

Volcanic Eruption and Tsunami in Tonga

The Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai underwater volcano in Tonga erupted on the 15 January 2022. The eruption sent a tsunami towards the coastal areas of Tonga's capital, Nuku'alofa on the main island of Tongatapu. Waves reportedly reaching a height of 15 metres have caused severe damaged with many buildings near the waterfront completely destroyed.

The eruption was heard throughout the South Pacific and caused a volcanic mushroom plume which extended to cover the entirety of Tonga's 170+ islands in a thick layer of ash. Aerial images made available reveal extensive damage to the islands closest to Volcano, including Mango, Fonoifua, Nomuka, Kolomotu'a, 'Eua as well as western Tongatapu.

Internet and phone lines went down at 18:40 local time on Saturday evening and whilst some communications have now been possible, the main lines are still down as a result of a damaged undersea cable which could take weeks to repair. The main airport for the islands was not damaged, but thick ash is hindering operations and international aid efforts which will be made possible once cleared.

Local Expertise supported by our regional network

McLarens offices in New Zealand and Fiji are preparing to respond to the devastation caused. The global pandemic means that entry to Tonga is currently restricted, however, we are in discussions with the Tongan authorities to enable qualified Loss Adjusters to travel from New Zealand and Fiji and to enter local quarantine as soon as possible.

We have been in contact with a local surveying company in Tonga with whom we have partnered with previously and have proven to be reliable and capable of gathering information as directed. The team consist of five surveyors and have access to drones for carrying out aerial surveys.

The local surveyors mandate will be to conduct damage surveys only and will be closely monitored by our qualified Loss Adjusters who will handle all insurance aspects and reporting.

Should you require our assistance please do not hesitate to contact us.

Details of our proposed incident response team are provided below:



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