

# Tsunami

## Preparedness Checklist

A tsunami is a series of ocean waves caused by earthquakes, landslides, or volcanic eruptions. These waves can kill and injure people and destroy entire communities. Tsunamis strike as fast-moving walls of water that flood, drain, and re-flood the land for hours. Tsunamis can flood more than a mile inland. But we can take action to prepare. Prepare now to protect yourself and your loved ones.



### What to Do: Before



#### Know your Risk

- Tsunamis can strike any U.S. coast, but the risk is greatest for communities with Pacific and Caribbean coastlines. Coastal areas such as beaches, bays, lagoons, harbors and river mouths and areas along rivers and streams that lead to the ocean are the most vulnerable.
- If you live on or near a coast, find out if you are in a tsunami hazard zone.



#### Make Plans to Stay Safe

- Learn about your community's tsunami evacuation plan. Some communities have maps with evacuation zones and routes. Know and practice these routes in the places where you spend time.
- If your community does not have a tsunami evacuation plan, identify a safe place at least 100 feet (30 meters) above sea level or at least 1 mile (1.6 km) inland.
- Be ready to move quickly to higher ground or inland. Don't wait for an official alert.
- If you are near the coast, a tsunami could follow an earthquake. As soon as the shaking stops, move quickly to higher ground or inland away from the coast. Don't wait for an official alert.



#### Understand Tsunami Alerts and Natural Signs of a Tsunami

- There are two ways that you may be warned: an official tsunami alert or a natural sign of a tsunami. Both are equally important. You may not get both.
- A natural sign of a tsunami may be your first, best, or only warning that a tsunami is on its way. Natural signs include an earthquake, a loud roar from the ocean, or unusual ocean behavior, such as a sudden rise or wall of water or a sudden retreat of the water, showing the ocean floor. If you experience any of these signs, a tsunami could be coming. Immediately move to higher ground or inland away from the coast. Don't wait for an official alert.
- Tsunami alerts are shared on local radio, television, weather radios, and other emergency alert systems. Understand the different alerts and what to do when you receive them.

Alert	What it means	What to do
Tsunami Information Statement	An earthquake has occurred, but there is no threat, or it was very far away, and the threat has not been determined.	Monitor local emergency information.
Tsunami Watch	A distant earthquake has occurred. A tsunami is possible.	<b>Be Aware.</b> Monitor local emergency information. Be prepared to take action if necessary.
Tsunami Advisory	A tsunami with dangerous currents or waves is expected or occurring.	<b>Take Action.</b> Stay out of the water and away from beaches and waterways. Follow instructions from local officials.
Tsunami Warning	A tsunami that may cause widespread flooding is expected or occurring! Dangerous coastal flooding and powerful currents are possible and may continue for several hours or days after initial arrival.	<b>DANGER-TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION! MOVE TO HIGH GROUND OR INLAND (AWAY FROM THE WATER).</b>

## What to Do: During



### Move to High Ground or Inland

If your community is under a Tsunami Warning or you see natural signs of a tsunami:

- **DANGER-TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION! MOVE TO HIGH GROUND OR INLAND (AWAY FROM THE WATER).**

- If you are near the coast and experience shaking from an earthquake: **DROP, COVER, and HOLD ON** to protect yourself. As soon as the shaking stops, **MOVE TO HIGH GROUND OR INLAND (AWAY FROM THE WATER).**
- Once you have evacuated, stay there until officials say it is safe to return home or direct you to evacuate further inland.

## What to Do: After



### Stay Safe

- Understand the dangers you may face after a tsunami. Many injuries happen during cleanup.
- If you have evacuated, listen to local officials to learn if it is safe to return home. If there is a lot of damage, it may be days before it is safe to return to your community.
- Avoid roads that were flooded, they may be damaged and could collapse.
- Do not touch floodwaters. They may contain sewage, bacteria, and chemicals that can make you sick.
- Avoid damaged or fallen power lines. Assume all wires are live and dangerous.
- When officials allow, inspect the outside of your home for damage before reentering.
- If your home is damaged, it may be safer to wait for a professional.
- Be aware of carbon monoxide poisoning. Do not use gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices inside a home, basement, garage, tent, or camper — or even outside near an open window. Carbon monoxide can't be seen or smelled, but it can kill you fast. If you start to feel sick, dizzy or weak, **get to fresh air right away — do not delay.**
- Avoid using candles because of the fire risk. Use battery-powered lights and flashlights instead.



### Stay Healthy

- Monitor your local health department for information about drinking water safety. Tsunamis can contaminate water supplies.
- **When in doubt, throw it out.** Throw away food that got wet or warm.
- Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwaters can contain sewage, bacteria, and chemicals. Mold can become a problem if a building is flooded and not completely dried out within 24-48 hours. Mold exposure can lead to asthma attacks, eye and skin irritation, and allergic reactions.



### Clean Up Safely

- Follow all specific recommendations from your local public health officials. Use the right safety gear including gloves, goggles, rubber boots, and N95 masks. Know how to safely operate any needed equipment.
- Pace yourself. Cleaning up is a big job. Rest when you need to. Work with other people and get help lifting heavy objects. Decide which cleanup tasks are most important and focus on those first.
- Avoid heat-related illness. If you are without air conditioning in hot weather, be aware of risk for heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, and fainting.



### Take Care of Yourself

- It's normal to have a lot of bad feelings, stress, or anxiety after a disaster or other emergency.
- Eat healthy food and get enough sleep to help you deal with stress.
- You can contact the Disaster Distress Helpline for free if you need to talk to someone. Call or text **1-800-985-5990**.

Prepare so you can protect. | For more information, visit [redcross.org/prepare](https://redcross.org/prepare) | Download the Emergency App

