Stakeholders discussion

Jeff Lorens, 2018/06/15 09:28
Here's a thought on a possibly "long" message (this one is about 350 characters I think). I suspect the ultimate solution will come from picking the best from all ideas. Jeff L.

A Tsunami Warning has been issued for the coast. You are in or near the area under this alert. Move inland immediately...preferably to higher ground. Follow instructions from local officials. A tsunami is a series of dangerous waves...and the first wave is typically not the largest. More information will be available via local radio and TV stations. James Waddell, 2018/06/19 21:04
Jeff, I like your suggested statement, but was wondering if rather than "More information will be available via local radio and TV stations." we might be able to use something like "More information will be available via local radio, TV, and online at tsunami.gov." since so many people have web access via smartphone. That addition probably exceeds our character limit but perhaps we could trim a few elsewhere.

Rocky Lopes, 2018/06/20 08:26
See background constraint #1 above about including a link or even reference to a URL (tsunami.gov). The agency is saying -- for now -- no link or URL in the message because of concerns about overload of servers. Management will make a decision on this later in 2018. For purposes of coming up with a message to be tested in the national survey, we should not include a link or URL.

Christa Rabenold, 2018/06/19 10:02
Messages below use active voice and some modified language from TWCs and common tsunami hazard zone signs. I think it’s important to say “local officials” and not just “officials” since warning center cancellations do not mean it’s safe to return to tsunami hazard zones. Currently, around 273 characters, so there’s room to expand. I'm not sure that everyone knows what NWS stands for, so if we have the space, I think we should write it out.

National Weather Service: A tsunami warning is in effect now for coasts in your area. Dangerous flooding and powerful currents are possible. Go now to high ground or inland, away from the water. Stay there until local officials say it’s safe. Learn more from local media.

National Weather Service: A tsunami warning is in effect now. Dangerous flooding and powerful currents are possible along coasts in your area. Go now to high ground or inland, away from the water. Stay there until local officials say it’s safe. Learn more from local media.

Christa, 2018/06/21 14:28
Given the expansion of the characters, it would be good to also consider other languages, eg. Spanish.

Christa von Hillebrandt, 2018/06/21 14:33
Instead of referring to local media, I suggest that we say something along the lines of "Pay attention to official information" - this means whether it is on TV or Radio or Social Media, the important issue is that people heed official information.

Mark W Roberts, 2018/06/21 19:00
1. It is critical that NWS make the effort to geocode the warning so that the alert is sent to only those who are in actual warning areas. One of the fundamental reasons why WEA has been ineffective for tsunami warnings is over warning. This is particularly important in Alaska where some of the FIPS codes are the size of lower 48 states.

2. NWS Tsunami warnings should take advantage of “clickable” links that direct the user to tsunami.gov. This is common practice at sporting events, conferences, trade shows, and for commercial ventures. NWS needs to have sufficient bandwidth to handle a tsunami warning on their web site. the public has told me multiple times, "Amazon.com and other retailers handle “black Friday” online retail shopping without incident, why can’t we handle a life and death alert like tsunamis?". NWS needs to recognize that in this day, many people use their smart phone to confirm warning and
receive additional information. NWS needs to invest sufficient resources to make sure that tsunami.gov web site is up and responsive to the public who will look to it as a primary source of information during a warning. It is a mistake to fail to take advantage of the active link feature of the expanded WEA service. The FCC and emergency managers lobbied for active links for just this purpose.

Rocky Lopes, 2018/06/26 08:31
Thanks for your input. This discussion for now is only about a draft 360-character tsunami WEA message to use for a proposed survey. Your input will be shared with the NWS WEA Policy Team. Thank you.

Rocky Lopes, 2018/06/26 09:16
Geocoding of WEA messages is a different issue and not germane to this exercise about a longer WEA message. Geocoding by polygon efforts are underway.

