



Montserrat Volcano Observatory

2 August 2017
1:00 pm

Statement on the status of activity at the Soufriere Hills Volcano

It has been brought to the attention of the Montserrat Volcano Observatory that some members of the public have expressed concerns regarding the current state of the Soufriere Hills Volcano. Based on current monitoring data, there have been no significant changes in recent activity or the shape of the volcano. There has been no change in the Hazard Level or change in access to Zone V.

In the Weekly Report for the Period 21 to 28 July 2017, MVO reported that a brief swarm of volcano-tectonic earthquakes occurred on the morning of 27 July. This swarm lasted 15 minutes and contained 36 earthquakes. Similar swarms have previously occurred during the last 7 and a half years, most notably in March 2012 and 2014. Both of these swarms were more intense, involving 103 and 67 earthquakes respectively, and in the case of March 2012, involved visible short-term changes to fumarole activity and some ash venting. Following the swarm on Thursday 27 July 2017, there has been no change in fumarole activity or in the shape of the volcano, nor has there been any ash venting or other observable activity.

The Hazard Level is currently at Level 1, and has been since 1 August 2014 when the current Hazard Level System was released. A brochure describing the Hazard Level System can be downloaded from the MVO website at http://www.mvo.ms/pub/Hazard_Level_System/HLS-20140801.pdf. Under Hazard Level 1, access to Plymouth is controlled by the DMCA, RMPS and MVO.

There remains no public access to Zone V, including Plymouth. Persons wishing to operate official tours and sand barge operations in Zone V are required to seek permission from the Royal Montserrat Police Service, the DMCA and MVO and follow all agreed procedures. Information regarding these procedures can be obtained from the RMPS and the DMCA.

MVO stresses that the public should not be concerned by the occurrence of the earthquake swarm on 27 July 2017. MVO continues to monitor the activity at the Soufriere Hills volcano 24 hours a day. Should any significant changes in activity occur, MVO will inform the local authorities and the public will be notified via ZJB Radio Montserrat and social media.

This report along with additional information on the Soufrière Hills Volcano and the Hazard Level System can be found at the MVO website: www.mvo.ms. You can also follow @mvoms on both Facebook and Twitter.

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