

Hawaii's Kilauea volcano jolts with lava, quakes and gas

May 5 2018, by Caleb Jones And Marco Garcia



Residents from the lava affected areas of the Big Island hold a prayer before the start of a community meeting with local authorities at Pahoa High School, Friday, May 4, 2018, in Pahoa, Hawaii. (AP Photo/Marco Garcia)

Sputtering lava, strong earthquakes and toxic gas jolted the southern part

of the Big Island of Hawaii as magma shifted underneath a restless Kilauea volcano.

The trifecta of natural threats forced stressed out residents to evacuate and prompted the closure of parks and college campuses on Friday.

Multiple new vents, from which lava is spurting out of the ground, formed in the same residential neighborhood where molten rock first emerged Thursday. At midday, a magnitude 6.9 earthquake struck—the biggest of hundreds of quakes this week and the largest to strike the state in 43 years. Residents were also warned to watch out for dangerous levels of sulfuric gas.

Hawaiian Volcano Observatory spokeswoman Janet Babb said the earthquakes reflected the volcano adjusting to the shifting magma.

"The magma moving down the rift zones, it causes stress on the south flank of the volcano," Babb said. "We're just getting a series of earthquakes."

She said scientists were studying whether the quakes would affect the eruption.

The [lava lake](#) at Kilauea's summit crater dropped significantly, suggesting the magma was moving eastward toward Puna, a mostly rural district of forests, papaya farms and lava fields left by past eruptions.



Residents from the lava affected areas of the Big Island hold a prayer before the start of a community meeting with local authorities at Pahoa High School, Friday, May 4, 2018, in Pahoa, Hawaii. (AP Photo/Marco Garcia)

Officials ordered more than 1,700 people out of Big Island communities near the lava, warning of the dangers of spattering hot rock and high levels of sulfuric gas that could threaten the elderly and people with breathing problems. Two homes have burned.

Julie Woolsey evacuated her home late Thursday as a volcanic vent, or an opening in the Earth's surface where lava emerges, sprouted up on her street in the Leilani Estates neighborhood.

Lava was about 1,000 yards from her home, which Woolsey built on a lot purchased for \$35,000 11 years ago after living on Maui became too expensive.

"We knew we were building on an active volcano," she said, but added that she thought the danger from lava was a remote possibility.

She said she thought it was remote even days ago when she began packing and preparing to evacuate.



Residents from the lava affected areas attend a community meeting at Pahoa High School, Friday, May 4, 2018, in Pahoa, Hawaii. Community leaders, scientists, and local authorities answers questions about the lava eruption and evacuation plans. (AP Photo/Marco Garcia)

"You can't really predict what Pele is going to do," Woolsey said, referring to the Hawaiian volcano goddess. "It's hard to keep up. We're hoping our house doesn't burn down."

She let her chickens loose, loaded her dogs into her truck and evacuated with her daughter and grandson. She's staying at a cabin with her daughter's in-laws.

Local authorities held a community meeting with residents from lava affected areas Friday night at Pahoa High School.

Two new volcanic vents, from which lava is spurting, developed Friday, bringing the number formed to five.

State Sen. Russell Ruderman said he's experienced many earthquakes, but the magnitude-5.4 temblor that hit first "scared the heck out of me." Merchandise fell off the shelves in a natural food store he owns.



Big Island mayor Harry Kim speaks at a community meeting at Pahoa High School, Friday, May 4, 2018, in Pahoa, Hawaii. Community leaders, scientists, and local authorities answered questions about the lava eruption and evacuation plans. (AP Photo/Marco Garcia)

When the larger quake followed, he said he felt strong shaking in Hilo, the island's largest city that is roughly 45 minutes from the rural Puna area.

"We're all rattled right now," he said. "It's one thing after another. It's

feeling kind of stressful out here."

State officials didn't report damage to roadways. Hawaii County Acting Mayor Wil Okabe said the larger quake cracked a beam in a county gymnasium in Hilo, forcing workers to be sent home.

Hawaii Electric Light said the jolt knocked out power to about 14,400 customers, but electricity was restored about two hours later.

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park evacuated all visitors and non-emergency staff. The quakes triggered rock slides on park trails and crater walls. Narrow fissures appeared on the ground at a building overlooking the crater at Kilauea's summit.



In this still frame taken from video, lava flows over a road in the Puna District as a result of the eruption from Kilauea Volcano on Hawaii's Big Island Friday, May 4, 2018. The eruption sent molten lava through forests and bubbling up from paved streets and forced the evacuation of about 1,500 people who were still out of their homes Friday after Thursday's eruption. (Byron Matthews via AP)

The University of Hawaii at Hilo and Hawaii Community College both closed campuses to allow students and employees to "attend to personal business and priorities."

Authorities already had closed a long stretch of Highway 130, one of the main arteries through Puna, because of the threat of sulfuric gas.

At Leilani Estates, where lava was pushing through cracks in the earth, some residents still wanted to get home.

Brad Stanfill said the lava was more than 3 miles (5 kilometers) from his house but he was not allowed in because of a mandatory evacuation order. He was frustrated because he wanted to feed his rabbits and dogs and check on his property.

