STAY INFORMED. MAKE A PLAN. BE PREPARED

ODM NEWSLETTER

DISASTER FACTS AND TIDBITS

OFFICE OF DISASTER MANAGEMET VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

JANUARY 18, 2021 OCTOBER - DECEMBER

ODM Recognized Volunteers on International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction

The Office of Disaster Management (ODM) joined the rest of the disaster management arena in commemorating International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction on October 13, 2020.

The United Nations designated 13 October as International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDRR) to promote a global culture of disaster risk reduction. It provided an opportunity to acknowledge the progress being made towards reducing disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015- 2030.

The Sendai Framework has seven strategic targets and for 2020 the focus was on Target E: "Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020".

The theme for 2020 focused on Disaster Risk Governance and driving home the message that many disasters can be avoided or prevented if there are disaster risk reduction strategies in place to manage and reduce existing levels of risk and to avoid the creation of new risks.

The Commonwealth of Dominica recognized the importance of good governance in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and continues to work assiduously on having strategies and plans in place to manage risks. This became even more pressing following the impact of Major Hurricane Maria in 2017 and the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic prompting policy makers and planners to rethink normal operations.

Work continues on the Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Legislation which will be updated to incorporate lessons learned from recent events including provisions for responding to pandemics.

The new installment of the County Work Programme (CWP) that will guide disaster management activities of NEPO over the five-year period 2021-2025, is in the final stages of development. The CWP is a results-based, climate smart, systematic approach to Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

The National Disaster Plan, currently under review, continues to provide valuable guidance on national disaster preparedness and response.

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COMING SOON!

COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA

COUNTRY WORK PROGRAMME FOR COMPREHENSIVE DISASTER MANAGEMENT 2021 - 2025

Highlighting volunteers

On International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020, the ODM recognized volunteers who supported the national disaster management system. The focus groups for 2020 were volunteer trainers in Emergency Shelter Management, Emergency Radio Communication and Warehouse and Supplies Distribution. Images below depict Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of National Security and Home Affairs, Ms. Jo-Ann Commodore, presenting certificates and tokens of appreciation to volunteers.

Mr. Lazare Charles,
Shelter Management

Sergeant Joseph Raymond,
Emergency Radio Communication

Mrs. Vernanda Raymond,
Shelter Management

Ms. Lydia LeBlanc
Shelter Management

Nurse Fiona Glenville,
Shelter Management

Ms. Vanya David,
Warehouse Management and Supplies Distribution

Nurse Priscilla Prevost,
Warehouse Management and Supplies Distribution

Mrs. Calma Louis,
Warehouse Management and Supplies Distribution

"good national and local strategies for disaster risk reduction must be multi-sectoral, linking policies in areas such as land use, building codes, public health, education, agriculture, environmental protection, energy, water resources, poverty reduction and climate change adaptation" (UN).

ODM Observes World Tsunami Awareness Day

The Office of Disaster Management (ODM) observed World Tsunami Awareness day on November 5, 2020. The theme was in keeping with that of International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, focusing on Disaster Risk Governance and promoting target (E) of the Sendai Framework which encourages countries to have national tsunami plans and strategies in place to reduce tsunami risks.

