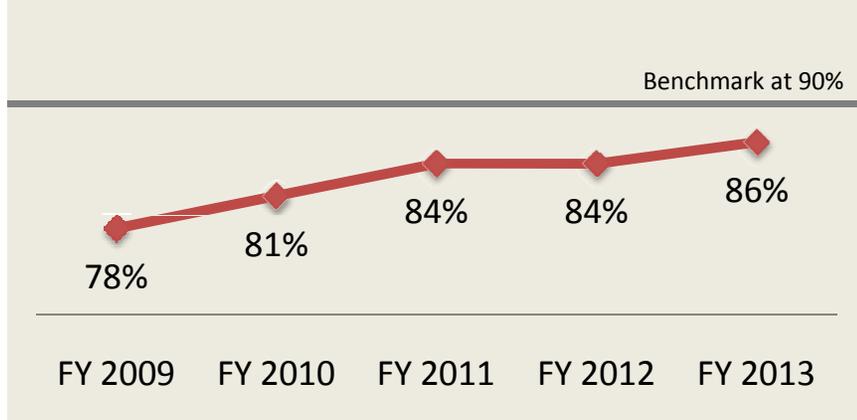
The EMS operation is consistent with the Revised Charter of Honolulu’s mandate to develop and deliver emergency medical services.



	EMS Operating Expenditures (\$ millions)	Total 911 Calls for Ambulance Service	Total EMS Transports	Total Ambulances in Service	Avg. EMS Transports Per Ambulance	Ambulance Response Time Met (Percentile) ¹
FY 2009	\$23.5	79,493	43,768	16	2,736	78%
FY 2010	\$23.5	77,323	43,576	18	2,421	81%
FY 2011	\$23.2	77,695	48,442	19	2,550	84%
FY 2012	\$24.4	83,938	46,988	20	2,349	84%
FY 2013	\$25.2	89,806	51,307	20	2,565	86%
Change from last year	3%	7%	9%	0%	9%	2%
Change over last 5 years	7%	13%	17%	25%	-6%	8%

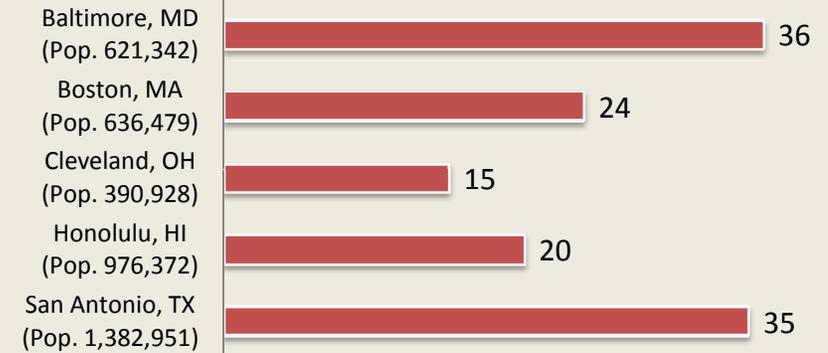
Source: Department of Budget and Fiscal Services and Honolulu Emergency Services Department. ¹State Department of Health Ambulance Response Times: Urban (10 minutes); Urban/Rural (15 minutes); and Rural (20 minutes) at the 90th percentile.

Ambulance Response Time Compliance: 90th Percentile



Source: Honolulu Emergency Services Department

National Comparison: Number of Ambulances by Service Area Population for FY 2013



Source: Honolulu Emergency Services Department and various city websites.

Over the last five years, the division’s operating expenditures increased 7% from \$23.5 million in FY 2009 to \$25.2 million in FY 2013. According to the division, the increase was due to the closure of the Hawai’i Medical Center West’s emergency room in December 2011 which resulted in higher transportation costs and the need for additional back-up ambulance from a third-party vendor. The division has been facing the effects of the closure which includes shortage of medications, the aging of equipment, and the retention of paramedic personnel. To address these effects, the division opened an ambulance unit in Ewa Beach in July 2012.

