



RED HILL RAPID RESPONSE BRINGS RELIEF

CORE & MAIN CASE STUDY: Strong supply chain provides safe drinking water solution.

Core & Main takes seriously its responsibility to find the best water distribution solutions and help communities thrive. As a leader in advancing reliable infrastructure with local service, nationwide, our branches worked together to respond rapidly to the 2021 Red Hill fuel leak and water emergency in Hawaii, supplying necessary equipment and expertise to decontaminate a well serving more than 9,700 households.

Background

In Hawaii there is a phrase, “Ola i ka wai,” which roughly translates to “water is life” or “life is because of water.” Yet in November 2021, families living on and near the military base at Pearl Harbor reported petroleum odors coming from the U.S. Navy-supplied tap water. It turned out a broken pipeline led to a major jet fuel leak from the Navy’s Red Hill facility into Oahu’s main water supply. More than 9,700 households were impacted. Residents experienced nausea, rashes, headaches and other symptoms, while many households had to relocate due to contaminated water.

The EPA partnered with the Navy, Army and Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) to restore safe drinking water for residents. Core & Main spearheaded an effort across our branches to provide a specialized water infrastructure solution to move a high volume of contaminated water from the Red Hill well to filtration sites.

Working Together To Get It Done Quickly

Oahu is Hawaii’s third-largest island, yet it lacks fresh water. The fuel seepage threatened the island’s primary source of drinking water, the Halawa Shaft, operated by the Board of Water. Fast action was necessary to contain the damage.

The short-term solution? Flush the water from the Red Hill Shaft through carbon filters to remove fuel contaminants, then discharge the flushed water to wastewater treatment facilities and island parks.

Moving millions of gallons of water through Red Hill aimed to counter the potential for contaminants to migrate offsite and into the larger community’s water source. The Navy hired local subcontractors to find the needed supplies to get the water to filter stations and out of the Navy’s water well.



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Local contractors were hired to build the water lines and pump as much water out and away from the well as possible. Core & Main's Hawaii-based branches worked with one contractor to source the 24-inch fusible HDPE pipe, flanges, valves and more needed for the project. Core & Main also supplied granular activated carbon (GAC) sewer valve assembly kits to connect the pipe for discharge after the filtration station.

Because of the project's urgency, Core & Main's Hawaii operations partnered with several mainland Core & Main branches to get the necessary supplies delivered to the island quickly. Within a week's time, the team was able to get what was needed to Oahu contractors.

Shaun Y., Core & Main district manager, credits the speed of the response to great communication. "All the branches were responsive in getting things packed up and setting up and coordinating the air freight," he said.

Even when the design was up in the air and changing daily, Core & Main adapted. If requested materials weren't available, Shaun would suggest alternatives to enable the contractor to propose changes on the fly. "They really worked with us to ensure the timelines were met," a project manager at the contractor said.

"One of Core & Main's values is collaborative teamwork. The Red Hill situation is an example of that in action. We really worked together as one company to help the end user."

KEN O.,
Area Director,
Core & Main