

# Quaternary Fault and Fold Database of the United States

As of January 12, 2017, the USGS maintains a limited number of metadata fields that characterize the Quaternary faults and folds of the United States. For the most up-to-date information, please refer to the [interactive fault map](#).

## Hilina fault system, Hilina Pali section (Class A) No. 2610c

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### Synopsis

**General:** The first person to map the faults on the south flank of Kilauea Volcano remains unknown, but Wood (1914 #6979) noted that subsidence occurred on the oceanward side of these structures related to the 1868 Great Ka'u earthquake, an estimated M8 earthquake (Wyss, 1988 #6980). Tilling and others (fig. 16, 1976 #6974) summarize faulting on the Hilina fault system associated with the November 29, 1975, M7.2 Kalapana earthquake. Lipman and others (1985 #6952) provide a comprehensive report of the 1975 Kalapana earthquake. Refer to the description of the November 29, 1975, Kalapana earthquake in this compilation for more details. Kellogg and Chadwick (1987 #6948) record 1975 Kalapana earthquake fault offsets preserved in the Mauna Ulu pahoehoe lava flows (1969-1974) for the central Hilina fault system. Riley and others (1999 #6972) estimate the depth of the Hilina fault system and recurrence interval for the

1975 Kalapana earthquake using paleomagnetic measurements of south flank lava flows. Expanding on the work of Kellogg and Chadwick (1987 #6948), Cannon and Burgmann (2001 #6934) and Cannon and others (2001 #6935) present detailed fracture maps of central Hilina faults, estimate prehistoric fault offset rates and recurrence intervals for large ( $M > 6$ ) prehistoric south flank earthquakes, and provide evidence for a shallow rather than a deep-seated interpretation for some of the Hilina faults. Faulting along the Hilina fault system is related to large ( $M > 6$ ) earthquakes on the southern flank of Kilauea Volcano. Delaney and others (1998 #6939) conclude that the small strains observed across the southern flank in the past several decades suggest that the Hilina faults remained inactive except for during the 1975 Kalapana earthquake. The landslide and tsunami potential of the Hilina fault system remains a great concern. Ma and others (1999 #6984) estimate that the tsunami created by the 1975 Kalapana earthquake displaced approximately 2.5 cubic kilometers of water. Along the coast and offshore of Kilauea's south flank to the southeast, the Hilina fault system may represent the landslide headscarp to the submarine Hilina slump and Papa'u sand-rubble flow. Slumps and seafloor structures offshore of the Hilina fault system are interpreted as landslide blocks and debris (see Moore and others, 1989 #6961, 1995 #6958; Moore and Chadwick, 1995 #6959; Morgan and others, 2000 #6964, 2003 #6965). Significant coastal and submarine mass movements may have occurred within the past 100 ka. Geologic evidence demonstrates the existence of Quaternary deformation, but the fault system is associated with volcanic features that might not extend deeply enough to be a potential source of significant earthquakes.

**Sections:** This fault has 15 sections. The Hilina fault system is an approximately 50-km-long, 5-km-wide zone of primarily normal faults that extend east across the southeastern flank of Kilauea Volcano. For this long fault system, we identify 15 fault sections based on fault-scarp morphology reflected on 7.5-minute topographic maps, continuity of expression, and evidence of apparent recent movement from cross-cutting relations of faults, fractures, and lava flows. The large number of sections for this fault system in particular is largely the result of young movement, high rates of movement, associations with large historic earthquakes, and focused study by researchers. The 15 sections are Pu'u Mo'o [2610a], Kukulau'ula Pali [2610b], Hilina Pali [2610c], Keana Bihopa [2610d], Pu'u Ka'one [2610e], Pu'u Kapukapu [2610f], Makahanu Pali [2610g], Pu'u'eo Pali [2610h],

