

# TSUNAMIS

## Be Aware

A tsunami is a series of ocean waves usually caused by earthquakes or underwater landslides. Tsunami waves may travel up to 600 miles an hour in open water. As they enter shallow water near land, they get higher and can cause great loss of life and property damage. Experts believe a tsunami could hit the Northwest coast with as little as five minutes warning. In low-lying areas without a tsunami warning system, an earthquake may be the only sign a tsunami is approaching. Contact your local emergency management office to find out if there is a tsunami warning system in your area.



## Understanding Tsunami Warnings on Radio and TV

**Tsunami Advisory:** An earthquake has occurred in the Pacific Basin, which might generate a tsunami. Hourly bulletins will be issued to advise you of the situation.

**Tsunami Watch:** A tsunami was or may have been generated, but is at least two hours travel time to the area in watch status. Local officials should prepare for possible evacuation if their area is upgraded to a warning.

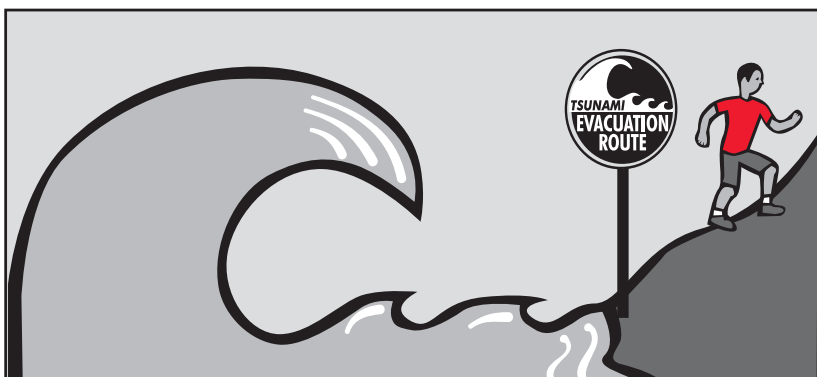
**Tsunami Warning:** A tsunami was or may have been generated, which could cause damage; therefore, people in the warned area are strongly advised to evacuate.

## Prepare

- ◆ Become familiar with the tsunami warning signs. A strong earthquake may generate a tsunami. A noticeable rapid rise or fall in coastal waters is a sign that a tsunami is approaching, in addition to a loud rumbling sound such as rocks being overturned as the water returns
- ◆ Plan an evacuation route from your home, school, workplace, or any other place you'll be where tsunamis present a risk
- ◆ If you are visiting an area at risk from tsunamis, become familiar with tsunami evacuation information and how you would be warned
- ◆ Assemble a disaster supplies kit (see page 3) and keep it handy in your home or vehicle
- ◆ Train all family members over the age of 10 in first aid
- ◆ While deadly, tsunamis are also very infrequent. Be aware of the risk, but don't let it compromise your plans
- ◆ Tsunami evacuation maps are available for many coastal communities. Check with your local emergency management office for a map of your area
- ◆ If you live in an area that may be impacted by a tsunami, consider discussing flood insurance with your insurance agent. Homeowners insurance may not cover flooding from a tsunami

## Respond

- ◆ If you feel an earthquake while you are on the coast, **DROP, COVER and HOLD ON** if inside, and avoid falling objects if outside (see *Earthquakes*, page 17)
- ◆ When the shaking has stopped, move quickly inland and to higher ground. Go on foot if possible. Take your disaster supplies kit, but don't delay leaving
- ◆ If a tsunami watch is issued, listen to a NOAA weather radio, Coast Guard emergency frequency station, or other reliable sources for updated emergency information and be ready to evacuate
- ◆ Remain inland and on higher ground until an official "all clear" announcement is made by local officials. Typically there are multiple, large waves and tsunamis may last for hours



Get to higher ground as far inland as possible. Watching a tsunami from the beach or cliffs could put you in grave danger. Return home only after local officials tell you it is safe.