

Press Release 

28 February 2000

Release number 398

Volcanic ash alert!

 The Met. Office's Environment Monitoring and Response Centre (EMARC) has been tracking its first volcanic eruption since its official opening a month ago. The centre is responsible for issuing volcanic ash advisories for an area between Greenland and the west coast of Scandinavia. 

The volcano Hekla, on Iceland, erupted on Saturday evening spewing ash over 30,000ft into the atmosphere. Some of the volcanic ash is expected to pass just north of Scotland, and the latest guidance from The Met. Office is advising aircraft to avoid 60,000 square kilometres of airspace in the North Atlantic.

Forecasters at The Met. Office have been carefully monitoring the movement of the ash using computer programmes which simulate the way pollutants disperse throughout the atmosphere. Similar programmes can be used to track chemical and nuclear leaks anywhere in the world.

The Met. Office's forecasting director Colin Flood said: "We don't just forecast tomorrow's weather in the UK. This is a good example of one of the more unusual services that The Met. Office provides. Our forecasters will continue to monitor the situation over the next few days, and keep our aviation customers aware of any potential danger posed by the volcano."

For further details:

The Met. Office Press Office 01344 856655

 THE MET. OFFICE

 Excelling in Weather Services

 [email: webmanager@meto.gov.uk](mailto:webmanager@meto.gov.uk)  Crown Copyright 1999