

TSUNAMIS PREPAREDNESS

Tsunamis are large ocean waves generated by major earthquakes beneath the ocean floor or major landslides into the ocean. Rising to several feet or higher, they can strike the coast with devastating force. People on beaches or in low coastal areas, such as estuaries and rivers, need to be aware that a tsunami could arrive within minutes of a severe earthquake – and the danger period can continue for many hours. Tsunamis can occur any time of year, day or night.

Top Tips

- To escape a tsunami, go as high and as far as you can – ideally to a spot 100 feet above sea level or 2 miles away.
- Every foot inland or upward may make a difference!
- If you can see the wave, you are too close for safety.

Know the Difference!

- A Tsunami WARNING means a tsunami may have been generated and could be close to your area.
- A Tsunami WATCH means a tsunami has not yet been verified but could exist and may be as little as an hour away.

Protecting Your Family

- Talk about tsunamis with your family so that everyone knows what to do in a tsunami situation. Discussing ahead of time helps reduce fear, particularly for younger children.
- Check at your workplace and your children's schools and day care centers to learn if they are in a tsunami hazard area or inundation zone. Learn about their evacuation plans, especially the designated spot where you will pick up your children.
- Plan evacuation routes from your home, school, workplace and other places you could be where tsunamis present a risk.
- If possible try to pick areas 100 feet above sea level or 2 miles inland.
- If you cannot get that high or far, go as high or far as you can. Every foot inland or upward may make a difference. You should be able to reach the highest ground possible on foot within 15 minutes.
- Practice your evacuation routes. Familiarity may save your life. Be able to follow your escape route at night and during inclement weather.

During a Tsunami

If You Feel a Strong Coastal Earthquake

- Drop, cover, and hold on to protect yourself from the earthquake.
- When the shaking stops, gather members of your household and review your evacuation plan. A tsunami may be coming within minutes.

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During a Tsunami Cont.

If You Feel a Strong Coastal Earthquake

- Use a NOAA Weather Radio or stay tuned to a Coast Guard emergency frequency station, or a local radio or television station for updated emergency information.
- Follow instructions issued by local authorities. Recommended evacuation routes may be different from the one you planned, or you may be advised to climb higher.
- If you hear an official tsunami warning or detect signs of a tsunami, evacuate at once. A tsunami warning is issued when authorities are certain that a tsunami threat exists, and there may be little time to get out.
- Take your emergency preparedness kit (<http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/be-red-cross-ready/get-a-kit>). Having supplies will make you more comfortable during the evacuation.
- If you evacuate, take your animals with you. If it is not safe for you, it is not safe for them.
- Get to higher ground as far inland as possible. Watching a tsunami from the beach or cliffs could put you in grave danger. If you can see the wave, you are too close to escape it.
- Avoid downed power lines and stay away from buildings and bridges from which heavy objects might fall during an aftershock.
- Stay away until local officials tell you it is safe. A tsunami is a series of waves that may continue for hours. Do not assume that after one wave the danger is over. The next wave may be larger than the first one.

After a Tsunami

Staying Safe After a Tsunami If You do Nothing Else:

- Let friends and family know you're safe.
 - » Register yourself as safe on the Safe and Well website
- If evacuated, return only when authorities say it is safe to do so.
- Continue listening to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for updated information and instructions.
- If people around you are injured, practice CHECK, CALL, CARE.
 - » Check the scene to be sure it's safe for you to approach
 - » Call for help
 - » If you are trained, provide first aid to those in need until emergency responders can arrive.

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Tsunami Fact vs Fiction

Fiction

Tsunamis are giant walls of water.

Fact

Occasionally, tsunamis can form walls of water (known as tsunami bores) but tsunamis normally have the appearance of a fast-rising and fast-receding flood. They can be similar to a tide cycle occurring in just 10 to 60 minutes instead of 12 hours.

Fiction

A tsunami is a single wave.

Fact

A tsunami is a series of waves. Often the initial wave is not the largest. In fact, the largest wave may not occur for several hours. There may also be more than one series of tsunami waves if a very large earthquake triggers local landslides which in turn trigger additional tsunamis.

Fiction

Boats should move to the protection of a bay or harbor during a tsunami.

Fact

Tsunamis are often most destructive in bays and harbors, not just because of the waves but because of the violent currents they generate in local waterways. Tsunamis are least destructive in deep, open ocean waters.

Fiction

A tsunami is the same thing as a tidal wave.

Facts

Tidal waves are regular ocean waves, and are caused by the tides. These waves are caused by the interaction of the pull of the moon's gravity on the earth. A "tidal wave" is a term used in common folklore to mean the same thing as a tsunami, but is not the same thing.