Jason Ballmann and John Marquis (SCEC / TsunamiZone.org), 2018/06/22 20:33
John Marquis and myself here at SCEC have read through this and are providing some input. I enjoyed reading the background and discussion thread here, as well as the social science research. Thus, particularly tried to match the wording as best as I could that Wood and Mileti have laid out, and tried to combine what's in the draft message and what Christa and Jeff wrote.

We also weren't sure how to best accommodate near-source and far-source; if you give people a sense they can take hours or minutes in a far-source scenario, your point isn't that they should wait to evacuate but that they could perhaps take a bit more time in evacuating (the process itself). Anyway, here's our shot:

Near-source:

Dangerous tsunami now approaching the coast. Widespread, multiple walls of water, flooding, and strong currents will occur. Act immediately: go 2 miles inland or 100 feet up in a sturdy structure or hill, or to your known tsunami safe area. Stay tuned to local officials and news broadcasts. Refrain from returning until they say it is safe.

Far-source:

Dangerous tsunami expected in X minutes/hours along the coast. Widespread, multiple walls of water, flooding, and strong currents will occur. Act now: go 2 miles inland or 100 feet up in a sturdy structure or hill, or to your known tsunami safe area. Stay tuned to local officials and news broadcasts. Refrain from returning until they say it is safe.

Rocky Lopes, 2018/06/26 09:23, 2018/06/26 13:53
The terms "walls of water" and specifics like "2 miles inland or 100 feet up" are not accepted, vetted, and common language used nationwide. Whatever terms and calls to action are used will reflect currently open-source language that has been vetted with stakeholders. Thank you, though, for the suggestions for messaging about local and distant events.

Rocky Lopes, 2018/06/27 09:51
A WEA will go out long before we know the forecast arrival time. Further, WEA message dissemination is dependent on the carrier, and not all are the same. So some people will get a WEA before others. Also, WEA will not interrupt a data session (such as an app running) or a phone call. Once data/phone session is ended, then WEA will come through. So once again, not everyone will receive a WEA at the same time. This is why we will not include forecast arrival time in a tsunami WEA -- too many variables beyond our control affect when individuals will see it on their respective devices.

Bill Sammler, 2018/06/25 22:42
See below. 305 characters including spaces.

From the National Weather Service, A Tsunami Warning is in effect. A series of powerful, potentially damaging waves will impact the coast soon. Move inland away from the beach to areas designated by local officials. Use local radio and television for more information, including when it is safe to return.
Ron Morales, 2018/06/26 09:06
I think the portion describing what a tsunami is, is not needed in the WEA. I like Bill Sammler’s draft text. I think it’s very difficult to generically handle how much time you have to take action, since no two tsunami situations are the same. Bill’s text said "will impact the coast soon". That might be good enough, since we would want people to take immediate action, even if you have hours before the wave hits.

Ron Morales, 2018/06/26 09:09
Not sure if my first comment made it. In short, I like Bill Sammler’s draft text. The original draft had wording about what a tsunami is, which is not really needed. Also, it’s very difficult to include time to take action, but the wording from Bill that says "...damaging waves will impact the coast soon" is sufficient. We would want people to take action immediately, even if they have hours before impact(s).

Becki Heim - NWS Alaska Region, 2018/06/26 11:18, 2018/06/26 13:14
Greetings All,

Here is the consolidated feedback I received from NWS Alaska Region Warning Coordination Meteorologists:

- Like the suggestions from Jeff and Christa

- Preferred option:
  "National Weather Service: A tsunami warning is in effect now for coasts in your area. Dangerous flooding and powerful currents are possible. Go now to high ground or inland, away from the water. Stay there until local officials say it's safe. Learn more from local media."

- Also like these options:
  "A Tsunami warning has been issued for the coast. You are in or near the area under this alert. Move inland immediately...preferably to higher ground. Follow instructions from local officials. A tsunami is a series of dangerous waves...and the first wave is typically not the largest. More information will be available via local radio and TV stations."  
  "National Weather Service: A tsunami warning is in effect now. Dangerous flooding and powerful currents are possible along coasts in your area. Go now to high ground or inland, away from the water. Stay there until local officials say it's safe. Learn more from local media."

