

Lahaina, Hawaii Wildfire Alert

On August 8, 2023, a wildfire exploded on the west coast of Maui and quickly spread due to high winds. The fire's ignition was just to the east of the historic town of Lahaina (affectionately referred to by locals as Lahaina-town), located on the far west side of the island. The sustained winds of at least 50 mph – and gusts upwards of 90 mph – along with low humidity, caused the fire to spread west. Within a few hours, the entire downtown of Lahaina had burned. It should be noted that Maui was under a Red Flag warning leading up to the fire. This is truly one of the most devastating events in Hawaiian history.

Our local origin and cause investigator has been making inquiries and reports that on August 8, a small brush fire started around 6:30 a.m. east of downtown Lahaina. There are multiple *unconfirmed* reports that the fire was caused by a powerline, which ignited dry vegetation below. That said, we have obtained video and photographs depicting downed powerlines in the area. The brush fire was supposedly extinguished by the local Maui Fire Department. Later that evening, as sustained winds became more severe and gusts increased, the fire reportedly rekindled and quickly swept west into Lahaina-town. The local Maui Fire Department simply did not have the resources to prevent the fire from overtaking the town. In fact, the fire moved so quickly that several people fled into the ocean to escape the heat and smoke, where they were rescued by the Coast Guard. The image below depicts downtown Lahaina and the harbor. As you can see, the wind-driven fire pushed all the way to the coast and destroyed everything in its path.



More than 90 people are confirmed dead – although authorities expect this number to increase as search and rescue efforts continue. Nearly 3,000 residential and commercial structures have been damaged and/or destroyed. Most of the island is without power, and Hawaiian Electric (HECO) is working to repair damaged lines and restore power. Many locals and tourists are being relocated to nearby islands, and only essential travel is allowed into Maui. Governor Josh Green has declared a state of emergency, and President Joe Biden has declared this a major disaster to provide federal aid.

Current Status

Cozen O'Connor has attorneys licensed in Hawaii and have been litigating subrogation cases there for many years. As a result, we have a strong connection with the local investigators, which is critical to our investigation process. The firm has retained a local origin and cause investigator and is mobilizing him to Maui to investigate the cause of this fire. The firm also has experts from other disciplines, including electrical engineering, standard of care, and meteorologists retained and on



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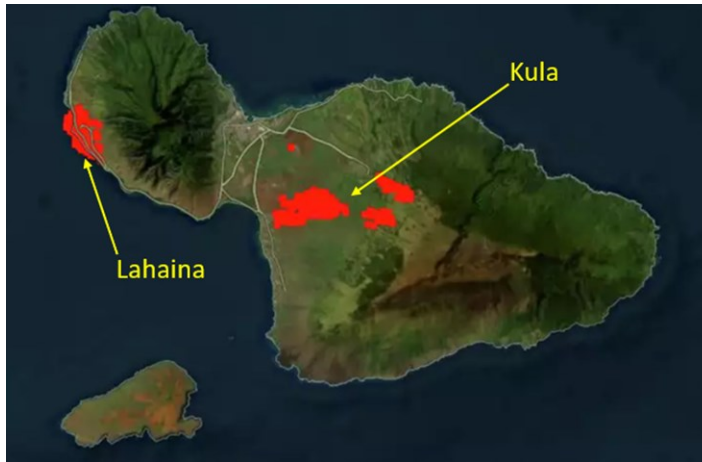
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Related Practice Areas

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standby.

It should also be noted that other wildfires are burning on Maui. One began in the town of Kula and traveled west to the populated town of Kihei. Reports are sparse about damages, but it is expected to cause property damage as well. Our investigator will also evaluate the Kula fire.



A class action lawsuit was filed over the weekend, and we will continue to monitor this development. Further, we are assessing whether HECO should have executed a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) and turned off power in advance of high winds, as well as Maui County's apparent failure to sound sirens once the fire started.

Moving Forward

At this point, we will work closely with our experts to determine causation and evaluate subrogation potential for our clients. Please let us know if you have claims you would like to refer, and we will provide additional details about this devastating fire loss and investigation.
