



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600

March 28, 2025

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ALTSA: NH #2025-013

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CONSIDERATIONS FOR VOLCANIC ASHFALL

Dear Administrator/Provider/Superintendent:

Mount Spurr, a volcano about 80 miles outside of Anchorage, Alaska, is in a state of unrest where it is likely to erupt soon.¹ While the ash spread from Mount Spurr is not currently forecasted to impact Washington State, this serves as a reminder of the important steps to take to prepare your facility for future volcanic eruptions. Washington has five active volcanoes in the Cascade Range, this letter offers guidance that can be incorporated into your facility's emergency plans.

Current conditions with Mount Spurr, along with forecasts for cloud and ashfall can be found here: <https://avo.alaska.edu/volcano/spurr>

Facility Preparation:

- Install Hoods over air intakes to reduce direct ash ingestion.
- Add temporary filtration to external air intakes (monitor and replace as needed)
- Seal or cover sensitive equipment, such as external fuel valves and switches.
- Understand how to clean ash:
 - Blow away excess ash from intakes (less than 30 psi), then wipe down with a cloth.
 - Air filters should be removed before cleaning.
 - Do not use wet methods for ash cleanup. May increase clogging or short-circuiting.
- Consider procurement of supplies such as air filters and N95 respirators
 - Air filters may need replacement every 30 minutes during high rates of ash fall.

Response Activities (During Ash Fall)

- If able to do so, turn off HVAC equipment.
- Initiate half-hour intervals for inspection, cleaning, and preventive maintenances.
- Regulatory monitor air filters and fuel filters.
- Use dry methods to clean ash debris.
 - Use of vacuum, brushing or blow away ash (less than 30 psi).
 - Store collected ash in bags to prevent remobilization.
- Be aware that ash in the air may be conductive to electricity. Isolate as necessary.
- Keep roofs free of ash in excess of 4 inches.

Protecting Residents

- Protect lungs, especially for vulnerable populations such as the elderly and those with respiratory conditions.
 - Closely monitor residents with asthma or other respiratory conditions.

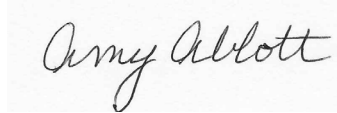
¹ <https://alaskapublic.org/news/environment/2025-03-19/what-to-know-about-mount-spurrs-likely-eruption>

- Keep indoors as feasibly as possible.
- Keep doors, windows, and dampers closed. Place towels at door thresholds and other draft sources.
- Use disposable facemask, such as N95, when outdoors.

For additional information on volcanic ash and the potential hazards and impacts, visit the USGS Volcanic Ash and Gas website, at: https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/volcanic_ash/

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. If you have any questions, please contact Richard Freed, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator (richard.freed@dshs.wa.gov).

Sincerely,



Amy Abbott, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: “Transforming Lives”

Resources and Additional Reading:

USGS-Cascades Volcano Observatory:

<https://www.usgs.gov/observatories/cvo>

USGS-HVAC and Generators:

https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/volcanic_ash/equipment_HVAC.html

USGS-Volcano Updates:

<https://www.usgs.gov/programs/VHP/volcano-updates>

USGS-Volcanic Ash and Gas Impacts & Mitigation:

https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/volcanic_ash/

Alaska Volcano Observatory- Mount Spurr (includes current activity and ash fall forecasts)

<https://avo.alaska.edu/volcano/spurr>

Washington Department of Health-Volcanoes:

<https://doh.wa.gov/emergencies/be-prepared-be-safe/severe-weather-and-natural-disasters/volcanoes>

Washington Department of Natural Resources-Volcanoes and Lahars:

<https://www.dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/geology/geologic-hazards/volcanoes-and-lahars#volcanic-hazards.6>

Washington Emergency Management Division-Volcanoes information and Preparedness:

<https://mil.wa.gov/volcano>.