

WHAT IS A TSUNAMI?

A tsunami is a series of waves most commonly caused by an earthquake beneath the sea floor. As tsunamis enter shallow water near land, they increase in height and can cause great loss of life and property damage where they come ashore.

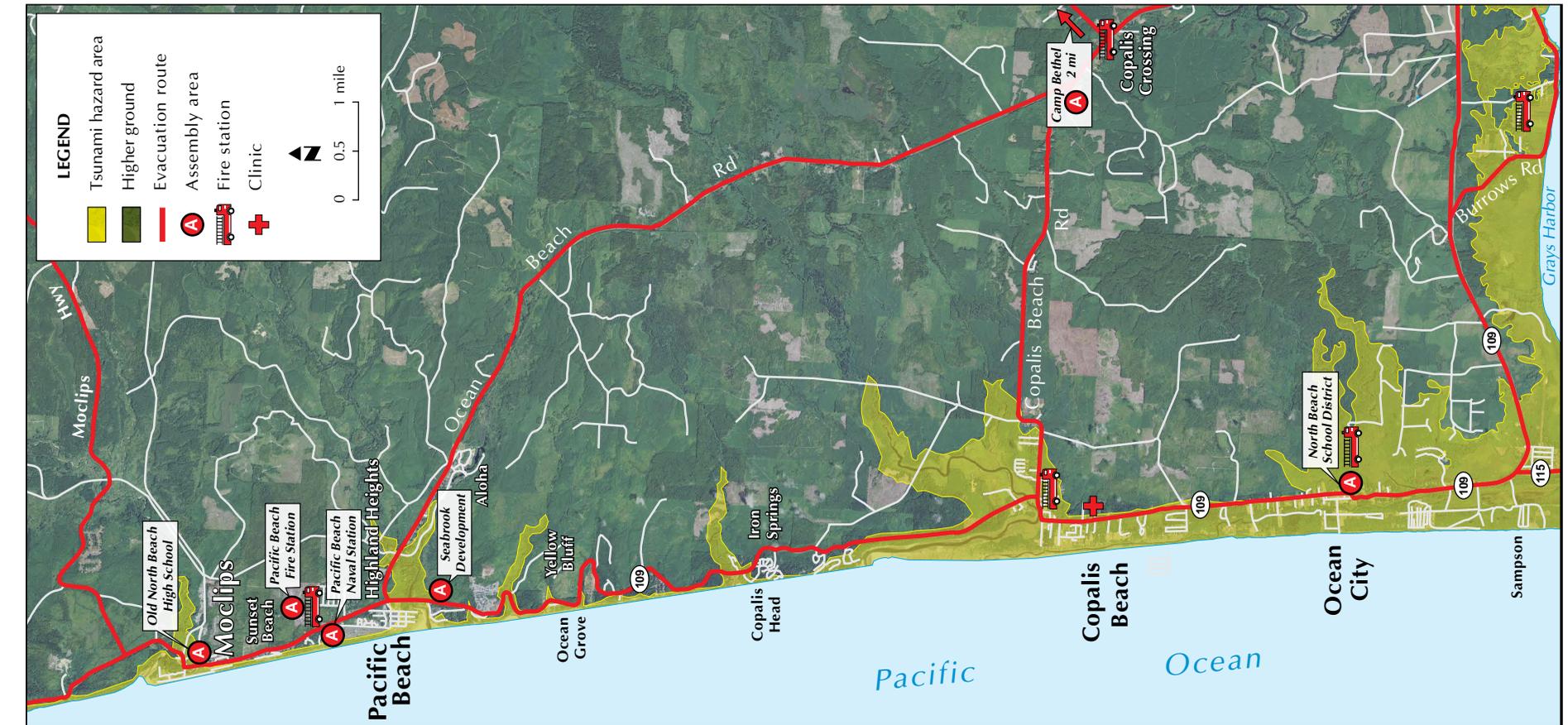
Recent research suggests that tsunamis have struck the Washington coast on a regular basis. They can occur at any time of the day or night, under any and all weather conditions, and in all seasons. Ocean-facing beaches, bay entrances, tidal flats, and coastal rivers are especially vulnerable to tsunamis.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A 'DISTANT' AND A 'LOCAL' TSUNAMI?

When a tsunami has been generated by a distant earthquake, it will not reach the Washington coast for several hours, and there is time to issue a warning. When a tsunami is generated by a strong offshore earthquake, its first waves would reach the outer coast minutes after the ground stops shaking. Feeling an earthquake could be your only warning!

WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MYSELF FROM A TSUNAMI?

- Develop a family disaster plan. Everyone needs to know what to do on their own to protect themselves in case of disaster.
- Be familiar with local earthquake and tsunami plans. Know where to go to survive a tsunami. Identify an evacuation site within 15 minutes walking distance of home and/or work.
- Prepare three-day emergency kits for your home, automobile, and work.



