

What is a tsunami?

A tsunami is a series of waves most commonly caused by an earthquake beneath the sea floor. If a large earthquake displaces the sea floor near the Alaska coast, the first waves may reach the shore minutes after the ground stops shaking. There would be no time for authorities to issue a warning.

The West Coast and Alaska Tsunami Warning Center alerts local officials who may order an evacuation, but isolated areas may not receive official announcements.

If you notice a sudden, drop or rise in sea level, it may be a warning of impending danger. Move to high ground or inland immediately. The waves can kill and injure people and cause great property damage where they come ashore. The first wave is often not the largest; successive waves may be spaced several minutes apart and continue to arrive for several hours.

Valdez has a history of locally generated tsunamis due to underwater landslides. The landslides created in the Port of Valdez could occur within seconds of a major earthquake.

Where and when do tsunamis occur?

Tsunamis can occur at any time of the day or night, under any weather conditions, and in all seasons. Beaches open to the ocean, by bay entrances or tidal flats, and the shores of coastal rivers are especially vulnerable to tsunamis.



How do I know when to evacuate?

A strong offshore earthquake may generate a tsunami. Therefore, if you feel the ground shake or you hear the sirens sound, evacuate inland or to high ground immediately and return only after officials say it is safe to do so. During distant source tsunami events, local Emergency Management officials will advise citizens to evacuate by making an announcement over the Emergency Alert System or NOAA Weather Radio. Please listen to your local radio stations for alerts.

Where do I evacuate?

Go to an area 50 feet above sea level; if possible follow the blue evacuation signs that will lead you in the right direction. If you do not have time to travel to high ground, but are in a multi-story building, go to the uppermost level. If you are on the beach and unable to get to high ground, go inland as far as you can. If time allows take your disaster supply kit with you. The tsunami evacuation map illustrates the primary evacuation routes and congregation areas.

How do I get inland or to high ground?

Go on foot if possible, particularly if an earthquake has caused damage to roads or power lines, and resulted in significant debris.



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Tsunami!

Evacuation Map and Safety Tips for Cold Bay, Alaska