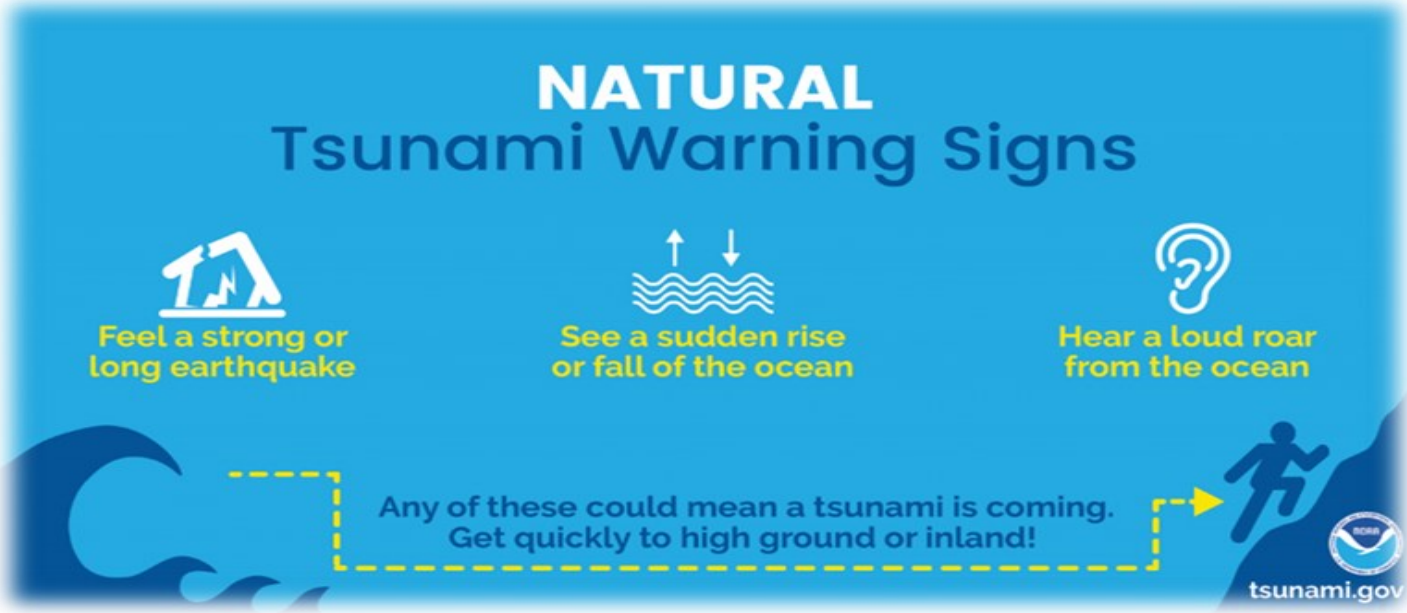
In January 2020, the United Nations Development Programme and their partners including CDEMA, OCHA, the International Federation of Red Cross and the European Union under the DIPECHO Project (Phase II), "Strengthen integrated and cohesive preparedness capacity at a regional, national and community level in the Caribbean" provided tremendous support to the ODM and the National Disaster Management system in building tsunami awareness and readiness in the northeastern coastal community of Calibishie.

Under this project, a simulation exercise was conducted at Calibishie which involved community members as well as key stakeholders such as schools, Village Council, Disaster Committees, first responders and the Dominica Red Cross Society. A draft National Tsunami Warning Protocol was also developed for Dominica.

Tsunami Preparedness Planning in the community of Calibishie.

Students of Calibishie Primary School moving uphill to safe ground during tsunami simulation.

Natural Tsunami Warning Signs



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What is a tsunami?

A tsunami is a series of huge ocean waves that can be caused by earthquakes, landslides, volcanic eruptions or even asteroids. While a tsunami may be a rare event, it is considered to be among the world's deadliest and costliest natural hazards. More than 80% of the world's tsunamis were caused by earthquakes. The travel time for a local tsunami is generally less than 1 hour, and may be as little as 10 minutes. If you live, work or play on the coast, it is important to be tsunami smart and know the natural tsunami warning signs.

IF YOU EXPERIENCE THESE SIGNS...GET TO HIGHER GROUND!

There may not always be time to wait for an official tsunami warning from the authorities. A natural tsunami warning may your first, best or only warning that a tsunami is on its way.

Natural tsunami warnings include **FEELING** a strong or long earthquakes, **HEARING** a loud roar (like a train or an airplane) from the ocean and or **SEEING** unusual ocean behavior such as the ocean looks like a fast-rising flood or a wall of water; Or, the water drain away suddenly, showing the ocean floor, reefs and fish like a very low, low tide.

If you experience any of these warnings, even just one, a tsunami could be coming – move quickly to higher ground or inland. Higher ground could be the 3rd floor or higher of buildings or even a very strong tree. However, ensure that you move to a safe area at least 100 feet or more above sea level, or at least one mile inland. Stay out of the tsunami hazard or evacuation zone until local officials tell you it is safe. The first wave may not be the last or the largest and the danger may last for hours or days.

