WHAT TO KNOW about tsunamis

A tsunami is a series of sea waves, usually caused by a displacement of the ocean floor by an undersea earthquake. As tsunamis enter shallow water near land, they increase in height and can cause great loss of life and property damage.

Recent research suggests that tsunamis have struck the Oregon coast on a regular basis. They can occur any time, day or night. Typical wave heights from tsunamis occurring in the Pacific Ocean over the last 500 years have been 20–65 feet at the shoreline. However, because of local conditions a few waves may have been much higher — as much as 100 feet.

We distinguish between a tsunami caused by an undersea earthquake near the Oregon coast (a local tsunami) and an underwater earthquake far away from the coast (a distant tsunami).

WHAT TO DO for both local and distant tsunamis

1. **Evacuate on foot, if at all possible.** Follow evacuation signs and arrows to an Assembly Area.*

2. **If you need help evacuating, tie something white (sheet or towel) to the front door knob.** Make it large enough to be visible from the street. If the emergency is a distant tsunami, then help may arrive. In the event of a local tsunami, it is unlikely that anyone will help you, so make a plan and be prepared!

3. **Stay away from potentially hazardous areas until you receive an ALL CLEAR from local officials.** Tsunamis often follow river channels, and dangerous waves can persist for several hours. Local officials must inspect all flooded or earthquake-damaged structures before anyone can go back into them.

4. **After evacuation, check with local emergency officials if you think you have special skills and can help, or if you need assistance locating lost family members.**

*Assembly areas A are shown on the map. Do not confuse Assembly Areas with Evacuation Centers, which are short-term help centers set up after a disaster occurs.

Distant tsunamis

A distant tsunami will take 4 hours or more to come ashore. You will feel no earthquake, and the tsunami will generally be smaller than that from a local earthquake. Typically, there is time for an official warning and evacuation to safety. Evacuation for a distant tsunami will generally be indicated by a 3-minute siren blast (if your area has sirens) and an announcement over NOAA weather radio that the local area has been put into an official TSUNAMI WARNING.

In isolated areas along beaches and bays you may not hear a warning siren. Here, a sudden change of sea level should prompt you to move immediately to high ground. If you hear the 3-minute blast or see a sudden sea level change, first evacuate away from shoreline areas, then turn on your local broadcast media or NOAA weather radio for more information.

If you feel an earthquake, a tsunami may be coming...

**WHAT TO DO:**

- DROP, COVER, and HOLD the earthquake is over; protect yourself
- MOVE IMEDIATELY INLAND to high ground and away from low-lying areas
- FOLLOW EVACUATION ROUTE SIGNS
- DO NOT WAIT for an official warning
- DO NOT GO ON FOOT if at all possible
- DO NOT PACK or delay
- DO NOT RETURN to the beach — large waves may continue to come ashore for several hours
- WAIT for an “all clear” from local emergency officials before returning to low-lying areas

**CONTACTS**

Oregon Emergency Management
1205 State Street, Salem, OR 97301
(503) 378-2911
http://www.oregon.gov/OMD/OEM/

Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries
605 NE Oregon Street, #28, Suite 965
Portland, Oregon 97232
(971) 673-1555
http://www.oregongeology.org

Nature of the Northwest Information Center
717 Robin Street, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97210
(503) 378-2911
http://www.pages.unavco.org

International Tsunami Information Center
717 Robin Street, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97210
(503) 378-2911
http://itic.ioc-unesco.org

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

Brookings Police Department
408 5th Street
Brookings, OR 97415
(541) 469-7751
http://www.brookings.or.us/police

Brookings Fire and Rescue
200 E. Drive
Brookings, OR 97415
(541) 469-3118
http://www.brookings.or.us/police

Carry County Sheriff’s Office of Emergency Services
1205 State Street, Suite 311
Salem, OR 97301
(503) 378-2911
http://www.sert.oregon.gov/cesos.html

Hoyt Kurth Volunteer Fire Protection District
P.O. Box 2001
Brookings, OR 97415
(541) 469-3000

Winnemucca Volunteer Fire Protection District
1730 Mariner Drive
Brookings, OR 97415
(541) 469-4000

Roosevelt Volunteer Fire Protection District
2222 River Road
Brookings, OR 97415
(541) 469-2282

If you think you have special skills and can help, or if you need assistance locating lost family members, contact the following agencies:

- Brookings Police Department
- Brookings Fire and Rescue
- Carry County Sheriff’s Office of Emergency Services
- Hoyt Kurth Volunteer Fire Protection District
- Winnemucca Volunteer Fire Protection District
- Roosevelt Volunteer Fire Protection District

This information could save your life — Please read it and share it with your family and friends.