# Mount Spurr volcano shows signs of eruption threatening Anchorage and global air traffic



Mount Spurr, an 11,000-foot-tall volcano located approximately 80 miles from Anchorage, Alaska, is showing signs of potential eruption, prompting concern due to the widespread impact such an event could have locally and internationally. Anchorage, the state's most densely populated city with nearly 300,000 residents, lies within the possible ash cloud's reach, which could disrupt air travel and logistics on a significant scale.

Experts from the Alaska Volcano Observatory (AVO) have reported continued unrest at Mount Spurr, including "frequent small volcanic earthquakes" detected beneath the volcano in the past day. According to a Tuesday morning update from AVO, most of these earthquakes are too small to be precisely located, and so far, no unusual visual activity has been observed due to cloudy to partly cloudy conditions on webcams and satellite views.

Historically, Mount Spurr's last eruptive phase occurred in 1992, with three explosive events in July, August, and September. During this period, an ash cloud from the August eruption hovered over Anchorage, shutting down Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport (ANC) for about 20 hours, darkening skies midday, and depositing ash nearly an eighth of an inch thick across the city. The municipality reported nearly $2 million in damages from this eruption, covering office closures and cleanup costs. While there were no direct fatalities from the eruptions themselves, there were two heart attacks linked to the physical effort of shovelling ash, one of which was fatal.

The potential eruption now anticipated could similarly have far-reaching consequences. A massive ash plume is expected to shoot up to 50,000 feet into the atmosphere, posing severe risks to aviation. The ash particles are highly abrasive and can cause significant damage to aircraft, including windscreen pitting, fuselage abrasions, compressor blade erosion, and engine failure. Navigational and operational instruments may also be compromised by ash ingestion, making flights through the area extremely hazardous.

Anchorage International Airport is among the busiest cargo airports globally, ranking fourth in cargo traffic with over 8,000 cargo flights monthly. It serves as a crucial freight transit hub between Asia and North America. Hence, a closure resulting from an eruption could severely disrupt cargo shipments, e-commerce operations, and manufacturing supply chains. Fairbanks International Airport (FAI), another key regional airport, could also be affected and might have to close depending on ash dispersal.

Both ANC and FAI play vital roles in passenger flights as well, particularly for polar and Pacific air routes connecting North America, Asia, and Europe. These airports often serve as diversion or refuelling points. Closure of these hubs would force rerouting of flights, causing longer travel times and congestion at alternate locations.

Matt Haney, scientist-in-charge at the Alaska Volcano Observatory, described the forthcoming eruption as likely to be "explosive," resembling the 1992 events. Haney and his team have monitored signs of volcanic unrest since April 2024, tracking shallow earthquakes, ground deformation, and gas and steam emissions—all indicators of an impending eruption. He explained that the next phase to watch for would be a volcanic tremor, a prolonged shaking caused by rising magma, different from the brief quakes detected so far. In the 1992 eruption, such tremors were recorded about three weeks before the volcano erupted.

Health concerns related to ashfall include potential respiratory issues, as fine ash particles can penetrate deep into the lungs. This is particularly hazardous for individuals with pre-existing conditions such as asthma and bronchitis.

The anticipation of a Mount Spurr eruption illustrates the interconnected impact such natural events can have beyond immediate geographical boundaries, affecting urban life, transportation infrastructure, global supply chains, and public health. The Daily Mail is reporting on the situation with ongoing updates from the Alaska Volcano Observatory.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

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* <https://www.fox4news.com/news/alaskas-mount-spurr-being-closely-watched-signs-explosive-eruption> - This report details the Alaska Volcano Observatory's observation of thousands of earthquakes and significant terrain shifts at Mount Spurr, indicating potential volcanic activity.
* <https://www.livenowfox.com/news/mount-spurr-alaska-volcano-unrest> - This article discusses the Alaska Volcano Observatory's detection of significantly elevated volcanic gas emissions during recent monitoring flights at Mount Spurr, suggesting an increased likelihood of an eruption.
* <https://www.fox9.com/news/mount-spurr-alaska-volcano-unrest> - This report highlights the Alaska Volcano Observatory's findings of significantly elevated volcanic gas emissions and increased seismic activity at Mount Spurr, raising concerns about a potential eruption.
* <https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/volcanic_ash/spurr_1953_1992.html> - This source provides detailed information on the 1953 and 1992 eruptions of Mount Spurr, including the impact of ashfall on Anchorage's water supply and infrastructure.
* <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/alaska-volcano-mount-spurr-could-erupt-soon-scientists-say/> - This article reports on the Alaska Volcano Observatory's assessment that the likelihood of an eruption at Mount Spurr in the next few weeks or months has increased, based on recent measurements of elevated volcanic gas emissions.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-14661071/volcano-eruption-alaska-global-impact-mount-spurr.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data