

DLNR News Release-Suspected Norovirus Leads to Closure of Kalalau Valley on Kauaʻi, Sept. 3, 2024

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DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GASTROINTESTINAL ILLNESS FELLS NUMEROUS CAMPERS AND CLOSES POPULAR WILDERNESS CAMP AREA

(HONOLULU) – The DLNR Division of State Parks (DSP), on the recommendation of the Hawaiʻi Department of Health (DOH), is closing the Kalalau Section of the Nāpali Coast State Wilderness Park on Kauaʻi. In light of the high risk of illness in this isolated setting, the closure begins tomorrow. DOH, in consultation with DLNR, recommended the trail be closed for the next seven days.

DSP sent notices this afternoon to people who had confirmed overnight permits informing them of the park's closure due to "an undetermined gastrointestinal illness in Kalalau." One camper who got sick and hiked out Monday, said others who were seriously ill left earlier by boat.

People who hold permits for closed dates can request a refund or rebook to a later date, by emailing the address below. DSP says its notice is subject to change pending additional guidance from DOH.

At full capacity, the Kalalau camping area accommodates 80 people. On Wednesday, Sept. 4, a team of officers from the DLNR Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) will fly to the wilderness park, with one to be stationed at Hanakāpīʻai, to inform hikers of the closure between there and Kalalau. Two others will hike into Kalalau to check on the welfare of campers still at the site and call for further medical assistance if needed.

DSP Administrator Curt Cottrell said, "This is a very concerning and rare occurrence, magnified by the extreme remote nature of the Kalalau Valley. We appreciate the DOH guidance in helping manage and mitigate this isolated outbreak in the hope no one else is exposed or gets sick."

DOH has received reports of acute gastrointestinal illness (nausea, vomiting and diarrhea) from 24 people who have hiked the Kalalau Trail since August 14. One was evacuated but no one has been hospitalized.

Laboratory tests are underway to confirm, but based on reported symptoms, the suspected illness is Norovirus. Individuals who have recently been on the trail should monitor themselves for

symptoms. The reported illnesses have been self-resolving, but if symptoms do not improve within 24 – 48 hours, or if symptoms are severe, seek medical care promptly.