

**National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program and U.S. Coast Guard Work Group on:**  
**Maritime Vessel Evacuation – Minimum Offshore Safe Depths**

**General Recommendations for Recreational and Commercial Boaters:**

**\*\*\* In general, it is NOT recommended that boaters try to take vessels offshore before or during a tsunami. And, if they are offshore, they should not try to re-enter the harbor until the harbor master or port captain indicates it is safe to do so.\*\*\***

**LARGE LOCAL-SOURCE TSUNAMI – Tsunami may arrive in 10-15 minutes**

- **If you are on land or tied up at the dock:** Do not attempt to take your vessel offshore. Leave your boat and go to high ground on foot as soon as possible. You do not have time to save your boat in this situation and put your life at risk if you try to do so.
- **If you are in deep water or close to deep water:** Take your vessel further offshore beyond the “minimum offshore safe depth” outlined in the Table 1 for your U.S. state/territory/commonwealth or region. Typically, this depth is 50 to 100 fathoms (300 to 600 foot), then you are safe from tsunamis.
- **If you are on the water but near shore:** Use your best judgment to decide between the two options: safely beach/dock the vessel and evacuate to high ground or get to the minimum offshore safe depth. Attempting to beach the vessel could be challenging and dangerous, being dependent on wave conditions, water levels, and the presence of bars. It is easy for a boat to run aground or capsize before reaching the shore only to then be swept away by the coming tsunami. However, if you can safely beach or dock your boat and get to high ground before the tsunami, then this is your best chance. If that is not possible, head to deep water as quickly as possible.

**LARGE DISTANT-SOURCE TSUNAMI – Tsunami arrival at least two-hours away**

- **It is NOT recommended that boaters try to take their vessels offshore before or during a tsunami.** It is safer to keep your boat docked during a tsunami because most tsunamis are relatively small, and your personal safety is more important than saving your property/boat.
- **On the rare occasion when a larger tsunami is expected (Warning level), the boat owner may consider taking their boat offshore considering the following criteria:**
  - The SIZE of the tsunami.
  - How much TIME you have before the tsunami arrives.
  - The PREPAREDNESS of the boat and EXPERIENCE of its captain to remain offshore for an extended period of time (12-24 hours or more), or travel to safe, undamaged harbors.
  - The WEATHER at sea could be as dangerous as the tsunami itself.
- **Do not go offshore unless you are very sure that you can get beyond the recommended minimum offshore safe depth** at least 30 minutes before the estimated tsunami arrival time for your coastline. Please refer to the Table 1 for the recommended minimum safe depth for your U.S. state/territory/commonwealth or region.

Table 1: Specific guidance for minimum offshore safe depths for maritime vessel evacuation prior to the arrival of tsunami.

State/Territory	Minimum offshore safe depths		Notes
	Distant Source Tsunami	Local Source Tsunami	
California	30 fathoms	100 fathoms	Evaluated, except for the San Francisco Bay*
Oregon	30 fathoms	100 fathoms	Evaluated
Hawaii	50 fathoms	50 fathoms	Evaluated; implemented in Coast Guard plan in some locations
Alaska	30 fathoms & vessels should be at least 1/2 mile from shore	100 fathoms	Evaluated
Washington	30 fathoms	100 fathoms	Evaluated, special conditions inside Puget Sound*
Puerto Rico	50 fathoms	100 fathoms	Evaluated
US Virgin Islands	50 fathoms	50 fathoms	Evaluating*
Gulf Coast		100 fathoms	Evaluating*
East Coast		100 fathoms	Evaluating*
American Samoa	50 fathoms	50 fathoms	Evaluating*
Guam	50 fathoms & vessels should be at least 1/2 mile from shore	100 fathoms	Coordinated with USCG Guam Sector
Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands	50 fathoms & vessels should be at least 1/2 mile from shore	100 fathoms	Coordinated with USCG Guam Sector

\*Please contact the MMS state representative for the further information.

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