

Lung association offers tips on volcano's dust

There are no proven effects from occasional contact with volcanic ash, according to the American Lung Association of Alaska.

Significant exposure, over a period of years will cause silicosis or significant scarring of the lungs. Officials do not expect any significant problems from the falling ash from Redoubt Volcano.

Individuals who need to take health precautions are outside employees, cleanup workers and individuals with lung diseases.

The association offers these tips for dealing with the ash:

- Avoid visible falling dust or ash.
- Do not smoke — it can complicate health effects.
- Do not wear contact lenses; if you must wear them, wash them every three hours.
- Lung disease patients should go out only when necessary.
- Wet ash before sweeping or cleaning to reduce the amount of dust in the air.
- Be cautious while driving, and drive with car vents closed.
- Indoor activity is recommended for children and pets due to their higher respiratory rate.
- For those individuals who need to be outdoors for any extensive period of time, the American Thoracic Society recommends the use of an industrial/respiratory mask, which must fit securely and form an airtight seal.