



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

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Hawai'i Volcanoes News Release

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Park Remains Closed Due to Unhealthy SO2 Levels

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park remains closed.

Park Superintendent Cindy Orlando ordered closure of the park at about 11:00 am on Wednesday, April 23, 2008 due to elevated levels of sulfur dioxide gas.

"Stagnant weather prevails again today," said Incident Commander Joe Molhoek. "It would be unwise and unhealthy for a visitor to be at a summit overlook or on a trail in these conditions."

The park is situated on two active volcanoes, Mauna Loa and Kilauea. The toxic, invisible gas of concern is being emitted from Halema'uma'u crater at the summit of Kilauea and from Pu'u 'O'o on the volcano's east rift.

This year, SO2 emissions from Halema'uma'u have been as high as ten times above normal levels.

"We're in a new layer of complexity," said Orlando. "Fortunately, the park has a cadre of rangers adept at opening and closing areas in the wake of critical health and safety concerns."

A handful of national park service emergency responders remain on duty. They are equipped with real-time personal SO2 monitors.

"We continue to monitor wind speed and direction as well as SO2 levels throughout the park," added Molhoek. "The park will reopen when favorable weather returns and the threat of unhealthy sulfur dioxide levels diminish."

Residents and visitors continue to enjoy the lava viewing site at the end of Highway 130 near Kalapana, operated by the County of Hawai'i. They are also encouraged to explore the three national park on the island's west side—Pu'u honua o Honaunau, Kaloko-Honokohau, and Pu'ukohola Heiau—or visit Pana'ewa Rainforest Zoo and Gardens, Akaka Falls State Park, Imiloa Astronomy Center, Lyman Mission House and Museum, Pacific Tsunami Museum, and Mokuapapa Discovery Center.



*Volcanic gas obscures its source—Halema`uma`u crater
For a live panorama go to <http://hvo.wr.usgs.gov/cam3/>*

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