

# VOLCANO: MESSAGES

LAST UPDATE: APRIL 2022

## About the Message Library

People affected by disaster must have access to timely, appropriate and accurate information to help them keep themselves and their families safe and well. They should know their rights, entitlements and be able to give feedback. Responders have a duty to put in place appropriate, systematic and coordinated mechanisms to ensure this.

Our Message Library offers clear, concise and simple messages on a range of topics as templates for you to adapt and use in the context you are working in. These are intended to help you make a quick start on communicating with communities while you further develop mechanisms for on-going dialogue with diverse groups within each community.

For help contextualising and using the messages we recommend you do our e-learning course and read the following technical guidance.

### E-learning

<https://kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=768>

### Guidance

<https://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-guidance/cdac-message-library-user-guidance>

## 1. BEFORE A VOLCANO ERUPTION

### Prepare in advance

Assemble an emergency preparedness kit.

Create a household evacuation plan that includes your pets.

Stay informed about your community's risk and response plans.

Ensure each family member knows how to get back in touch if you are separated during an emergency.

[Insert details as to whether a local emergency app is available]

### Protecting your family

Talk about volcanoes with your family so that everyone knows what to do in case of a volcanic eruption. Discussing ahead of time helps reduce fear, particularly for younger children.

Make sure you have access to local radio broadcasts either on your radio or mobile phone. A battery-powered or hand-crank radio will get around power cuts.

Keep handy a pair of goggles and a dust mask for each member of your household in case of ashfall.

Ensure that every member of your family carries a Safe and Well wallet card listing emergency contacts and emergency meeting places.

If you have home insurance find out what your homeowners' policy will or will not cover in the event of a volcanic eruption.

### Protecting your home

Make a list of items to bring inside in the event of ashfall.

## 2. DURING A VOLCANIC ERUPTION

### Staying safe during a volcanic eruption

Listen to a local station on a portable, battery-operated radio or television for updated emergency information and instructions. Local officials will give the most appropriate advice for your particular situation.

Follow any evacuation orders issued by authorities, and put your emergency plan into action. Although it may seem safe to stay at home and wait out an eruption, if you are in a hazard zone, doing so could be very dangerous.

If indoors, close all window, doors, and dampers to keep volcanic ash from entering.

Put all machinery inside a garage or barn to protect it from volcanic ash. If buildings are not available, cover machinery with large tarps.

Bring animals and livestock into closed shelters to protect them from breathing volcanic ash.

### **If you are outdoors**

Seek shelter indoors if possible.

Stay out of designated restricted zones. Effects of a volcanic eruption can be experienced many miles from a volcano.

Avoid low-lying areas, areas downwind of the volcano, and river valleys downstream of the volcano. Debris and ash will be carried by wind and gravity.

Stay in areas where you will not be further exposed to volcanic eruption hazards. Trying to watch an erupting volcano up close is a deadly idea.

### **If you are caught in an ashfall**

Wear a dust mask designed to protect against lung irritation from small particles.

Protect your eyes by wearing goggles. Wear eyeglasses, not contact lenses.

Keep as much of your skin covered as possible.

## **3. AFTER A VOLCANIC ERUPTION**

### **Staying safe after a volcanic eruption – minimum actions**

Let friends and family know you're safe. The Red Cross / Crescent can help you reconnect with family members.

If evacuated, return only when authorities say it is safe to do so.

Continue listening to local news or a weather radio for updated information and instructions.

If people around you are injured, practice CHECK, CALL, CARE. Check the scene to be sure it's safe for you to approach, call for help, and if you are trained, provide first aid to those in need until emergency responders can arrive.

### **Caring for yourself & loved ones**

Stay indoors and away from volcanic ashfall areas if possible. The fine, glassy particles of volcanic ash can increase the health risks for children and people with respiratory conditions, such as asthma, chronic bronchitis, or emphysema.

Whether you are indoors or outdoors:

- Wear a dust mask designed to protect against lung irritation from small particles
- Protect your eyes by wearing goggles. Wear eyeglasses, not contact lenses.
- Keep as much of your skin covered as possible.
- Take time to ensure your emotional recovery by following our tips.
- Keep animals away from ashfall and areas of possible hot spots. Wash animals' paws and fur or skin to prevent their ingesting or inhaling ash while grooming themselves.
- Help people who require additional assistance—infants, elderly people, those without transportation, large families who may need additional help in an emergency situation, people with disabilities, and the people who care for them.

### Returning home safely

Avoid driving in heavy ashfall. Driving will stir up volcanic ash that can clog engines and stall vehicles. Abrasion can damage moving parts, including bearings, brakes, and transmissions.

Follow these tips for inspecting your home's structure and utilities & systems after a volcano.