Building Public Hazard Awareness

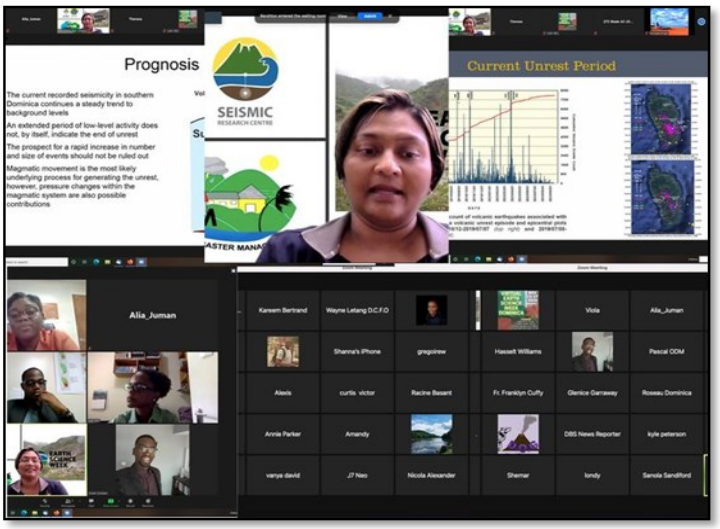
Public engagement to build hazard awareness is critical in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management. Presentations and trainings on the hazards that normally accompany hydro-met events were provided throughout the hurricane season (June 1 to November 30) and catered to a wide cross section of the public. The ODM's hazard awareness programme also focused on geo-hazards and included information on earthquake, tsunami and volcanic hazards.

One of the highlights in public education during the period was the collaboration between the ODM and the UWI Seismic Research Centre (SRC) in executing a virtual Geo-Hazard Awareness Campaign aligned to Earth Science Week (ESW) 2020. The activities for the week kicked off on Monday November 23rd with a simulcast discussion hosted by the UWI SRC and ODM teams. Over 80 students were treated to a virtual tour of the SRC on Tuesday November 24th. On Wednesday 25th, SRC and the ODM facilitated a virtual presentation to the general public. Dr. Erouscilla Joseph, Director of SRC, provided a very engaging and informative overview of geo-hazards in Dominica that was well received by over 90 participants who joined the meeting. The presentation was followed by a Q&A session which allowed the public the opportunity to gain further insight about volcano and earthquake monitoring activities on Dominica. On Thursday 27th November, the UWI SRC hosted a focus group discussion on Volcanic Alert Level Systems (VALS) with national stakeholders which included representatives from the Dominica Police Force, the Meteorological Service, Dominica Red Cross, Ministry of Public Works, Physical Planning and the Fire and Ambulance Services. Throughout the week, the public was engaged on Social media where interesting and useful nuggets of information about volcano and seismic hazards were circulated.

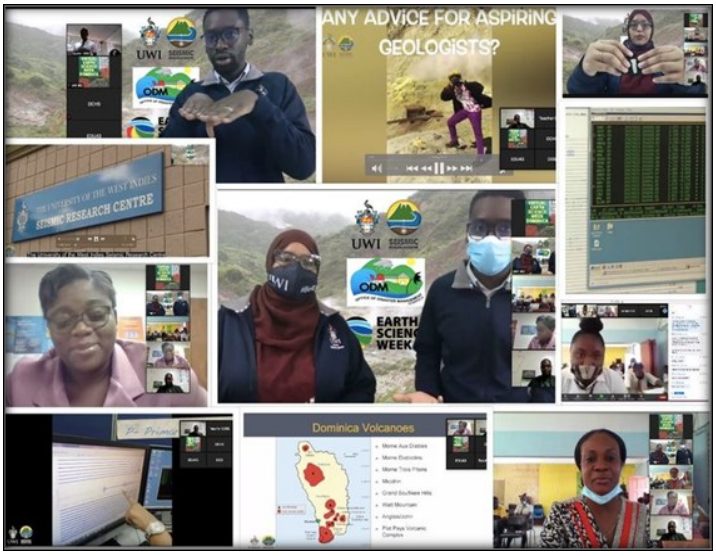
Mr. Fitzroy Pascal, NDC- ODM and Dr. Erouscilla Joseph, Director- SRC, facilitated a virtual launch of the Geo-hazard Awareness Campaign with a focus on Volcano and Seismic hazards in Dominica.

