

Kilauea, Hawaii's Most Active Volcano, Erupts Again

The volcano, located on the Big Island, last erupted in June. The Hawaiian Volcano Observatory said there was no immediate threat to people or property.

By Jin Yu Young on 11 Sep 2023



Lava from the Kilauea volcano in Hawaii on Sunday. U.S.G.S. via YouTube

Kilauea, Hawaii's most active volcano, erupted for the second time in three months on Sunday afternoon, according to the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory, which said there was no immediate danger to residents.

The 3:15 p.m. eruption threw fountains of lava almost 500 feet into the air, according to David Phillips, the deputy scientist-in-charge at the observatory, which is part of the United States Geological Survey. The observatory raised alert levels for Kilauea to a warning from a watch just under an hour before the eruption began.

Livestreamed footage showed fissures at the base of the volcano's main crater, Halema'uma'u, generating lava flows on its surface floor.

Kilauea, in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park on Hawaii's Big Island, last erupted in June, and the observatory had been closely monitoring it for another possible eruption since August. Increasingly frequent earthquakes, swelling of ground during the past few weeks and pools of magma flowing upward over the past 24 hours were all signs of an imminent eruption, according to the observatory.

Mr. Phillips said the volcano's location in the national park put it at a safe distance from local residents. "There is no immediate threat to human life or property," he said by telephone.

But he said volcanic smog — a mixture of sulfur dioxide and other volcanic gases — could pose a health risk to people with respiratory issues. Volcanic smog can be carried by wind across large distances and can last as long as an eruption continues.

Mr. Phillips said it was unclear how long the eruption would last, noting that they can range in duration from a few weeks to several decades. But he predicted that it would not be like the 2018 eruption that was accompanied by tens of thousands of earthquakes and destroyed over 700 homes, according to the National Park Service.

Kilauea, Hawaii's youngest volcano, formed underwater around 280,000 years ago, according to the National Park Service. It had erupted almost continuously from 1983 to 2018, and again from 2020 onward. A recent eruption lasted from September 2021 through December 2022. The June eruption lasted about 12 days.

Discussion Qns:

- 1. What are the characteristics of a volcanic eruption?*
- 2. How do the characteristics of the volcanic eruption affect people living in the area?*