For a distant earthquake, follow the tsunami evacuation route signs. For a local earthquake, if car evacuation is not possible, go directly to the nearest high ground. Fire stations are shown as landmarks only. Do not go there for help—they will likely be deserted. Assembly areas have been designated where you can get help and services.

HOW DO I KNOW WHEN TO EVACUATE?

If you feel the ground shake, evacuate inland or to high ground immediately! Waves higher than 20 feet could reach the Washington coast within 30 minutes of the quake. The first wave is often not the largest; successive waves may be spaced many minutes apart and continue to arrive for several hours. Return only after emergency officials say it is safe.

Isolated areas may not receive official warnings of distant tsunamis. If you notice a sudden drop or rise in sea level, move to high ground or inland immediately.

WHERE DO I EVACUATE TO?

The map shows tsunami hazard areas in yellow. Go to the nearest high ground—at least 50 feet above sea level, if possible. If you don't have time to travel to high ground, but are in a multi-story building, go to an upper level. If you are on the beach and unable to get to high ground, go inland as far as you can.

WHAT DO THE EVACUATION SIGNS MEAN?

Tsunami evacuation routes were developed to guide coastal residents and visitors to safer locations when car evacuation is possible. Evacuation signs have been placed along the main roads to direct motorists to higher ground. In some places, there may be more than one way to reach safer areas. These routes are marked with multiple signs showing additional options for evacuation. You will need to know the evacuation routes for your area.



HOW DO I GET INLAND OR TO HIGH GROUND?

Car evacuation may not be possible if an earthquake has damaged roads and power lines and resulted in significant debris. If this is the case, do not try to follow the evacuation routes out. Evacuate on foot directly to the nearest high ground. Avoid lakes and wetlands, which are prone to flooding and liquefaction during aftershocks.

WHAT SHOULD I HAVE IN MY EMERGENCY KIT?

You should prepare an emergency kit with a three-day supply of necessary items for each member of your family. The kit should be adapted to your needs, but keep it light and manageable in case you must evacuate on foot. Have it ready to go for immediate evacuation. Possible supplies include:

- Maps showing safe routes to high ground
- Non-perishable food and cooking and eating utensils, including can opener
- Water and a water purification kit
- First-aid kit and prescriptions
- Plastic bags for water storage and waste
- Dental and personal hygiene items
- Sturdy shoes, clothes, sleeping bag, tent
- Portable radio, headlamp/flashlight, and extra batteries
- Pocket knife, whistle, matches, duct tape, and rubber, latex, and heavy-duty gloves

WHERE CAN I STAY UNTIL THIS IS OVER?

Local emergency management has designated safe assembly areas within a reasonable distance for foot traffic. If you are at risk from a tsunami, but do not have an "official" assembly area close by,

you are urged to develop a neighborhood evacuation site. The site should be outside the tsunami hazard area, easy to get to, and capable of accommodating the number of people expected. If it is on private property, you will need the permission of the owner.

After the immediate danger is past and if there is damage to the degree that you cannot return home, you should then attempt to reach a designated assembly area. Because this may not be possible, it is a good idea to inform your County Emergency Manager of the location of your neighborhood evacuation site.

DOES MY COMMUNITY HAVE ANY PLANS IN PLACE?

Outdoor assembly areas have been selected to facilitate delivery of emergency services. It may be several days before help can arrive, so if possible, bring your own three-day emergency kit and emergency shelter.

The assembly areas listed below are not specific in terms of boundaries. You may camp or park in adjacent areas. Take care not to block a roadway—leave access for emergency vehicles.

Designated assembly areas are North Beach School District, Ocean City; Pacific Beach Naval Station, Pacific Beach Fire Station, and Seabrook Development, Pacific Beach; and old North Beach High School, Moclips.

WHAT ARE THE EMERGENCY RADIO FREQUENCIES?

Neah Bay, 162.55 MHz
Forks/Mount Octopus, 162.425 MHz
Puget Sound Marine, 162.425 MHz

WHEN YOU FEEL AN EARTHQUAKE:

- Protect yourself—drop, cover, hold until the earthquake is over
- Grab your three-day emergency kit
- Move quickly inland to high ground and away from low-lying coastal areas
- Evacuate on foot if at all possible because of potential road damage and traffic jams
- Do not wait for an official warning
- Do not pack or delay
- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or your local radio station for information on shelter locations and emergency broadcasts
- Be alert for aftershocks
- Do not return to the tsunami hazard zone until emergency officials say it is safe for you to return

WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY
Department of Public Services
Emergency and Risk Management Division
310 W Spruce St, Ste 212;
Montesano, WA 98563
360-249-3911; 360-249-3805 (fax)
<http://www.co.grays-harbor.wa.us/info/DEM/index.htm>



WASHINGTON MILITARY DEPARTMENT
Emergency Management Division
Camp Murray, WA 98430-5122
1-800-562-6108
<http://www.mil.wa.gov/>



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Natural Resources

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Tsunami!

Evacuation Map for Ocean City, Copalis Beach, Pacific Beach, and Moclips



Safety Tips for Grays Harbor County