The division is contracted by the state Department of Health to provide emergency ambulance service on the island of O`ahu. Under contract terms, ambulance response times should comply with benchmarks at the 90th percentile. Over the last five years, EMS did not meet the 90th percentile standard. However, response time compliance improved 10% from 78% in FY 2009 to 86% in FY 2013. According to the division, better relocated and utilized resources, improved dispatch programs, and installation of new equipment contributed to the improvement in response time.

In the 2013 National Citizen Survey, 85% of Honolulu residents rated Ambulance/EMS as *excellent* or *good*. This rating is *similar* to percentages reported nationwide and among cities with populations over 300,000.

	The National Citizen Survey (% <i>Excellent</i> or <i>Good</i>)			
	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>
Ambulance/EMS	90%	86%	86%	85%
Comparison to National Benchmark	↔	↔	↓	↔

Source: The National Citizen Survey, Trends over Time, Honolulu, HI, 2013

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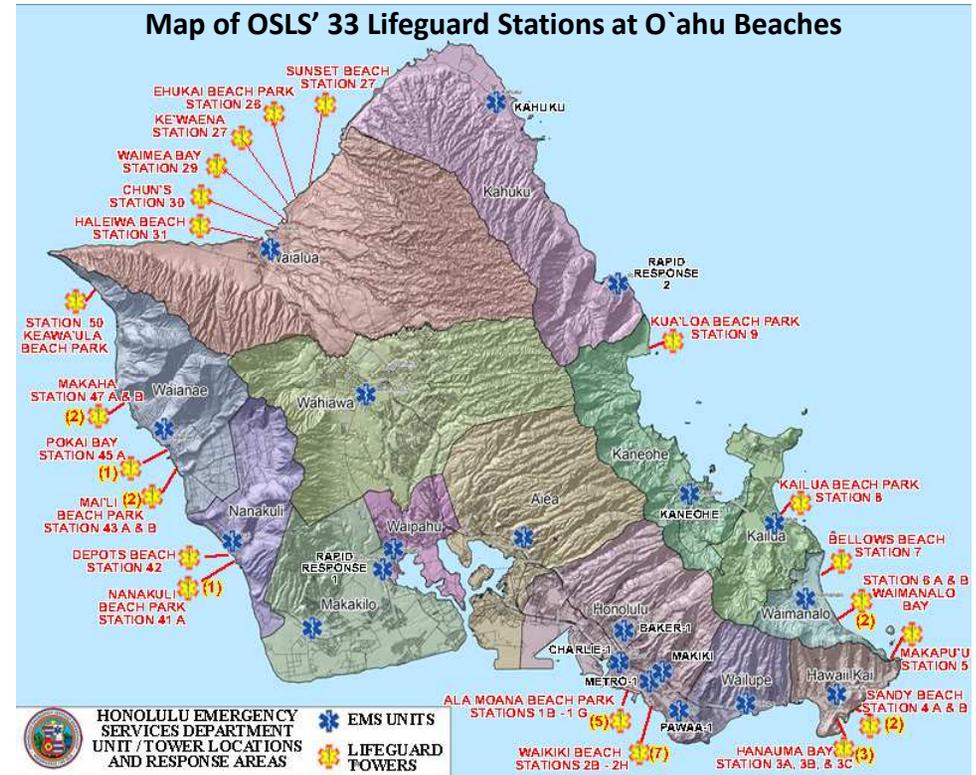
- ↑↑ Much higher than national benchmark
- ↑ Higher than national benchmark
- ↔ Similar to national benchmark
- ↓ Lower than national benchmark
- ↓↓ Much lower than national benchmark

Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services (OSLS) Division provides lifeguard services along 198 miles of O`ahu's coastline. OSLS divides the island into four operational districts:

- North Shore (Kualoa to Ka`ena Point)
- Windward (Maunaloa Bay to Kualoa Point)
- South Shore (Pearl Harbor to Maunaloa Bay)
- Leeward (Ka`ena to Pearl Harbor)

Each district is assigned one captain and two lieutenants who are responsible for daily operations. Basic coverage is tower-based, with lifeguards assigned to stations at specific beaches. Mobile response units and personal watercraft are used to respond to aquatic emergencies.

