

## **Volcanic Ash Advice: Clean-up**

### **What is Volcanic Ash?**

Volcanic ash consists of tiny jagged pieces of rock and glass, and is highly abrasive, mildly corrosive, and conducts electricity when wet. |

### **Cleaning up outside**

Try to keep ash out of buildings, machinery, vehicles, downspouts, water supplies, and wastewater systems (for example, storm drains) as much as possible.

Close water supply intakes, and disconnect drainpipes/downspouts from gutters to stop drains clogging. Allow ash and water to empty from gutters onto the ground.

Be careful with ladders and on the roof as the ash can make surfaces very slippery. Try to clean roofs before more than a few centimetres of ash has accumulated.

Remove and secure machinery and equipment from the immediate environment, to prevent as much damage as possible.

Try to co-ordinate clean-up activities with your neighbours and community-wide operations.

### **Cleaning up inside**

Vacuum surfaces to remove as much ash as possible from carpets, furniture, office equipment, appliances, and other items.

Try to avoid bringing further ash into the household via shoes and clothing.

Clean up inside after the outside areas have been attempted.

### **Recommended Actions**

- Use a mask, handkerchief or cloth over your nose and mouth; and eye protection.
- Do not wear contact lenses if possible as these can become irritated.
- Close doors and windows. Place damp towels at door thresholds and other draft sources; tape draughty windows – these really help keep fine ash out.
- Disconnect drainpipes/downspouts from gutters to stop drains clogging, and allow ash and water to empty from gutters onto the ground.
- Lightly water down the ash before removing by shovelling. Dry brushing can produce very high exposure levels and should be avoided.
- Listen to your local radio for information on the eruption and clean-up plans.

### **Detailed advice on ash impacts and preparedness can be found at the following websites:**

Civil Defence websites

[www.getthru.govt.nz](http://www.getthru.govt.nz)

[www.waikatoregioncdemg.govt.nz/Volcanic-eruption/](http://www.waikatoregioncdemg.govt.nz/Volcanic-eruption/)

Information on volcanic ash provided by GNS Science and the US Geological Survey

[www.volcanoes.usgs.gov/ash/](http://www.volcanoes.usgs.gov/ash/)

IVHHN - The International Volcanic Health Hazard Network

<http://www.ivhhn.org/>