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COUNTY REMINDS RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES TO COVER LOADS

Hawai'i County wishes to remind all motorists that loads in all vehicles, particularly trucks with open beds, must be secure and the only thing that can spill from a vehicle is clear water.

The Office of the Mayor has received numerous complaints in recent months regarding trash along roads in the County of Hawai'i, including bags of household refuse likely meant for a transfer station. This state law not only applies to commercial haulers, but to anyone who operates a vehicle on a public street.

"We're kindly asking residents and businesses to make sure items being transported in vehicles are secured so they don't become a traffic hazard or end up as litter on the side of the road," said Mayor Mitch Roth. "It's a simple request that can mean the world of difference for your community and its safety."

Any violations observed can be reported to the Police Department non-emergency line at 935-3311. Please provide a license number of the vehicle involved and the location so appropriate action may be taken. Any violations observed by police during regular patrols will be dealt with accordingly.

Hawai'i Revised Statutes 291C-131 states that all vehicles must be constructed, covered or loaded as to prevent anything from spilling or escaping onto the street. The law goes on to say that no vehicle shall be driven on any highway when its load is not entirely within the body of the vehicle, unless the load is securely fastened by clamps, ropes, straps, cargo nets or other suitable mechanical devices to prevent the load from ending up on the road. The law also says a load cannot exceed the width of the vehicle.

Vehicles carrying agricultural produce from fields during harvest are exempt from requirements but the owner of a vehicle must still provide clean up if anything is spilled or dropped on the highway. Vehicles transporting a granular load consisting of dirt, sand or gravel are not required to cover their load if it does not extend, at its peak higher than the lowest point of the container or bed. However, the Office of the Mayor still recommends that such loads be covered.

Fines range from \$250 for the first offense to suspension of registration and driver's license and a fine of \$1,000 for multiple offenses.

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