Over the last 5 years, the division's operating expenditures increased 6% from \$8.7 million in FY 2009 to \$9.2 million in FY 2013. According to the division, the increase was due to the funding of eight new permanent water safety officer positions, as well as pay raises granted under collective bargaining.



Source: Honolulu Emergency Services Department

	OSLS Operating Expenditures (\$ million)	Ocean Rescues	Preventive Actions ¹	Public Contact ²	First Aid - Major ³	Beach Users (million)
FY 2009	\$8.7	1,731	448,537	836,526	1,264	14.7
FY 2010	\$8.8	1,920	527,395	922,099	1,203	15.2
FY 2011	\$8.8	1,868	583,425	1,067,512	1,158	15.6
FY 2012	\$8.5	2,318	597,902	989,497	1,170	16.4
FY 2013	\$9.2	2,619	744,764	1,228,418	1,336	18.1
Change from last year	8%	13%	25%	24%	14%	10%
Change over last 5 years	6%	51%	66%	47%	6%	23%

Source: Honolulu Emergency Services Department. ¹Preventive Action means any action taken to prevent an accident or serious injury from happening. ²Public Contact means any verbal interaction with a member of the public. ³First Aid – Major means any injury requiring ambulance (EMS) assistance.

Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services

The number of preventive actions increased 66% from 448,537 in FY 2009 to 744,764 in FY 2013. Public contacts also increased 47% during the same time period. According to the division, the introduction of new and highly popular ocean recreation activities, such as stand-up paddle boarding and commercial kayaking excursions, over the last five years have contributed to the demand for ocean safety services.

In FY 2013, OSLS personnel on the beaches and in the ocean waters accomplished more than 1.9 million preventive measures¹ in addition to the 2,619 ocean rescues and the management of 1,336 major medical cases.

One of OSLS' goals is to promote community awareness of ocean safety practices. To meet this goal, OSLS holds an annual Junior Lifeguard Training Program. The five-day course is designed to familiarize participants with ocean and beach safety skills such as ocean hazard identification, CPR, emergency first aid, and rescue techniques.

¹Preventive measures consists of 1,228,418 public contacts and 744,764 preventive actions.

²CY = Calendar Year

In FY 2013, over 200 youth between the ages of 13-17 participated in the program during the summer months. The program is offered at four O`ahu beach parks: Ala Moana Beach Park (South); Kalama Beach Park (East); Ehukai Beach Park (North); and Makaha Beach (West).

OSLS also promotes ocean safety practices through lectures, demonstrations, and various media to disseminate educational information. The department noted that OSLS faces growing demand in the level of service from visitors whose understanding and knowledge of ocean environment is minimal and whose language and cultural background create barriers to understanding ocean hazards.

In FY 2013, the division added ocean safety Nixle alerts to its community alert system.

The division's training unit follows guidelines established by the United States Lifesaving Association (USLA). Ocean safety personnel earned USLA Open Water Certification through CY² 2013.

US Lifesaving Association, CY 2012

Reporting Agency	Coastline Miles	Attendance (million)	Total Rescues	Rescues per 10,000
City and County of Honolulu, HI	198.0	18.1	2,619	1.45
City of Huntington Beach, CA	3.5	7.9	4,628	5.84
City of Miami Beach, FL	7.0	12.2	412	0.34
City of Newport Beach, CA	9.7	9.5	3,794	3.97
City of San Diego, CA	24.0	24.3	5,426	2.24

Source: US Lifesaving Association - American Lifeguard Rescue and Drowning Statistics for Beaches, CY 2012