

Volcano

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New Zealand is situated on the "Ring of Fire", a geographic belt encircling the Pacific Ocean and containing about 90% of the earth's volcanoes. Volcanoes usually have short active periods, separated by longer dormant periods. The three main types of volcanoes found in New Zealand are cone volcanoes such as Mounts Ruapehu and Taranaki; volcanic fields such as the ones found in the Auckland area; and calderas such as Lake Taupo.

Volcanoes produce a wide variety of hazards that can kill people and destroy property nearby as well as hundreds of kilometres away. Hazards include widespread ashfall, very fast moving mixtures of hot gases and volcanic rock, and massive lahars.

GNS Science is responsible for monitoring volcanic activity and setting alert levels. If a life-threatening eruption is likely to occur, a civil defence emergency will be declared and the areas at risk will be evacuated.

[Before a volcanic eruption](#)

- Find out about the volcanic risk in your community. Ask your local council about emergency plans and how they will warn you of a volcanic eruption.
- Practice your evacuation plan with members of the household.
- Develop a [Household Emergency Plan](#). Assemble and maintain your [Emergency Survival Items](#) for your home as well as a portable getaway kit.
- Include your pets and livestock in your emergency plan.

When a volcanic eruption threatens

- Listen to your local radio stations as emergency management officials will be broadcasting the most appropriate advice for your community and situation.
- Put your emergency plan into action.
- If you have a disability or need assistance, make contact with your support network and keep informed of civil defence advice.
- Put all machinery inside a garage or shed, or cover with large tarpaulins to protect them from volcanic ash.
- Bring animals and livestock into closed shelters to protect them from volcanic ash.
- Protect sensitive electronics and do not uncover until the environment is totally ash-free.
- Water supplies can be affected so it is a good idea to store drinking water in containers and fill bathtubs and sinks with water.
- Check on friends and neighbours who may require special assistance.

During a volcanic eruption

- Listen to the radio for civil defence advice and follow instructions.
- If outside at the time of eruption, seek shelter in a car or a building. If caught in volcanic ashfalls, wear a dust mask or use a handkerchief or cloth over your nose and mouth.
- Stay indoors as volcanic ash is a health hazard, especially if you have respiratory difficulties such as asthma or bronchitis.
- When indoors, close all windows and doors to limit the entry of volcanic ash. Place damp towels at thresholds.
- Do not tie up phone lines with non-emergency calls.
- If you have to go outside use protective gear such as masks and goggles and keep as much of your skin covered as possible. Wear eyeglasses, not contact lenses as

these can cause corneal abrasions.

- Disconnect drainpipes/downspouts from gutters to stop drains clogging. If you use a rainwater collection system for your water supply, disconnect the tank.
- Stay out of designated restricted zones.

After a volcanic eruption

- Listen to your local radio stations for civil defence advice and follow instructions.
- Stay indoors and away from volcanic ashfall areas as much as possible.
- When it is safe to go outside, keep your gutters and roof clear of ash as heavy ash deposits can collapse your roof.
- If there is a lot of ash in the water supply, do not use your dishwasher or washing machine.
- Avoid driving in heavy ashfall as it stirs up ash that can clog engines and cause serious abrasion damage to your vehicle.
- Keep animals indoors where possible, wash away ash on their paws or skin to keep them from ingesting the ash, and provide clean drinking water.
- Use a mask or a damp cloth and eye protection when cleaning up. Moisten the ash with a sprinkler before cleaning.
- Look for and report broken utility lines to appropriate authorities.
- If your property is damaged, take notes and photographs for insurance purposes.

If you rent your property, contact your landlord and your contents insurance company as soon as possible.

How to get ready

[Household emergency plan](#)

[Emergency survival items](#)

[Getaway kits](#)