

Volcanic eruption coats Japanese city with ash

August 19 2013, by Mari Yamaguchi



City officials wearing masks clean the pavement covered by ash Monday morning, Aug. 19, 2013 after the Sakurajima volcano erupted Sunday afternoon in Kagoshima, on the southern Japanese main island of Kyushu. People in the city wore masks and raincoats and used umbrellas to shield themselves from the ash after the eruption. (AP Photo/Kyodo News)

Residents in a southern Japanese city accustomed to frequent eruptions

from a nearby volcano were busy washing ash off the streets Monday after the mountain spewed a record-high smoke plume into the sky.

Ash wafted as high as 5 kilometers (3 miles) above the Sakurajima volcano in the southern [city](#) of Kagoshima on Sunday afternoon, forming the highest plume since the Japan Meteorological Agency started keeping records in 2006. Lava flowed about 1 kilometer (.6 miles) from the fissure, with several huge [volcanic rocks](#) rolling down the mountainside.



Volcanic smoke billows from Mount Sakurajima in Kagoshima, on the southern Japanese main island of Kyushu Sunday, Aug. 18, 2013. Kyodo reported that it erupted Sunday evening, marking the 500th eruption this year at the 1,117 meters (3,686 foot) high mountain, which is one of Japan's most active

volcanoes. There is no immediate reports of injuries. (AP Photo/Kyodo News)

Residents wore masks and raincoats and used umbrellas to shield themselves from the falling [ash](#). Drivers turned on their [headlights](#) in the dull evening gloom, and railway service in the city was halted temporarily so ash could be removed from the tracks.

Officials said no injuries or damage have been reported.



In this photo released by Kagoshima Local Meteorological Observatory, volcanic smoke billows from Mount Sakurajima in Kagoshima, on the southern Japanese main island of Kyushu Sunday, Aug. 18, 2013. Kyodo reported that it erupted Sunday evening, marking the 500th eruption this year at the 1,117 meters (3,686 foot) high mountain, which is one of Japan's most active volcanoes. There is no immediate reports of injuries. (AP Photo/Kagoshima Local Meteorological Observatory)

By Monday morning, the air was clearer as masked residents sprinkled water and swept up the ash. The city was mobilizing garbage trucks and water sprinklers to clean up.

But business largely returned to normal in the city of 600,000 people living only 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the volcano whose eruptions are part of their daily life.

"The smoke was a bit dramatic, but we are kind of used to it," said a city official who requested anonymity because he was not allowed to speak to the media.



In this Sunday, Aug. 18, 2013 photo, drivers use headlights early evening as the streets are covered by ash after the Sakurajima volcano erupted earlier in the day in Kagoshima, on the southern Japanese main island of Kyushu. People in the

city wore masks and raincoats and used umbrellas to shield themselves from the ash after the eruption. (AP Photo/Kyodo News)

Sunday's eruption was the 500th this year of Sakurajima, a statement from the city said.

JMA says there are no signs of a larger eruption but similar activity may continue. It maintains an earlier warning that people not venture near the volcano itself.



Volcanic smoke from Mount Sakurajima flow into an urban area in Kagoshima, on the southern Japanese main island of Kyushu Sunday, Aug. 18, 2013. Kyodo reported that it erupted Sunday evening, marking the 500th eruption this year at the 1,117 meters (3,686 foot) high mountain, which is one of Japan's most active

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Japan is on the "Ring of Fire," the seismic faults encircling the Pacific Ocean, and has frequent earthquakes and [volcanic activity](#).

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