Take pictures of home damage, both of the buildings and its contents, for insurance purposes if you hold insurance.

### Cleaning and repairing your home

Wear protective clothing, including long pants, a long-sleeved shirt and sturdy shoes, and be cautious.

As soon as it is safe to do so, clear your roof of ashfall. Ash is very heavy and can cause buildings to collapse, especially if made wet by rain. Exercise great caution when working on a roof.

Learn more about how to clean up after a volcano, including the supplies you'll need and how to handle fire hazards such as gas, electricity and chemicals.

### Cleaning and repairing your home – detailed advice

It's up to you whether you prefer to start by tackling the largest issues across the entire home, or by focusing on one or two key rooms where you can make substantial progress.

If this is your first visit to the home, follow our tips for checking your home's structural elements and utilities and systems.

Open doors and windows. If the house was closed for more than 48 hours, air it out before staying inside for any length of time.

Remove any remaining water, large amounts of dirt/mud, damaged items and other trash.

Clean hard surfaces throughout your home (flooring, countertops and appliances) thoroughly with hot water and soap or a detergent. Then disinfect

with bleach or a commercial disinfectant (be sure to follow directions on the bottle).

Dry soft surfaces (upholstered furniture, rugs, bedding and clothing) in the open air if possible, before cleaning.

Throw out all food, beverages and medicine exposed to flood waters and mud. When in doubt, throw it out. This includes canned goods, plastic utensils, baby bottle nipples and containers with food or liquid that has been sealed shut.

Any appliances that were inundated by flood water should be checked by a professional before you use them.

### **Cleaning and sanitizing food contact surfaces**

Throw away wooden cutting boards, wood or plastic utensils, and baby bottle nipples and pacifiers that have come into contact with floodwater.

Use hot, soapy water to thoroughly wash metal pans, ceramic dishes and utensils that have come into contact with floodwater.

Sanitize dishes by boiling them in a clean or properly treated water or by immersing them for 10 to 15 min in a solution of 1 tablespoons of unscented liquid of unscented liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water.

### **Water damage**

Water damage, such as from a flood or in the aftermath of a fire, is not just unsightly and unsanitary – it can also be dangerous. From wallboards to rugs, items that are not thoroughly dried can sprout mold and mildew.

Your first task in addressing water damage is to remove any water that remains. That means pumping out standing water and drying out waterlogged surfaces.

Pump out flooded basements gradually (about one-third of the water per day) to avoid structural damage. If the water is pumped out completely in a short period of time, pressure from water-saturated soil on the outside could cause basement walls to collapse.

Bring all soft items (such as sofas, clothing, bedding, and throw rugs) outside if possible – sunlight and wind will help them dry faster.

Throw out items that have absorbed water and cannot be cleaned or disinfected. This includes mattresses, carpeting, cosmetics, stuffed animals and baby toys.

Remove all drywall and insulation that has been in contact with flood waters.

Consider removing vinyl floor coverings and tile to allow the substructures beneath or behind them to dry.

Keep the windows open and run fans – or keep them shut and run dehumidifiers – to pull moisture out of wood floors and subfloors, beams, doors, etc.

Be patient. Depending on the level of water damage incurred, it can take weeks or months for your home's structural elements to be thoroughly dried. Only then should you replace drywall, carpets and other floorcoverings.

### Smoke damage

Smoke odors and soot are difficult to remove, so the work may be best handled by professional fire restorers. However, there are some steps you can take to rid your home of these reminders of the fire.

Most of all: avoid touching soot. It smears easily and will leave oily black stains on everything it touches. If one is available, use a shop vac to remove soot, being careful that the vacuum nozzle doesn't contact the surface you are cleaning.

If you have soot stains on your walls or hard surfaces, visit your local hardware stores to find a cleaner designed to address soot.

For smoke odors, ventilation is key. Open windows and run fans. Don't neglect your attic and other insulated spaces, since insulation often retains odors.

Wash hard surfaces with hot soapy water. Consider using trisodium phosphate (TSP) if it is available where you live. Be sure to follow directions for safe use and disposal of TSP!

For soft, washable items, such as clothing and bedding, first decide if the item is worth keeping. Smoke is difficult to fully remove, and you may have more important things to spend time on. Multiple wash cycles – without letting the items dry in between – may be required.

### REFERENCES

For more information on this topic, we recommend you read the following references.

American Red Cross (2022). **Volcano Preparedness.**

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/volcano.html>

#### HELP US KEEP THE LIBRARY UP TO DATE

**If you would like to contribute to topic reviews, have found a message that needs greater clarity, or wish to create a new topic, please contact us at [info@cdacnetwork.org](mailto:info@cdacnetwork.org).**