

Fatal Boating Accident Primes Safety Discourse

Memorial Service For Boating Victim Set For Monday

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One week ago, 17-year-old Keahi Lum was killed by a propeller when a boat ran him over while he and a partner were diving.

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The Medical Examiner's office said Lum died of traumatic injuries to his chest and abdomen.

Memorial services for the boy are set for 9 a.m. at New Hope in Sand Island on Monday, though some -- like Rep. Gene Ward -- are saying the accident never should have happened.

In the wake of Lum's death, Ward is planning a community gathering for boaters and divers that will be held within the next two weeks to clarify and discuss safety regulations in Maunalua Bay.

“Right now, it's on the honesty system,” Ward said. “There's no one sitting in a tower or a helicopter saying, “Over here!” or blow a whistle.”

Ward said the gathering is geared toward consciousness raising on what the rules of the bay and how they should be used.

Both boaters and divers said that they agree something must be done.

Divers told KITV's Jodi Leong off-camera that boats often speed in the bay and don't always heed dive markers. Boaters, on the other hand, say the red markers aren't always visible.

“The problem is: the buoy is only 6 inches above the water,” said boater Eric Levora. “With the flag even, (it's) very seldom I ever see any flags.”

Levora also said divers often stray far from their markers.

“They usually have a float buoy, but sometimes those guys will have 50 to 100 feet behind them, so you don't really know where they are,” Levora said. “It's like hunting. You get flowing, following a fish and then all of a sudden you look up and you're three miles offshore because the current pulled you that way.”

Still, Levora said boaters must constantly scan the water for people, birds and nets, but he's also concerned about skilled divers who don't use markers in an attempt to keep their dive spots secret.

“That puts them in danger and then you're on top of them,” he said. “When you're going 20 miles an hour, you can't just shut that thing down. It's not like a car.”

In the case of Lum's death, police said there may be criminal charges against the boater. Lum's dive partner said the boat was speeding, but police said there is no evidence that the 32-year-old boat owner was intoxicated.

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