



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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VOG ADVISORY FOR CHANGES IN WIND DIRECTION

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health and Hawai'i County Civil Defense are advising the general public and visitors to be aware of expected changes in wind direction from normal trade winds to southwesterly Kona winds. Kona winds may cause vog conditions for communities located northeast of Kilauea summit. This includes communities in Volcano; Middle and Upper Puna; Hilo; Hamakua; and South Kohala. Neighbor islands may also be affected.

Hawai'i residents and visitors are advised to be prepared and aware of the surrounding conditions, and how they feel or may react to vog in the air. In the event of vog conditions, the following recommendations are provided:

- **Reduce outdoor activities that cause heavy breathing.** Avoiding outdoor activity and exercise during vog conditions can reduce exposure and minimize health risks. This is especially important for sensitive groups such as children, the elderly, and individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions such as asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, and chronic lung and heart disease.
- **Stay indoors and close windows and doors.** If an air conditioner is used, set it to recirculate.
- **Always keep medications on hand and readily available.** Individuals with asthma or other breathing problems who use a prescribed inhaler (such as Albuterol) should make sure it is always close by. These prescribed medications should be inhaled as soon as one is aware of or suspect that sulfur dioxide levels are high in their area. Continue to

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use medications as directed by a doctor. If any shortness of breath or chest tightness does not quickly improve, seek immediate medical care.

- Daily prescribed medications, should be taken on schedule and may provide protection from the effects of sulfur dioxide.
- **Contact a doctor** as soon as possible if any health problems develop as respiratory conditions can worsen rapidly.
- **Do not smoke** and avoid second-hand smoke.
- **Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration.**
- **Emergency Plans.** As a precaution, family emergency plans should be developed to be prepared in the event winds carry higher levels of sulfur dioxide, vog, and/or ash. A family emergency plan includes:
 - 1) A plan for leaving the area. This should cover leaving if evacuation is recommended or if you are feeling health effects and make your own decision to go to a different area.
 - 2) A plan to secure home, business, and property.
 - 3) Preparation of an evacuation kit.
 - 4) Plans for the care of pets.
 - 5) All household members should be familiar with their family emergency plans.

Additional information can be found at:

- ❑ Hawai'i County Civil Defense Agency (<http://co.hawaii.hi.us/cd/index.htm>)
- ❑ State of Hawai'i Department of Health (<http://hawaii.gov/health>)
- ❑ Governor's Website on Vog: (<http://hawaii.gov/gov/vog>)
- ❑ USGS Hawaiian Volcano Observatory (<http://hvo.wr.usgs.gov/>)
- ❑ VOG Help Line (866) 767-5044 (toll-free)

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