

No serious injuries or damage as monster waves hit shores

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Gargantuan waves continued to pummel north and west shore beaches Thursday, the second day of a swell that happens only once every 10 to 20 years, but no serious injuries or major damage to property occurred.

About 20 to 40 of the most experienced surfers, including professionals, braved 50-foot waves on Oahu's North Shore on Wednesday, said Emergency Management spokeswoman Shayne Enright.

No one was seriously injured, "but it could have been serious if the lifeguards didn't get to them," she said. She warned that although the coming swells may not be as big as the last couple of days, "it is still extremely dangerous," adding, "Basically, you can't let your guard down."

North Shore lifeguards issued 3,000 warnings Wednesday at Pipeline, Waimea Bay and Sunset Beach, where crowds gathered, and made two rescues at Waimea. Twelve were rescued on Oahu's west side.

"We were very lucky and dodged another big bullet," said John Cummings III, spokesman for the Department of Emergency Management.

No homes were damaged, and although the high surf caused an "overtopping of highways along the North Shore, it wasn't to the point where we had to close the road or divert traffic," Cummings said.

Waimea Bay Beach Park was shut down at 5:30 p.m. Thursday as the surf came back up, and will remain closed today if conditions continue to be hazardous.

Surf will remain at the high end of advisory-level heights today, at about

20 feet on the north shores of Oahu, Kauai and Molokai, National Weather Service meteorologist Bob Burke said. They will be generally highest in the morning and gradually decrease later in the day. The west side will also see smaller surf as well.

The weather service received reports Thursday of the biggest surf of 15 to 30 feet at Kee Beach and Haena, Kauai.

On Oahu, surf was 18 to 25 feet at Ehukai, 15 to 25 at Sunset Beach and 10 to 20 at Makaha.

The largest waves on Maui were at Hookipa at 15 to 25 feet.

The Big Island's west side saw 10- to 12-footers at Magic Sands and 8 to 10 at Kahaluu.

The weather service said Wednesday that Buoy 1 northwest of Kauai recorded a 30-foot swell for the first time since 1986.

Kauai County reported



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High surf pummeled Waimea Bay on Thursday, providing some of the largest waves in decades for professional surfers.

40-foot waves on its north shores Wednesday, keeping its emergency workers busy.

An off-duty lifeguard rescued an 87-year-old Washington man who was sitting at Kee Beach at about 4:30 p.m. Wednesday when a powerful wave washed ashore and swept him roughly 20 yards down the beach.

The lifeguard noticed the

man in distress and was able to bring him to shore before the strong currents pulled him out too far.

The man received multiple abrasions and was taken to Wilcox Hospital for medical evaluation.

Kauai north shore beaches remained closed Thursday, but Anahola Beach was reopened for swimming.