	Kipukapapalinamoku [2610i], Poliokeawe Pali [2610j], 'Ainahou [2610k], Holei Pali [2610l], 'Apua Pali [2610m], Paliuli [2610n], and Pulama pali [2610o].
<b>Name comments</b>	<p><b>General:</b> The Hilina fault system consists of a set of roughly east-trending normal fault structures with moderate dips to the south and southeast. The term pali, used in several of the section names, is the Hawaiian work for "cliff" or "scarp." For example, the name Hilina Pali represents the geomorphic scarp of the Hilina fault. Another term used, pu'u is the Hawaiian work for "hill."</p> <p><b>Section:</b> The Hilina Pali section is in the western and central portion of the Hilina fault system.</p>
<b>County(s) and State(s)</b>	HAWAII COUNTY, HAWAII
<b>Physiographic province(s)</b>	HAWAIIAN-EMPEROR ISLAND-SEAMOUNT CHAIN
<b>Reliability of location</b>	<p>Good Compiled at 1:100,000 scale.</p> <p><i>Comments:</i> The fault traces are generally exposed, but locally concealed, on the 1:100,000-scale geologic map (Wolfe and Morris, 1996 #6977). The fault scarp is obvious on the 1:24,000-scale Ka'u Desert and Makaopuhi Crater topographic sheets.</p>
<b>Geologic setting</b>	The Hilina fault system is a normal fault system in the southern flank of Kilauea Volcano, Hawai'i. The present southern flank is being displaced to the southeast along a basal detachment by high-level rift zone intrusions and deep-seated gravitational spreading of the island. Between 1990 and 1996, south flank horizontal velocity rates determined from global positioning system (GPS) surveys indicate as much as 10 cm/yr of lateral motion (Owen and others, 1995 #6968, 2000 #6969). This slightly northwest-dipping basal detachment at approximately 8-10 km depth represents the boundary between ocean lithosphere and the volcanic edifice. Pelagic sediment deposited on the seafloor prior to the formation of the volcanic edifice could be lubricating the basal detachment and promoting southeastward motion of the south flank. A comprehensive analysis of geodetic data for the 1975 Kalapana earthquake (Owen and Burgmann, 2006 #6985) indicates that measured ground deformation on the south flank is best explained by a combination of faulting of the basal

	<p>detachment, opening of the east rift zone [2608b] and southwest rift zone [2608c], a summit eruption and collapse of the summit magma chamber, and faulting on the Hilina fault system.</p> <p>Sections of the Hilina fault system may vary in depth from shallow, arcuate normal faults to steeply dipping normal fault splays off the deep, basal detachment. Cannon and others (2001 #6935) conclude that Holei Pali [2610l] and 'Apua Pali [2610m] have fault dips of about 20° at the surface and may flatten downward, reaching a 1-2 km depth at the coast and possibly intersecting the base of a 2- to 3-km-thick hyaloclastic layer offshore (Morgan and others, 2000 #6964). Riley and others (1999 #6972) interpret Hilina Pali [2610c] to be a cylindrical (curved) fault that extends to a depth of 5 km. The Hilina fault system may also be a network of steeply-dipping normal fault splays off the 8- to 10-km-deep basal detachment (Lipman and others, 1985 #6952), with microseismicity possibly being localized at the intersection (Okubo and others, 1997 #6982).</p>
<b>Length (km)</b>	This section is 18 km of a total fault length of 50 km.
<b>Average strike</b>	N. 67° E. (for section) versus N. 69° E. (for whole fault)
<b>Sense of movement</b>	<p>Normal</p> <p><i>Comments:</i> Sense of slip from Wolfe and Morris (1996 #6977). Normal faulting occurred in the 1975 Kalapana earthquake (Tilling and others, fig. 16, 1976 #6974; Lipman and others, 1985 #6952).</p>
<b>Dip Direction</b>	<p>S; SE</p> <p><i>Comments:</i> Dip as shown by Tilling and others (1976) and Wolfe and Morris (1996), south to southeast side down.</p>
<b>Paleoseismology studies</b>	
<b>Geomorphic expression</b>	The largest scarp is about 490 m high with a slope of about 28°.
<b>Age of faulted surficial deposits</b>	Faults cut surface lava flows that range in age from 200-400 yr B.P. to 1,500-3,000 yr B.P. (Wolfe and Morris, 1996 #6977). See Holcomb (1987 #6944) for details of ages of lava flows.
<b>Historic</b>	Kalapana earthquake M7.2 1975

<b>earthquake</b>	Ka'u earthquake 1868 Kaimu earthquake 1823
<b>Most recent prehistoric deformation</b>	latest Quaternary (<15 ka)  <i>Comments:</i> Tilling and others (fig. 16, 1976 #6974) note that 1.5 m of vertical subsidence was observed on the Hilina Pali for the 1975 Kalapana earthquake. Riley and others (1999 #6972) suggest that the Hilina Pali fault is responsible for block rotation of the Pu'u Kapukapu block [2610f]. The Hilina Pali fault may be cylindrical (curved) to an approximately 5-km depth based on paleomagnetic measurements of rotated lava flows (Riley and others, 1999 #6972).
<b>Recurrence interval</b>	200 yr  <i>Comments:</i> Riley and others (1999 #6972) based a 200-yr recurrence interval on 710 m of vertical offset in the Puna Basalt that occurred over the past 38.5 k.y. Since the 1975 Kalapana earthquake produced 3.5 m of subsidence, approximately one Kalapana-sized earthquake every 200 years could explain the 710 m of vertical displacement.
<b>Slip-rate category</b>	Greater than 5.0 mm/yr  <i>Comments:</i> The vertical slip rate of 20 mm/yr reported by Riley and others (1999 #6972) is based on 710 m of vertical fault offset over the past 38.5 k.y.
<b>Date and Compiler(s)</b>	2006 Eric C. Cannon, none Roland Burgmann, University of California at Berkeley
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