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Volcanic activity

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Notes for the Large Print Reader

Print page numbers are indicated as:

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Main text is in Arial typeface, 18 point.

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Omissions and alterations

Some page layouts have been edited for clarity.

Volcanic activity

Volcanic activity can include ashfall, falling rocks, hot gases and volcanic rock, lava flows, and massive mudflows.

Reduce the impacts of volcanic activity

Find out what the volcanic risk is in your area. Your local council may have resources and information on how to reduce potential damage.

Review your insurance regularly. Having insurance cover for your home and contents is important to help you get back on your feet if you suffer damage in a disaster.

Get ready before volcanic activity

Find out about the volcanic risk in your community. Talk to your Civil Defence Emergency Management Group to find out how they will warn you of a volcanic eruption. Find your local Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group at <https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/find-your-civil-defence-group/>

Work out what supplies you might need and make a plan together.

If you are at risk from volcanic ash fall, add the following to your emergency supplies. Auckland, Bay of Plenty,

Tairāwhiti, Hawke's Bay, northern Manawatū, Northland, Taranaki and Waikato are most at risk.

- Certified disposable dust masks (rated P2 or N95) and goggles
- Plastic wrap or plastic sheeting (to keep ash out of electronics)
- Cleaning supplies including an air duster, a broom, a shovel, and a vacuum cleaner with spare bags and filters
- Heavy-duty plastic bags to dispose of ash

You could be stuck in your vehicle, so remember to store emergency supplies there too.

What to do during volcanic activity

Stay informed in an emergency. Listen to the radio or follow your Civil Defence Emergency Management Group online.

Check on your neighbours and anyone who might need your help.

Follow official advice from:

- your Civil Defence Emergency Management Group
the Department of Conservation (for Tongariro, Ngauruhoe, Ruapehu or Taranaki only)
- local authorities, and
- emergency services.

During ash fall

Put your emergency plan into action. Listen to the radio for updates. Follow instructions from emergency services and Civil Defence.

Stay indoors. Volcanic ash is a health hazard, especially if you have respiratory difficulties such as asthma or bronchitis.

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Do not attempt to clear ash from your roof while ash is falling.

Keep pets indoors.

Do not drive when there is ash on the road.

Avoid unnecessary exposure to ash until it has settled. If you have to go outside, wear protective clothing:

- a properly-fitted P2 or N95-rated mask (or a cloth if you don't have a mask)
- goggles
- sturdy footwear
- gloves, and
- clothing that covers your arms and legs.

Do not wear contact lenses because trapped ash can scratch your eyes. Wear glasses instead.

If ash fall has been forecast for your region

Before ash fall starts, go home if possible, to avoid driving or walking during ash fall.

If you have a visual impairment, wear eyeglasses. Do not wear contact lenses because trapped ash can scratch your eyes.

Bring pets inside and move livestock into closed shelters. Make sure that animals have supplementary feed and access to clean drinking water.

Close all windows and doors and shut down heat pumps to limit the entry of volcanic ash. Set up a single entry point for your house. Place damp towels at the threshold to prevent ash being tracked indoors.

Cover sensitive electronics. Do not remove covers until the indoor environment is completely ash free.

Cover vehicles, machinery and spa pools to avoid ash causing damage. Ash can corrode metal surfaces and cause abrasion damage to windscreens and paintwork.

Disconnect drainpipes/downspouts from gutters to stop drains clogging. If you use a rainwater collection system for your water supply, disconnect the tank.

Check on your neighbours and anyone who might need your help.

What to do after a volcanic eruption

Continue to follow official advice from:

- your Civil Defence Emergency Management Group
- the Department of Conservation (for Tongariro, Ngauruhoe, Ruapehu or Taranaki only)
- local authorities, and
- emergency services.

If you have evacuated, do not return home until told it is safe to do so.

Help others if you can, especially people who may need extra help.

Learn what to look for and what to do if you need to give first aid at <https://www.stjohn.org.nz/first-aid/first-aid-library/>

Keep children indoors and discourage play in ash.

Keep animals indoors until ash is cleaned up or washed away. If pets go outside, brush them before letting them back indoors.

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Check on your neighbours and anyone who might need your help.

If your property is damaged

- Do not do anything that puts your safety at risk or causes more damage to your property.

- Contact your insurance company as soon as possible.
- If you rent your property, contact your landlord and your contents insurance company.
- Take photos of any damage. It will help speed up assessments of your claims.

Cleaning up ash

It is important to clean up ash promptly, as it is a health hazard and can cause damage to buildings and machinery.

When cleaning up, follow advice and instructions from your local council and Civil Defence Emergency Management Group. Be aware that:

- ash clean-up is physically demanding and time-consuming
- in bulk, ash is much heavier than people often expect
- repeated cleaning may be necessary, and
- water restrictions are likely after ash fall.

Use water very sparingly to avoid depleting water supplies.

Wear protective clothing that covers your arms and legs, sturdy footwear, a properly fitted P2 or N95 mask, and goggles.

If you have a visual impairment, wear eyeglasses.

Do not wear contact lenses because trapped ash can scratch your eyes.

Find information on how to clean up ash at https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/volcanic_ash/ash_removal.html

Clean up ash indoors first

Clean up any ash indoors to protect indoor air quality.

Ash is much more abrasive than ordinary house dust.

The best cleaning methods to prevent scratching damage are vacuuming and rinsing. Use water sparingly.

If possible, clean electronic equipment with an air duster to avoid scratching delicate surfaces.

Cleaning up outdoor areas

Wait until ash has stopped falling before starting any outdoor clean-up.

Clean ash off the roof. Roof clean-up must be carefully planned as it is hazardous. Use safe working methods. Find information on working safely on roofs at <https://worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/working-at-height/working-safely-at-height/>

For driveways and other hard surfaces, lightly wet the surface of the ash then use a broom to sweep up. Avoid dry sweeping as this creates high levels of airborne ash.

Remove ash from car paintwork and windscreens with water, but use water sparingly. Avoid rubbing as this can cause abrasion damage.

Follow official instructions about ash collection and storage. Contact your local council and your Civil Defence Emergency Management Group for more information.

Do not dispose of ash into drains as it can cause blockages and be difficult to remove.