

Hawaiian Lava Wall Cuts Off Highway 137

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Photo

courtesy of NPR.[/caption]

Summary: Lava from the Kilauea eruption on Hawaii's Big Island continues to spread.

Since May, Hawaii's Big Island volcano has been active; and on Saturday, the destructive lava from the Kilauea eruption flowed onto Highway 137, creating a 20-foot wall that has blocked thousands of people's means of transportation. The highway closure is expected to impact thousands of locals.

"Around 10:30 p.m. on Saturday, the powerful lava flows cut a crucial access point to Lower Puna communities when it crossed the road just south of the major roadway's 13-mile marker. The late-night lava flow forced Big Island police to shut down parts of the highway and implement roadblocks between Kamaili and Pohoiki roads," [Hawaii News Now](#) stated.

The lava has been setting homes and land ablaze, and earlier this month when cracks in the earth began to show, about 26 homes were destroyed on the east side of Leilani Estates.

Hawaii News Now said that Highway 130 is still open to residents of the Big Island, although it has been developing cracks. In response, authorities have installed metal plates and have created weight restrictions for motorists who take that route.

The volcano on Hawaii's Big Island first showed activity during the first week of May. The ground split open in Leilani Estates, and residents were told to evacuate the area. Over a week later, the volcano erupted, sending a volcanic cloud 30,000 feet into the air.

[NPR](#) said that the lava is also spilling into the Pacific Ocean and generating "laze," a local term that describes a combination of hydrochloric acid, steam, and fine glass particles. The Hawaii County Civil Defense Agency said that the laze could cause human illness.

"Health hazards of laze include lung damage, and eye and skin irritation," the Hawaii County Civil Defense Agency said. "Be aware that the laze plume travels with the wind and can change direction without warning."

Residents in Hawaii have said to the press that the volcano is loud and explodes frequently.

"There continue to be explosions and earthquakes from the volcano's summit — many are saying it sounds like a war zone," Jackie Young of Hawaii Public Radio reported.

Big Island resident Corey Hale told NPR that she abandoned her home and is staying in the parking lot of the community center in Pahoa.

"It's been scary," Hale said. "None of us think that there's going to be some sudden crazy random eruption here in the parking lot, but it's just scary to be so close to such a powerful natural event, and feeling the ground shaking all the time and see the red of the sky. And then just not knowing — you know, the not knowing."

- [Are Hawaii's Big Island Homes Covered by Volcano Insurance?](#)
- [Hawaii's Kilauea Volcano Erupts at Summit](#)

What do you think of the environment on Hawaii's Big Island? Let us know in the comments below.