

Mt. Meakan Volcanic Disaster Prevention

Mt. Meakan is an active volcano. Its impressive terrain and deep craters with fuming sulfuric steam vents and ponds, along with panoramic views from the summit, make climbing the mountain a particularly rewarding experience. However, it is crucial to be aware of the dangers of climbing such a mountain.

The last major eruption on Mt. Meakan occurred in 1955. In 2008, authorities closed the three trails leading to the summit after a minor eruption and reopened the trails again in 2009. The volcano is active and emits gas regularly.

Local authorities believe Mt. Meakan may erupt again in the near future, and have set up specialized equipment in the area. While hiking, you may notice a thick black cord running up the trails; this is a power cable that provides electricity to the sirens and monitoring devices along the routes.

The volcano is continuously assessed and ranked on a scale from one to five based on its likelihood to erupt and the level of danger, with five being the highest level. Depending on the level, access to the mountain may be restricted. You should always check the current alert level before setting out on a hike in the area. At the Akankohan Eco-museum Center, this information is displayed on an information board and updated in real time. You can also check the Japan Meteorological Agency's website: (https://www.jma.go.jp/en/volcano/map_1.html).

When the alert level is one, hikers can ascend to the top of Mt. Meakan and up to the crater. At level two, access is restricted from the Seventh Station of each of the mountain's three hiking trails. At any level higher than two, all hiking trails are closed.

While hiking Mt. Meakan, it is important to keep safety in mind. Be aware that the sulfurous fumes emitted from the crater can cause nausea, so try to avoid breathing them in.