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# Tsunami



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# Notes for the Large Print Reader

Print page numbers are indicated as:

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Main text is in Arial typeface, 18 point.

Headings are indicated as:

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## **Omissions and alterations**

Some page layouts have been edited for clarity.

# Tsunami

All of New Zealand's coastline and large lakes are at risk of tsunami. Knowing the warning signs and the right action to take can help save lives.

## Reduce the impacts of tsunami

Find out your tsunami risk. Your Civil Defence Emergency Management Group has tsunami evacuation zone maps and advice. Make sure you know where to go, whether you are at home, at work or out and about. Find your local Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group at <https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/find-your-civil-defence-group/>

Review your insurance regularly. Having insurance cover for your home and contents is important to help you get back on your feet if you suffer damage in a disaster.

## Get ready before a tsunami

- Work out what supplies you may need and make a plan together.
- Know your tsunami evacuation zones. Make sure you know where to go, whether you are at home, at work or on holiday. Find your tsunami evacuation zone at <https://getready.govt.nz/tsunami-evacuation-zones/>

- Understand the different types of warnings: Natural, Official and Unofficial.
- Regularly practise your tsunami hīkoi (evacuation walk).

## **What to do during a tsunami or when a tsunami warning is issued**

### **Know the natural warning signs and take action**

For a local source tsunami, which could arrive in minutes, there won't be time for an official warning. It is important to recognise the natural warning signs and act quickly.

Drop, Cover and Hold if there is earthquake shaking. As soon as the shaking stops, move immediately to the nearest high ground or as far inland as you can out of tsunami evacuation zones. Even if you can't get out of your evacuation zone, go as far or as high as you can. Every metre makes a difference.

If you are near a shore and experience any of the following, take action. Do not wait for official warnings.

- Feel a strong earthquake that makes it hard to stand or a long earthquake that lasts more than a minute
- See a sudden rise or fall in sea level
- Hear loud or unusual noises from the sea

## **Remember, Long or Strong, Get Gone**

Drop, Cover and Hold during the shaking. Protect yourself from the earthquake first.

As soon as the shaking stops, move immediately to the nearest high ground or as far inland as you can out of tsunami evacuation zones.

Walk, run or cycle if at all possible to reduce the chances of getting stuck in traffic congestion.

Take your animals with you only if it will not delay you. Do not spend time looking for them and if you are not at home, do not return to get them.

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While evacuating, avoid hazards caused by earthquake damage, especially fallen power lines.

Do not return until you get an official all-clear message from Civil Defence.

### **Official warnings**

When tsunami travel across the ocean from far away, we have more time to warn people what to do.

Civil Defence issues tsunami warnings in New Zealand.

Tsunami warnings are published on

[www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz) and @NZCivilDefence on

Twitter. Tsunami warnings will also be broadcast on radio and television. An Emergency Mobile Alert may also be issued if there is a threat of flooding of land areas.

Warnings may also be broadcast through:

- siren
- phone
- mobile text
- loud hailer, or
- other local arrangements.

Contact your Civil Defence Emergency Management Group for more advice. They can tell you about the warnings used in your area.

Immediately follow the advice of any emergency warning. Do not wait for more messages before you act.

## **Unofficial or informal warnings**

You might receive informal warnings. Informal warnings could come from:

- friends
- other members of the public
- international media, and
- the internet.

If the warning seems trustworthy, consider evacuating. Check the accuracy of the warning once you have evacuated or en route if it won't slow you down.

If official warnings are available, trust their message over informal warnings.



## Lake tsunami

Tsunami can also happen in lakes and other large bodies of water. They can be caused by:

- earthquakes,
- landslides,
- rock falls,
- volcanic eruptions,
- dam failures, and
- glacier collapses.

Even a small earthquake could trigger a landslide at a mountain lake and create a tsunami.

It's important to recognise the natural warning signs and act quickly.

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If you are at a lake or any other large body of water and experience any of the following, move away from the water's edge to higher ground immediately.

- Feel a strong earthquake that makes it hard to stand up. Or a long, weak rolling earthquake that lasts a minute or more. Remember: Long or Strong, Get Gone.
- See a sudden rise or fall in water level. Or see unusual waves or water behaviour without an obvious cause.
- See signs of landslides or rock falls.

- Hear loud and unusual noises from the water or surrounding area.

## **What to do after a Tsunami**

Only return home once you are told it is safe to do so.

Listen to the radio or follow your Civil Defence Emergency Management Group online. They will give you information and instructions.

If there was an earthquake, expect more shaking. More earthquake shaking may generate another tsunami. Be prepared to evacuate.

Stay away from coastal water, tidal estuaries, rivers and streams for at least 24 hours after any tsunami or tsunami warning. Even small waves create dangerous currents.

Avoid areas impacted by the tsunami. You might hamper rescue and other emergency operations and be at further risk from the residual effects of tsunami flooding.

Help others if you can, especially people who may need extra help.

Learn what to look for and what to do if you need to give first aid at <https://www.stjohn.org.nz/first-aid/first-aid-library/>

## **If your property is damaged**

- Do not do anything that puts your safety at risk or causes more damage to your property.
- Contact your insurance company as soon as possible.

- If you rent your property, contact your landlord and your contents insurance company.
- Take photos of any damage. It will help speed up assessments of your claims.