

"Ash Particles and Home Clean-Up Problems"

The following advice is provided by the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Furniture, fabrics and floor coverings may be damaged by volcanic ash particles that are sharp-edged. Volcanic ash is different from ordinary household dust. Its sharp crystalline structure causes scratches to surfaces when it is brushed for removal.

To clean household surfaces, a vacuum cleaner should be used to remove as much ash as possible. Then:

After vacuuming carpets and upholstery, you may want to use a detergent/shampoo cleaner. Avoid excess rubbing because the sharp ash particles may cut the textile fibers.

Glass, porcelain, enamel and acrylic surfaces may be scratched if wiped too vigorously. Use a detergent soaked cloth or sponge and dab or blot rather than wipe.

High-shine wood finishes will be dulled by the fine grit. Vacuum surfaces and then blot with a cloth treated to pick up dust. A tack cloth used by furniture refinisher's should work well.

Soiled clothing will require extra detergent. Wash small loads of clothing, using plenty of water so clothes will have room to move freely in the water.

Do not mix heavily soiled clothes with garments that are lightly soiled.

Be sure clothes are free of ash before putting them in an automatic dryer. Ash may scratch the inner surface of the dryer.

During the months following a volcanic eruption, filters should be replaced often. Air and furnace filters need careful attention.

Clean refrigerator air intakes. Clean any surface that may blow air and re-circulate the ash. Stove fans and vents should be cleaned thoroughly.