Scenes from Earth Science Week of Activities

Main presenters for the Student Virtual Tour of SRC, Alia Juman and Omari Graham



Presenter Dr Erouscilla Joseph, members of the ODM and SRC team (lower left) and general participants during the public presentation on Wednesday November 25th



Snapshot of students and teachers along with members of the ODM and SRC team during the virtual tour of SRC.

Simplifying the Science — Alia Juman demonstrating plate movements to students utilizing cream cookies

Students and teachers participating in the Q&A Session on Tuesday Nov 24th .

Volcano Preparedness - Volcanic Alert Systems

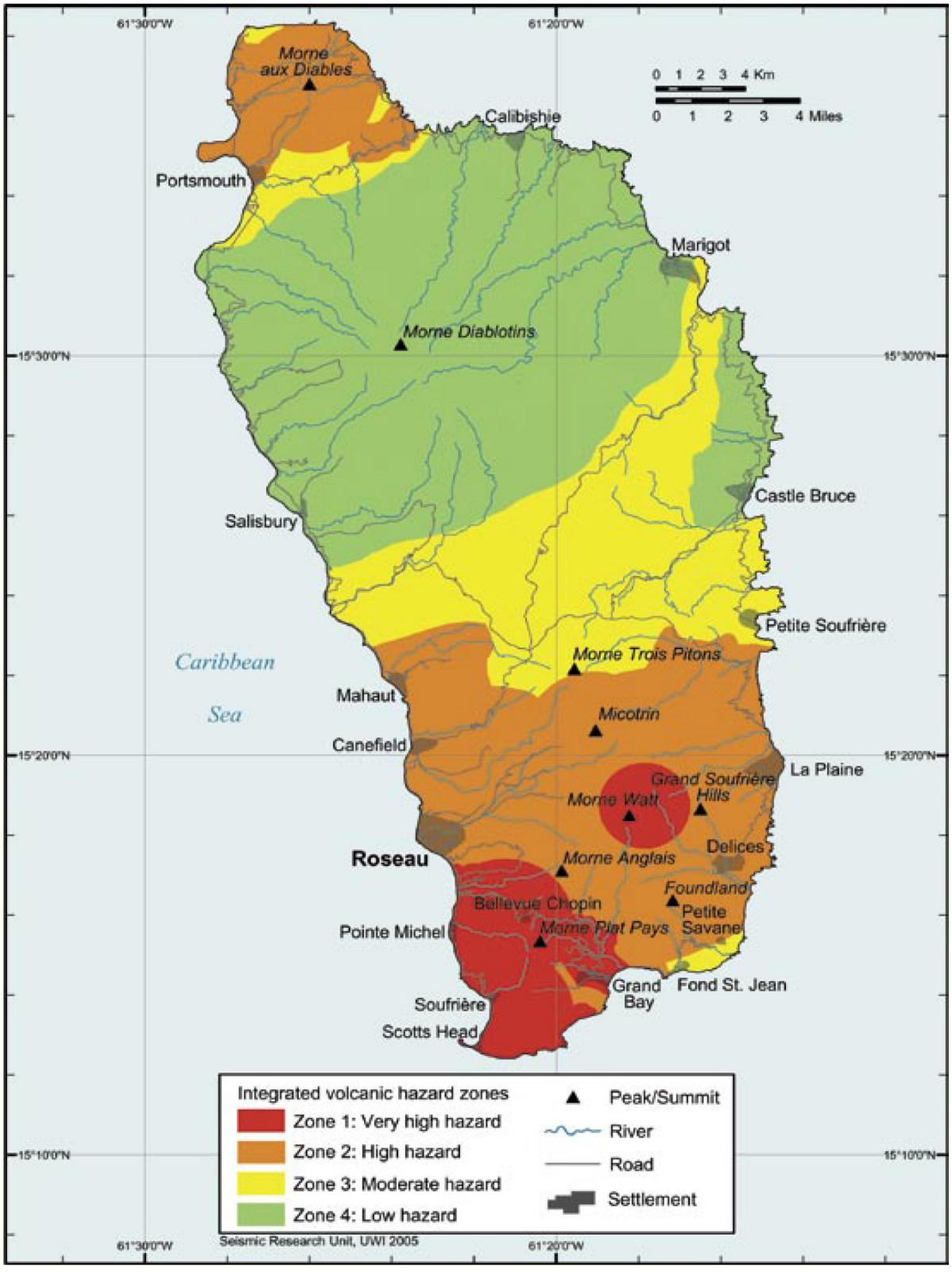
The Volcanic Alert System (VALS) is an important component of the National Volcanic Plan. The Volcano Alert System provides information on alert level based on observed volcanic activity and outlines expected actions of he scientists along with recommended actions for emergency managers including what information or guidance should be provided to the public. The alert table is shown below.

