

Tsunami Messaging Project

Summary of Tsunami Messaging Project discussions and results from May 1 through July 24

Since the [last summary of progress from December 19, 2013, through April 17, 2014](#), six more web-enabled discussion sessions were held for this project. Results of these discussions are below.

10. [Tsunami warning signs](#) (environmental clues) – local tsunami events

General:

- A natural tsunami warning means there may be a reason to be concerned. Do not rely solely on a natural warning. Get more information if you sense a natural warning. (Note: This conflicts with later discussions. Depends where you are. If you are on the beach, get to safety first.)
- You will be lucky if you sense ONE natural warning. You may not sense them all.
- You cannot outrun a tsunami. (Not: it is too late to save your life if you observe these natural warnings.)

Earthquake:

- In case of earthquake, go to high ground or inland. (CA sign)
- If you feel a long earthquake...
- After feeling an earthquake that lasts a long time...
- If you feel the ground shake, get to high ground.

Abnormal ocean activity (ocean looks strange):

- ...a sudden rise or fall of the ocean...
- ...ocean pulls away like a very sudden, very low tide exposing the ocean floor, reefs and fish...
- A tsunami may look like a fast-rising flood or wall of water.
- If you see the ocean behaving this way, you need to take action immediately. (alt: take action steps)

Sound (ocean sounds strange):

- ...a loud roar like a train, airplane, or truck; gravel swishing; bubbling sounds; dead quiet...

Comments/Notes:

- Use “nature” or “natural” vs. “environmental” warnings. Why? The word “environmental” is complex.
- It is ok to call them nature's warning signs or natural warning signs.
- People gauge the strength and duration of earthquake shaking differently.
- Ground shaking may not be strong, but it may still cause a tsunami (e.g., tsunami earthquake, earthquake that causes a landslide-generated tsunami).
- Science – sound will precede ocean behavior change.
- Use existing messages about sound.
- Some later discussions suggested using the word rolling to describe the earthquake.

11. Tsunami safety – Earthquake at the Beach

There is much more discussion, background, and informative research on [on this page](#).

- If you are on the beach and feel shaking of an earthquake, get off the beach and find out if you need to keep going and move to a safe location. (Note: This conflicts with information from other discussions, which suggested getting to safety - high ground - before getting information.)

Comments/Notes:

- The message above may need to be adjusted for readability, but the main points are, if on the beach and feel earthquake shaking, leave the beach, find out more information, and go to a tsunami-safe area if additional info indicates you need to do so.
 - Because it takes longer to rupture a long fault than it takes to rupture a short fault and long fault earthquakes are more likely to produce a tsunami.
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12. Tsunami Safety

There were four discussions about tsunami safety:

[During Alerts:](#)

General:

- Tsunami advisories and warnings are issued by NOAA. Radio and TV stations will carry official shoreline evacuation instructions through the Emergency Alert System.

Warning:

- Both natural and official tsunami warnings are equally important. Respond to whatever you hear or observe first!
- Do not rely on a siren or wireless emergency alert. Use the natural warning as your indicator to take action.
- If you are at home and hear there is a tsunami warning, you should make sure your entire family is aware of the warning.
- If you are in school and hear there is a tsunami warning, you should follow the advice of teachers and other school personnel.
- Move away from the beach. Get more information from local radio or TV stations or your mobile device.
- Follow the directions of emergency personnel. They may ask you to evacuate beaches and low-lying coastal areas.
- Limit phone calls to life-threatening emergencies.
- Keep listening to NOAA Weather Radio and local radio or TV for the latest updates.
- If you are in a safe area, stay where you are.

Advisory:

- If near the coast, stay away from bodies of water.
- There may be possible strong and dangerous currents. Listen carefully to TV and radio and act.

- Clear the beach. Stay away from the harbor.
- Locate loved-ones and review evacuation plans. Be ready to move quickly if a tsunami warning is issued.

Watch:

- If you hear about a Tsunami Watch, stay tuned. It may change.

Comments/Notes:

- Use If ... and ... then statements to construct the sentences with messages like this. For example, if you are at (location) and (this happens) then (do this).

Evacuation and use of signage:

- Are you in the zone?
- Are you in a safe area? If yes, stay there. If no, go to a safe place.
- If you are in a [yellow zone] on the map, go to safety and get more information.
- If you are in a [yellow zone] on the map, then you should leave (evacuate on foot) after feeling an earthquake that lasts a long time.
- If you are in the [insert type/color] hazard zone on the map and you feel an earthquake that lasts a long time, then get out of the hazard zone and get more information.
- An assembly area is a designated safe place for people to gather during a tsunami warning. You do not have to go far to get out of the hazard zone. (Alt name: evacuation site)

Comments/Notes:

- May have to differentiate between an assembly area and a shelter.

Safety zones and evacuation:

- If you are on the beach and feel a long, rolling earthquake, protect yourself from the earthquake (drop, cover and hold on), then move off the beach to high ground, and get more information. (Note: earlier discussions emphasized getting information first - in part to avoid overevacuation.)
- In case of earthquake, go to high ground or inland. (CA signs)
- In case of earthquake, go to a safe place or inland.
- Know where your safe high ground is.
- If you know where your zone is, you will be better prepared to evacuate properly.
- A "Leaving Tsunami Zone" sign means that you have gone far enough.
- How high and how far you need to go to get to a safe place will vary by location. Tsunami evacuation maps will provide more specific information.
- When you have no map, signs, or other information to guide you, listen to local media (TV, radio), ask a local resident, or move to an area 100 feet above sea level or two miles inland.

Comments/Notes:

- East Coast prefers: "Go inland" first THEN to "high ground."
- "The biggest tsunami ever (here) was as high as..." helps to recast their understanding.
- 100 feet above sea level or two miles inland is a general guideline that errs on the side of safety.

[Return to messaging project home](#)