

2.5 Responding to Volcanoes

On average there are about 70 volcanic eruptions around the world each year. Most eruptions do not directly affect people. However, after a major volcanic eruption that does affect people, governments produce short-term responses and long-term responses.



Exam Expert

Short-term responses

Implement an **emergency plan**:

1. Use **search and rescue** teams to find survivors. Injured people will need **medical treatment**. Search and rescue will also find out the number of deaths. The dead will need to be buried immediately to prevent the spread of disease.
2. Provide clean drinking **water**, **shelter** and **food** for survivors.
3. Provide **information points** so survivors can find family members.
4. **Control** the disaster area to prevent crime and to allow **aid supplies** to be delivered.



Figure 2.12 Search and rescue teams help find survivors.

Long-term responses

1. **Preparation:** Governments in countries with active volcanoes need to have emergency plans to evacuate people from affected areas. They need to train rescue workers and provide food, water and shelter for people who have been made homeless by an eruption. Many countries, including Ireland, have international **disaster response systems** in place. These allow countries to transport **aid** quickly to locations affected by disasters such as volcanic eruptions.
2. **Planning:** By controlling planning, governments can ensure that large populations do not grow up around volcanoes. Where there is already a population, **hazard mapping** can predict the likely path of lava flows. This allows governments to create '**exclusion zones**' within which people may not live.
3. **Education:** Educating about the hazards of volcanoes can help save lives during an eruption. Teaching how to prepare for a disaster and to keep supplies of **emergency** food, water, clothes and tents can help save lives if people have to leave their homes suddenly.
4. **Rebuilding:** People made homeless by a disaster will need to be rehoused in a new location. Businesses that have been destroyed will need to be rebuilt. Services such as water supplies, electricity and telephone cables will need to be replaced. Roads and bridges may also have to be rebuilt. This work can take a long time depending on the size of the disaster.