Keily Yemm, 2018/06/27 08:59, 2018/06/27 09:47
After consulting Washington state’s tsunami workgroup members, we would like to pass along the following insights into how our current tsunami siren warning message was crafted.

The Warning message states:
A tsunami warning has been issued for a coastline near you. If you are in a coastal area you are at risk and must move to higher ground or inland NOW. A tsunami can cause dangerous flooding and currents. Do not return until directed to do so. Tune to your local media sources for additional information AFTER you move to higher ground or inland.(current character count: 346 with spaces)

Key message points by sentence: comments below are made about each sentence from the above WA warning message
1. Stating “a warning message has been issued” Provides some authority to the message, as it is an official public notification. By referencing “near you” it implies the message has direct impacts to the recipient.
2. States the protective action we want the public to take. Provided early in the message since this is the important part.
3. Helps Explain what the dangers are, providing a reason or motivation to leave. Very general/brief since we are not trying to panic anyone.
4. Highlights the EM desire for folks to stay out of the hazard zone without some official direction to return. This helps prevent the public from attempting to return home before the danger has passed or before responders can access damage and dangers inside damaged areas.
5. “tune to your local media sources” broadens the resources we are directing people to check (Radio vs TV vs social media, vs other). We should not just be referencing radio/TV since significant parts of our coast do not receive a radio
A few key issues our group had with the current NWS draft warning message
1. Order of messaging: listing protective actions before defining the hazard is preferable.
2. “move inland to areas that local officials designate for safety” is worded very poorly. None of Washington’s or any other state’s messaging uses that type of reference for high ground. It is generally geared toward high ground and inland. This can be seen in road signage and outreach materials across the nation. Mirroring this language would be preferable.
3. Altering the TV/radio reference to "media sources" to broaden the resources you are pointing the public to seek out is preferable
4. Not identifying the need to get to safety first before seeking more information.

Christa von Hillebrandt, 2018/06/27 10:38
I think we should not put the sentence about going to the media, it is contradictory with the instructions and need to immediately "evacuate". Also, for areas like PR where there are many non English speakers, I propose bilingual texts. Also, not sure which is more effective: NOW or IMMEDIATELY.

The National Weather Service has issued a tsunami warning for your area. Dangerous flooding and powerful currents are possible. Go now to high ground or inland. El Servicio Nacional de Meteorología ha emitido un aviso de tsunami para su area. Peligro inminente de corrientes peligrosas e inundación. Diríjase ahora a lugares altos o alejados de la costa.

Rocky Lopes, 2018/06/27 11:57
The USVI's recommendation for the WEA message is as follows (via email):

National Weather Service: A tsunami warning has been issued for the coast. Dangerous flooding and strong currents are possible. Take the following life-saving precautions. Get off the beach. Move to higher ground or inland immediately. Stay there until local officials give the all clear. Listen to local media for more information, including when it's safe to return.

Kimberly McMahon, 2018/06/27 12:06
The complexity of Tsunami messaging has been stated by several people:
1) timing: could be imminent, could be a couple hours from now
Taking this into account, I liked the wording of "Do not return until directed to do so."
2) Making it relevant to the receiver: I like the wording of "coastline near you".
3) What happens if you're in a boat but not far from land? Do these users react differently than those on land: ie do they think they are safe b/c they are in a boat (not knowing the bathymetry, they could be safe or they could be in a dangerous area, esp for recreational boaters)
4) Stating the potential impacts is important according to social science studies to make it real. I am concerned using the term "currents" may cause the public to think "I'm not in the ocean, I'm fine", not realizing that the ocean is coming up to meet them.

So a mishmash of other's suggested wording, here's my 2 cents:
"National Weather Service: A tsunami warning has been issued for coasts in your area. Dangerous, powerful, and sudden flooding will impact the coast soon. Move inland away from the beach, preferably to higher ground. Follow instructions from local officials. Do not return until local officials say it's safe." (308 characters)

I look forward to collaborating further with everyone.