VOLCANO ALERT TABLE

Alert Level	Symptoms	Action By Scientists	Recommended Action: Civil Authorities
Green	Volcano is quiescent; seismic and fumarolic activity are at or below historical level at the volcano. No other unusual activity has been observed.	Normal monitoring	Undertake on-going public awareness campaigns and work on volcanic emergency plans.
Yellow	Volcano is restless: seismically or fumarolic activity or both are above the historical level at the volcano or unusual activity has been observed (this activity will be specified at the time that the alert level is raised)	Monitoring system will be brought up to full capacity. Civil authorities alerted.	Undertake on-going public awareness campaigns and work on volcanic emergency plans. Advise vulnerable communities of evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency
Orange	Highly elevated level of seismicity or fumarolic activity or both or other highly unusual symptoms. Eruption may occur with less thank twenty-four hours' notice.	Monitoring system continually manned. Regular visual inspection of potential vent areas. Continuous ground deformation and hydrothermal monitoring. Daily assessment reports to civil authorities	Coordinate evacuation (if necessary) based on hazard zones. Entry to the restricted access zones by scientists will be permitted after evacuation on a case-by-case basis. Organize regular radio and television announcements.
Red	Eruption is in progress or may occur without further warning,	Measures as permitted by safety conditions. Civil authorities advised continuously	Coordinate continued evacuation as necessary. Organize regular radio and television announcements.

DOMINICA VOLCANIC HAZARD ZONES

Knowing where you live in relation to the volcanoes can help to determine how much danger you face. Get information about the volcanic hazard map of Dominica. This will help you in preparing your emergency plan including knowing your evacuation route if you live in the orange and red zones. Contact the ODM for more information at odm@dominica.gov.dm.



Spared from Tropical Cyclones During a Very Active Hurricane Season

The 2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season was indeed a busy one with thirty (30) named storms. Dominica was not directly affected by tropical cyclones during the season. However, the island was not spared from the usual November troughs. The ODM team, the Ministry of Public Works and the Digital Economy and other support personnel were kept busy during the latter part of the season responding to floods and landslides across sections the island which resulted from heavy and prolonged rainfall due to troughs. Most notable events occurred on November 8-11 and November 28-29, 2020.

The November 8-11 rains affected mainly the north eastern, eastern and interior sections of Dominica with over sixteen (16) locations reporting impacts. Minor damages were reported to the road network, power and water utilities networks. Localized disruption to power and water services were also observed in some communities due to downed trees severing connections.

Landslides, including mudslides and rock falls, which lead to blocked or partially blocked roads affected the communities of Thibaud (Vieille Case to Penville area), Bense, Calibishie, Wesley, Melville Hall to Marigot Highway, Kalinago Territory (Crayfish River, Salybia, St Cyr, Mahaut Rive and Sineku) and Castle Bruce. Flash flooding and landslides which temporarily hampered mobility also affected Rosalie and Mourne Jaune in the Southeast and the Corona to Pond Casse Road in the interior of the island.

