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Hawai'i Volcanoes News Release

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Explosive Eruption in Kilauea's Summit Crater Prompts More Closures

At 2:58 am on Wednesday, March 19, 2008 scientists at the USGS Hawaiian Volcano Observatory recorded a small explosion in Halema`uma`u crater at the summit of Kilauea Volcano.

Rock debris was scattered over a 75 acre area that included portions of Crater Rim Drive and the trail, parking lot, and overlook at Halema'uma'u crater.

This is the first explosive event in Halema'uma'u since 1924. Scientists have advised park officials of the possibility of future explosive activity.

Today, Superintendent Cindy Orlando issued the following orders that will be in effect until further notice:



The rocks that rained down on the rim of Halema'uma'u destroyed the overlook's wooden guardrail. The site has been closed since mid-February due to elevated levels of SO2 gas. USGS photo

- Crater Rim Drive from Kilauea Military Camp to Jaggar Museum is closed to all vehicles, hikers and bicyclists.
- Crater Rim Trail, including Kilauea Overlook, from Kilauea Military Camp to Jaggar Museum is also closed.

The closures implemented on February 20, 2008 are still in effect and include Crater Rim Drive from Jaggar Museum southeast to Chain of Craters Road; Crater Rim Trail from Jaggar Museum parking lot southeast to Chain of Craters Road; and all trails leading to Halema'uma'u crater including those from Byron Ledge Trail, 'Iliahi (Sandalwood) Trail, and Ka'u Desert Trail.

Most of the park and its facilities remain open including Kilauea Visitor Center, Volcano House Hotel, Kilauea Military Camp, Volcano Art Center Gallery, Thurston Lava Tube, Devastation Trail, Kilauea Iki Trail, Sulphur Banks Trail, Chain of Craters Road, Kulanaokuaiki Campground, Namakanipaio Campground and all backcountry campsites.

For more information and photos go to http://hvo.wr.usgs.gov/kilauea/update/images.html

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