

Alaska volcano's weeklong eruption eases after spewing another massive ash cloud

July 18 2023



This web camera image provided by the U.S. Geological Survey shows a low-level ash plume from the Shishaldin Volcano captured on Tuesday, July 18, 2023. An ongoing eruption of a remote volcano in Alaska's Aleutian Islands produced an ash cloud so large Tuesday warnings were sent to pilots about potentially dangerous conditions. Credit: Alaska Volcano Observatory/U.S. Geological Survey via AP

An ongoing eruption of a remote volcano in Alaska's Aleutian Islands produced an ash cloud so large Tuesday that warnings were sent to pilots about potentially dangerous conditions.

An ash cloud with an initial height of around 5.5 miles (8.9 kilometers) was reported following the morning eruption of Shishaldin Volcano. But by early afternoon, ash emissions were below 1.9 miles (3 kilometers), and the aviation alert was downgraded, according to the Alaska Volcano Observatory.

The volcano is about 700 miles (1,127 kilometers) southwest of Anchorage and sits near the middle of Unimak Island. The island's 65 or so residents live about 25 miles (40 kilometers) northeast of the volcano, in the community of False Pass.

Shishaldin Volcano began erupting July 11. A U.S. Coast Guard overflight confirmed lava erupted the same day within the summit crater.

A significant explosion early Friday produced an ash cloud that reached up to 7.5 miles (12 kilometers) and drifted south over the Pacific Ocean. A second smaller explosion occurred later Friday.

The volcano, one of the most active in the Aleutian arc, saw increased lava eruptions just after midnight Tuesday, with no significant ash emissions, the observatory said. That changed hours later with the ash cloud. The National Weather Service issued an advisory due to the drifting ash cloud.



This web camera image provided by the U.S. Geological Survey shows a low-level ash plume from the Shishaldin Volcano captured on Tuesday, July 18, 2023. An ongoing eruption of a remote volcano in Alaska's Aleutian Islands produced an ash cloud so large Tuesday warnings were sent to pilots about potentially dangerous conditions. Credit: Alaska Volcano Observatory/U.S. Geological Survey via AP



This web camera image provided by the U.S. Geological Survey shows glowing lava erupting within the summit crater of Shishaldin around 12:30 a.m. AKDT, Tuesday, July 18, 2023, as seen from the WTUG webcam located NW of the volcano. The ongoing eruption of a remote the volcano in Alaska's Aleutian Islands produced an ash cloud so large Tuesday warnings were sent to pilots about potentially dangerous conditions. Credit: Alaska Volcano Observatory/U.S. Geological Survey via AP

Volcanic ash is angular and sharp and has been used as an industrial abrasive. The powdered rock can cause a jet engine to shut down.

Shishaldin is a symmetric cone with a base diameter of 10 miles (16 kilometers), the observatory said. The 660-foot (210-kilometer) funnel-shaped crater often emits steam and an occasional amount of ash.

There have been at least 26 confirmed eruptions at Shishaldin Volcano since 1824. Most are small, but the observatory said a 1999 eruption produced an ash cloud that reached 8.5 miles (14 kilometers).

© 2023 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Alaska volcano's weeklong eruption eases after spewing another massive ash cloud (2023, July 18) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-07-alaska-volcano-week-long-eruption-eases.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.