Teams of workers from the National Employment Personnel (NEP) assisted in clearance works in Penville, Vieille Case, Thibaud, Calibshie and the Kalinago Territory. No causalities or injuries were reported.

Landslide at Lower Bense

Landslide along Melville Hall to Marigot Highway

Landslide at Upper Penville

Landslide at St Cyr in Kalinago Territory

November trough Impacts cont'd

Landslide along the Corona / Pond Casse Road partially blocked the bridge cavity and damaged water main.

"Predictions for an active or an extremely active hurricane season does not mean you have to prepare more than if the prediction is for a normal or below normal season. What is required is simply to take the necessary actions and be prepared at all times as it only takes one system to disrupt our lives."

A trough system closed out the 2020 Hurricane Season affecting mainly the northern region of Dominica from November 28-29. Flash flooding and minor landslides affected the Portsmouth area and environs including Bellhall Road, Chance – One-mile Stretch and Bourne to Dos D'ane. Notably, flooding of the Hampstead Bypass Bridge temporarily prevented its use.

Debris fall in Bourne

Flooding at Hampstead Bypass Bridge

Mudflow between Bourne and Dos D'ane

LANDSLIDE FACTS

- ◊ Landslides are more frequent during times of heavy rainfall.
- ◊ Areas that are generally prone to landslide hazards include:
  - ⇒ On or at the base of slopes or steep hills
  - ⇒ Under cliffs
  - ⇒ Existing old landslide areas
  - ⇒ At the base or top of a steep cut slope or hill.

Safety Tips

- ◊ Stay awake and alert during heavy rainfall events if you live in a vulnerable area
- ◊ Plant ground cover on slopes to improve stability
- ◊ Build retaining walls
- ◊ Build channels to direct water flow around or away from buildings

Regional Shelters Project Update

Construction works continue on the Regional Emergency Shelters at Jimmit and Castle Bruce. The Jimmit shelter is designed to accommodate 500 persons while the Castle Bruce Regional Shelter will accommodate approximately 300 persons. Work is expected to commence on the Mini EOC and Disaster Relief Warehouse at Castle Bruce in January 2021.

Southern section of the Jimmit Emergency Shelter

Western section of the Jimmit Emergency Shelter

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

March 11, 2021 - CARIBE WAVE

March 11, 2021 - NATIONAL SCHOOL EARTH QUAKE DRILL

ROLL-OUT OF DOMINICA'S COUNTRY WORK PROGRAMME FOR COMPREHENSIVE DISASTER MANAGEMENT 2021-2025

Be In The Know

Are all the volcanoes in the Caribbean connected so that an erupting volcano on one island will trigger the others nearby?

No, volcanoes in the Caribbean are not connected. Volcanoes on individual islands are formed by the same process, i.e. subduction at the plate boundary, but they do not share the same magma chamber, and are not linked by long underground magma conduits. A volcanic eruption on one island, therefore, cannot trigger an eruption on another island.

Can eruptions occur without warning and destroy the entire island?

It is unlikely that an eruption will occur without warning. Volcanic eruptions in the Eastern Caribbean are usually preceded by recognizable symptoms, such as small earthquakes, changes in gas chemistry, and/or ground deformation (swelling of the mountain) long before an eruption occurs. The Seismic Research Centre operates a monitoring system which should enable scientists to provide sufficient warning to the authorities prior to an eruption so that appropriate action can be taken.

Common Volcanic Hazards

ASH FALLS - during a volcanic eruption ash falls can be thick enough to collapse roofs, destroy vegetation and cause aircraft and car engines to malfunction. Ash falls can also cause serious respiratory problems if they are inhaled.

MUDFLOW or LAHARS - can damage everything in its path

PYROCLASTIC FLOWS - mixture of HOT GASES, ASH AND ROCK FRAGMENTS. It can burn the skin, cause inhalation injuries and suffocation

GASES - cause respiratory issues, irritate the eye, nose and throat

LAVA FLOWS – extremely hot molten rocks ejected by the volcano . Can cause loss of lives and property.

GENERATE EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMIS which can cause loss of life and property damage

Contact the Office of Disaster Management for your preparedness support
Website: odm.gov.dm
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