

# Volcanoes

**Volcanic dangers include not only an eruption of a mountain and associated lava flows, but also ashfall and debris flows. If you are near a mountain range, be familiar with the following.**

## **Before a volcanic eruption:**

- Plan ahead. Have emergency supplies, food and water stored.
- Plan an evacuation route away from rivers or streams that may carry mud or debris flow.
- Keep a battery-operated radio available at all times.
- If there is an eruption predicted, monitor the radio or TV for evacuation information. Follow the advice given by the authorities.

## **After a volcanic eruption:**

- Do not approach the eruption area.
- Be prepared to stay indoors and avoid downwind areas if ashfall is predicted.
- Evacuate if advised to do so.
- Be aware of stream and river channels when evacuating.
- Move toward higher ground if mudflows are approaching.
- Follow the evacuation signs posted along roads and highways.

## **If there is ashfall in your area:**

- Protect your lungs. Infants and the elderly, and those who have respiratory conditions such as asthma, bronchitis, emphysema and other chronic lung and heart diseases should be particularly careful to avoid breathing ash. If ash is present:
  - Stay inside. Close doors, windows and dampers. Place damp towels at door thresholds and other draft sources.

- When outside, wear a single-use (disposable) facemask. Remember that these masks may not fit small children properly. (Note: masks may make breathing more difficult for people with respiratory conditions.)
- Those most at risk should limit outdoor activities. Keep children and pets indoors.
- If you have asthma or another respiratory condition – or have a child with asthma – pay attention to symptoms such as wheezing and coughing, or more severe symptoms such as chest pain or tightness, shortness of breath and severe fatigue. Stay indoors and follow your asthma management plan. Contact your doctor if you have trouble breathing.
- Replace disposable furnace filters or clean permanent furnace filters frequently.
- If you wear contact lenses, protect your eyes by wearing glasses or protective goggles or by removing your contacts.
- If you find ash in your drinking water, use an alternative source of drinking water such as purchased bottled water.
- Put stoppers in the tops of your drainpipes.
- Protect dust-sensitive electronics.
- Keep roofs free of ash in excess of 4 inches.
- Remove outdoor clothing before entering a building.
- Wash vegetables from the garden before eating.
- Minimize travel — ash may be harmful to your vehicle.
- Frequently change oil and air filters in your automobile.



**Washington State Department of Health**

**PO Box 47890**

**Olympia, WA 98504-7890**

**Web Site: [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov)**

**360-236-4027**

**(800) 525-0127**