

TSUNAMI

**IF YOU SEE ONE FROM THE BEACH,
IT'S TOO LATE TO RUN!**



Tsunami that strike coastal areas are almost always caused by earthquakes. Underwater volcanic eruptions or landslips can also generate tsunami. These tsunami sources may occur far away or very near where you live.

Some tsunami can be very large. In coastal areas they can reach heights of 10 metres or more (30 metres in some cases) and they can move inland a kilometre or more.

A tsunami consists of a series of waves. Often the first wave may not be the largest. The danger from a tsunami can last for several hours after the arrival of the first wave.

Tsunami can move faster than a person can run. In deep water, waves may reach speeds greater than 600 kms per hour.

Sometimes a tsunami causes the water near shore to recede, exposing the ocean floor. If you see this, leave immediately.

The force of some tsunami is enormous. Large rocks weighing several tonnes along with boats and other debris can be moved inland hundreds of metres by the tsunami. Homes and other buildings are destroyed. All this material and water moves with great force and can kill or injure people.

Tsunami can occur at any time, day or night.

Tsunami can travel up rivers and streams that lead to the ocean.

WHEN A TSUNAMI THREATENS, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Locally generated tsunami

If you are in the vicinity of the beach and feel a strong earthquake or notice the sea receding unusually, **immediately** move to higher ground. You may only have a few minutes.

- Take yourself and others to higher ground – **the higher the better** – at least 35 metres above sea level is best.
- If you cannot go higher, go inland – at least 1.5 kilometres.
- **DO NOT** return for at least **one hour or** until told to by the authorities.
- **DO NOT** wait for a tsunami warning before moving to higher ground.
- Avoid rivers and inlets because they magnify tsunami waves.

Long distance tsunami

- Warnings will be given about tsunami if they are coming from far away. These warnings come from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii.
- The tsunami warnings will be passed to you via a warning signal (sting) on your local radio or via a loud hailer or warning siren.
- Turn on your radio and follow all instructions.
- Take any essential items with you if you are told to evacuate.
- **DO NOT** go to the beach to watch the waves come in.
- If you are on a boat, stay on the water – **do not** return to port. Tsunami can cause rapid changes in water levels and unpredictable currents in ports and harbours.

For further information and advice look in the yellow pages or contact your local council.

