

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:

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

- **If you are on land or tied up at the dock:** Leave your boat and go to high ground on foot as soon as possible. You don't have time to save your boat in this situation and could die if you try to do so.
- **If you are on the water but very near shore:** If you can beach or dock your boat and get to high ground on foot within ten minutes of a Natural Warning (ground shaking, receding water, etc.), then this is your best chance. If that is not possible, head to deep water as quickly as possible.
- **If you are in deep water or very close to deep water:** If you are already in 100 fathoms of water (600 feet) then you are safe from tsunamis. If you are in deep water but not quite 100 fathoms, head to deeper water.

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 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 stay offshore for extended period of time (12-24 hours), 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 safe depth** at least 30 minutes before the tsunami arrives. Please refer to the Table 1 for the recommended minimum safe depth for your U.S. state/territory/ commonwealth or region.

General Recommendations for Large Ships (cruise, cargo, tanker, and military):

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

(recommendations from PR, others?)

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

(recommendations from PR, others?)

Table 1: Specific guidance for minimum offshore safe depths for maritime vessel evacuation prior to a tsunamis' arrival. Other guidance is needed for large bays (SF, Puget Sound).

State/Territory	Distant Source (ships in harbor)	Local Source (ships at sea)	Notes
California	30 fathoms	100 fathoms	Evaluated; SF Bay will need to be addressed
Oregon	30 fathoms	100 fathoms	Evaluated
Hawaii	50 fathoms	50 fathoms	Evaluated; implemented in Coast Guard plan in some locations
Alaska	30 fathoms	100 fathoms	Evaluated; ships should be at least 1/2 mile from shore
Washington	30 fathoms	100 fathoms	Special conditions exist inside Puget Sound
Puerto Rico	50 fathoms	50 fathoms	General recommendation
USVI	50 fathoms	50 fathoms	Possibly follow PR
Gulf Coast		100 fathoms	Still evaluating; issues with long, shallow shelf complicate getting far offshore
East Coast		100 fathoms	Still evaluating; issues with long, shallow shelf complicate getting far offshore
American Samoa	50 fathoms	50 fathoms	Evaluating, guidance from others
Guam	50 fathoms	50 fathoms	Evaluating, guidance from others
CNMI	50 fathoms	50 fathoms	Evaluating, guidance from others

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