One woman angrily told police guarding Leilani Estates that she was going in and they couldn't arrest her. She stormed past police unopposed.



In this still frame taken from video, lava flows toward a home in the Puna District as a result of the eruption from Kilauea Volcano on Hawaii's Big Island Friday, May 4, 2018. The eruption sent molten lava through forests and bubbling up from paved streets and forced the evacuation of about 1,500 people who were still out of their homes Friday after Thursday's eruption. (Byron Matthews via AP)

Leilani Estates has about 1,700 residents and 770 homes. A nearby neighborhood, Lanipuna Gardens, which has a few dozen people, also has been evacuated.

Kilauea has been continuously erupting since 1983 and is one of five volcanoes that make up the Big Island. Activity picked up earlier this week, indicating a possible new lava outbreak.

The crater floor began to collapse Monday, triggering earthquakes and pushing the lava into new underground chambers. The collapse caused magma to push more than 10 miles (16 kilometers) downslope toward the populated southeast coastline.

Residents have faced lava threats before.

In 2014, lava burned a house and destroyed a cemetery near the town of Pahoa. Residents were worried it would cover the town's main road and cut off the community from the rest of the island, but the molten rock stalled.



In this still frame taken from video, lava flows toward a home in the Puna District as a result of the eruption from Kilauea Volcano on Hawaii's Big Island, Friday, May 4, 2018. The eruption sent molten lava through forests and bubbling up from paved streets and forced the evacuation of about 1,500 people who were still out of their homes Friday after Thursday's eruption. (Byron Matthews via AP)

From 1990 through 1991, lava slowly overtook the town of Kalapana, burning homes and covering roads and gardens.

Kilauea hasn't been the kind of volcano that shoots lava from its summit into the sky, causing widespread destruction. It tends to ooze [lava](#) from fissures in its sides, which often gives residents at least a few hours' warning before it reaches their property.



Kilauea volcano erupts, Friday, May 4, 2018, in Kalapana, HI. There are no immediate reports of major damage after a large earthquake struck Hawaii's Big Island near a volcanic eruption that has forced residents to evacuate from their homes. Hawaii National Guard spokesman Maj. Jeff Hickman says the Hilo airport and the highways didn't sustain any damage from Friday's magnitude-6.9 quake. (AP Photo/Marco Garcia)



This Friday, May 4, 2018, remote image provided by U.S. Geological Survey, shows a new lava fissure on Kilauea Volcano's lower East Rift Zone on Makamae and Leilani Streets in the Leilani Estates subdivision near Pahoa, Hawaii. Spatter was being thrown roughly 100 feet high at the time of this image. The Kilauea volcano sent more lava into Hawaii communities Friday, a day after forcing more than 1,500 people to flee from their mountainside homes, and authorities detected high levels of sulfur gas that could threaten the elderly and people with breathing problems. (U.S. Geological Survey via AP)



In this image released by the U.S. Geological Survey, steam rises from cracks in the road shortly before a fissure opened up on Kaupili Street in the Leilani Estates subdivision, Friday, May 4, 2018, in Pahoa, Hawaii. The Kilauea volcano sent more lava into Hawaii communities Friday, a day after forcing more than 1,500 people to flee from their mountainside homes, and authorities detected high levels of sulfur gas that could threaten the elderly and people with breathing problems. (U.S. Geological Survey via AP)



This photo provided by Hawaii Electric Light shows lava flowing over Mohala Street in the Leilani Estates area near Pahoia on the Big Island of Hawaii Friday, May 4, 2018. Nearly 1,500 people have fled from their homes after Hawaii's Kilauea volcano sent molten lava chewing through forests and bubbling up on paved streets in an eruption that one resident described as "a curtain of fire." (Hawaii Electric Light via AP)



This photo provided by Hawaii Electric Light shows Mohala Street in Leiliani Estates near the town of Pahoia on Hawaii's Big Island that is blocked by a lava flow from the eruption of Kilauea volcano. The Kilauea volcano sent more lava into Hawaii communities Friday, May 4, 2018, a day after forcing more than 1,500 people to flee from their mountainside homes, and authorities detected high levels of sulfur gas that could threaten the elderly and people with breathing problems. (Hawaii Electric Light via AP)



Mary Ann Sullivan, 59, looks at her belongings and her cat she pulled from her home after a mandatory evacuation of the Leilani Estates due to a lava eruption, Friday, May 4, 2018, in Pahoehoe, HI. The eruption took place about a block from Sullivan's home. Sullivan and her husband spent the night at a nearby shelter and does not know when they will be able to return. (AP Photo/Marco Garcia)



After being forced out of his home at the Leilani Estates due to a mandatory evacuation, Tim Sullivan, 61, sits in his pickup truck near a local shelter, Friday, May 4, 2018, in Pahoa, HI. The eruption took place about a block from Sullivan's home. He and his wife spent the night at a nearby shelter and does not know when they will be able to return. (AP Photo/Marco Garcia)

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