



Emergency Preparedness Bulletin Volcanic Ash

Mt. Redoubt is an active volcano located 100 miles southwest of Anchorage. Under certain wind conditions an eruption could result in ashfall in Anchorage. District officials are reviewing emergency plans and maintaining contact with other agencies to ensure the safety of students, staff and assets in the event of an ashfall. Please use this opportunity to review your emergency plans for your home and worksite.

How will a volcanic eruption impact Anchorage?

Volcanic activity can pulverize rock into dust or sand. A significant eruption would create a cloud of volcanic ash that could travel throughout the Southcentral Alaska area under certain wind conditions. Experts indicate that under the most unfavorable conditions, it would take at least 2.5 hours for ash to travel to the Anchorage bowl. Fresh volcanic ash is not toxic but it is gritty and abrasive; it can trouble infants, the elderly and those with respiratory conditions. Machinery and equipment can be harmed by ash abrasion. Ash can clog ventilation, water supply and drains. (Source: USGS)

What can I do to protect myself and my property?

Advance preparation can ease the challenges presented by ashfall. Purchase dust masks, eye protection and extra air and oil filters for vehicles before an eruption. These supplies sell out quickly. Stay indoors, especially if you have respiratory ailments and use masks and eye protection if you must be exposed to ashfall. A wet handkerchief can substitute for a mask. Bring your pets indoors as well.

Avoid driving your vehicle; if you must drive use a clean air filter and change your oil and filters frequently. Close the vents that blow air into your vehicle. At home you should close doors, windows and dampers and cover dust sensitive electronics like computer equipment. Park your car and other equipment in a covered area or use a tarp or sheet to protect equipment left outdoors.

How will the district respond to volcanic activity?

Departments of Instruction, Maintenance, Transportation, Risk Management, Emergency Preparedness and others have reviewed emergency plans and have plans for dealing with a variety of scenarios. The district's response will depend on the timing and severity of the ashfall. The district is prepared to contact employees and parents with critical information and shelter-in-place, if necessary, in the event of a disruption during the school day. If a school closure is needed, the same procedures used in a weather closure will be in place. Information will be available on ASD-TV cable channel 14, e-mail, the Web site (www.asdk12.org), 742-4000 and major media.

What should schools and departments do to prepare?

As with all emergencies, the best strategy is to prepare in advance. Make sure you have a plan for your family's personal safety and discuss these plans with your family and co-workers. Review your school or department's emergency plan. Remember, experts says Anchorage will have at least 2.5 hours notice before ashfall occurs so there will be adequate time to implement plans. Be sure your supervisor has your current contact information.

Where can I find more information?

The Internet hosts many great resources to help you prepare and/or teach about volcanic eruption. Among others, the American Red Cross lists disaster kit contents and the Alaska Volcano Observatory provides updates on volcanic activity as well as photographs, maps and charts. The district has consolidated much of this information and posted it at www.asdk12.org/events/volcano.asp.

www.avo.alaska.edu/activity/redoubt.php

<http://pafc.arh.noaa.gov/volcano.php>

<http://alaska.redcross.org/>