

Volcano Factsheet:

Volcanic eruptions can hurl hot rocks for at least 20 miles. Floods, airborne ash, or noxious fumes can spread 100 miles or more. If you live near a known volcano, active or dormant, be ready to evacuate at a moment's notice.

BEFORE

Learn about your community warning systems. Be prepared for these disasters that can be spawned by volcanoes.

- Earthquakes
- Flash floods
- Landslides and mudflows
- Thunderstorms
- Tsunamis

Make evacuation plans.

You want to get to high ground away from the eruption. Plan a route out and have a backup route in mind.

Develop an emergency communication plan. In case family members are separated from one another during a volcanic eruption (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school), have a plan for getting back together. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person.

Have disaster supplies on hand.

- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- First aid kit and manual
- Emergency food and water
- Nonelectric can opener
- Essential medicines
- Cash and credit cards
- Sturdy shoes

Get a pair of goggles and a throw-away breathing mask for each member of the household.

Contact your local emergency management office or American Red Cross chapter for more information on volcanoes.

EVACUATION

Although it may seem safe to stay at home and wait out an eruption, doing so could be very dangerous. The rock debris from a volcano can break windows and set buildings on fire. Stay safe. Follow authorities' instructions and leave the area before the disaster begins.

DURING

Follow the evacuation order issued by authorities. Avoid areas downwind of the volcano.

If caught indoors:

Close all windows, doors, and dampers.
Put all machinery inside a garage or barn.
Bring animals and livestock into closed shelters.

If trapped outdoors:

Seek shelter indoors.
If caught in a rockfall, roll into a ball to protect head.
Avoid low-lying area where poisonous gases can collect and flash floods can be most dangerous.
If caught near a stream, beware of mudflows.

Protect yourself:

Wear long sleeved shirts and pants.
Use goggles to protect eyes.
Use a dust-mask or hold a damp cloth over face to help breathing.
Keep car or truck engines off.

Stay out of the area.
A lateral blast of a volcano can travel many miles from the mountain. Trying to watch an erupting volcano is a deadly idea.

MUDFLOWS

Mudflows are powerful "rivers" of mud that can move faster than people can walk or run. Mudflows occur when rain falls through ash-carrying clouds or when rivers are damed during an eruption. They are most dangerous close to stream channels. When you approach a bridge, first look upstream. If a mudflow is approaching or moving beneath the bridge, do not cross the bridge. The power of the mudflow can destroy a bridge very quickly.

AFTER

Listen to a battery-powered radio or television for the latest emergency information.

Stay away from volcanic ashfall.
When outside:

Cover your mouth and nose. A number of victims of the Mount St. Helens volcano died from inhaling ash.
Wear goggles to protect your eyes.
Keep skin covered to avoid irritation or burns.

If you have a respiratory ailment, avoid contact with any amount of ash. Stay indoors until local health officials advise it is safe to go outside.

Avoid driving in heavy ashfall. Driving will stir up more ash that can clog engines and stall vehicles.

Clear roofs of ashfall. Ashfall is very heavy and can cause buildings to collapse.

Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance--infants, elderly people, and people with disabilities.