

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
Division of Air Quality**

SITUATION REPORT

**AIR QUALITY ADVISORY
Southcentral AK #2009-01**

LOCATION(S) IMPACTED: Susitna Valley including the communities of Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, Willow, Skwentna, Cantwell, Petersville. Kuskokwim Valley including the communities Aniak, McGrath, Sleetmute, Lime Village.

TIME/DATE OF UPDATE: Monday, March 23, 11:00 AM.

VALID TIME: Valid until Tuesday, March 24, 10:00 AM.

TIME/DATE OF THE NEXT REPORT: Tuesday, March 24, 10:00 AM, unless conditions change significantly and warrant a timelier advisory.

ADVISORY: Small amounts of volcanic ash from eruptions of the Redoubt volcano have been falling in the Susitna Valley from Skwentna northeast to Talkeetna. It is believed that the ash content of the eruption clouds has been low, so any ashfall is expected to be minor. To this point, eruptions appear to have been of short duration with the last one occurring around 4:30am on Monday. However, once the ash stops being emitted, the possibility of health risks still continues from the ash on the ground for several weeks. At any time, winds or human activity can cause ash to be re-entrained into the air. People with respiratory conditions should be aware for the potential of ashfall in their area, and to use caution if it is observed.

OUTLOOK: The National Weather Service in Anchorage is forecasting winds to remain from the east or southeast thru Tuesday which will cause ash from any further eruptions to continue to travel to the west or northwest. Meteorological conditions will be closely monitored in the event of subsequent eruptions.

VOLCANIC DUST AND PUBLIC IMPACT: Ashfall restricts visibility, and is a general nuisance. Individuals exposed to airborne volcanic ash may experience various eye, nose and throat irritation. Although ash can cause discomfort, short-term breathing of volcanic ash is not known to pose a significant health hazard for healthy individuals. However, exposure to ash can make breathing difficult for infants, the elderly and those with respiratory ailments. People with existing respiratory conditions, such as chronic bronchitis, emphysema and asthma, are more at risk for developing acute respiratory symptoms from breathing volcanic ash. Anyone in these risk groups should be particularly careful to avoid exposure. Contact your health provider if you are concerned about symptoms.

DEC advises everyone to avoid unnecessary exposure to ash. Wear a disposable face

mask outdoors to reduce inhalation of ash particles. Dust masks can be purchased at most hardware stores. Masks that seal to the face provide the best protection. Alternatively, a wet cloth or bandana placed over the mouth and nose can help reduce exposure.

Contact lens wearers are advised to switch to eye glasses to reduce eye irritation from ash exposure. Wearing goggles can help to protect your eyes and wearing long sleeved shirts as well as gloves may be helpful.

Remember that pets are also susceptible to all of these same symptoms, and should be kept indoors or sheltered from ashfall as well.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: For information on activity at the Redoubt Volcano, including aviation hazards, information on the transport of ash, current emissions, and other links, visit the National Weather Service website: <http://pafc.arh.noaa.gov>.

For specific information about the Redoubt Volcano, including seismic activity and the status of the current eruptions, visit the Alaska Volcano Observatory website at <http://www.avo.alaska.edu>. They also have a recording on the status of the volcano at (907) 786-7478 (local Anchorage number).

For more information on steps to take in the event of ashfall, visit the Department of Environmental Conservation, Air Quality Division, Volcanic Ashfall page at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/air/volcano.htm>.

For information on this advisory, contact Cindy Dettmer-Shea, Division of Air Quality, (907) 269-7676.

NOTIFICATION LIST:

DEC All Air – Quality
State Emergency Coordination Center
Office of the Governor (Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau)
Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health
Department of Natural Resources
Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
AQ Advisory Contacts and Media Contacts