

This information could save your life.

About Tsunamis

A tsunami is a series of sea waves usually caused by the displacement of the ocean floor by an undersea earthquake or landslide. As tsunamis enter shallow water near land, they increase in height and can cause great loss of life and property damage.

Research suggests that tsunamis have struck the California coast many times in the past. They can occur any time, day or night. Typical wave heights from tsunamis occurring in the Pacific over the last 80 years have been 20-45 feet at the shoreline. Local conditions can sometime produce even larger waves.

We distinguish between a tsunami generated by a seismic event near the California coast (**LOCAL SOURCE TSUNAMI**) and one that occurs in another area of the Pacific Ocean (**DISTANT SOURCE TSUNAMI**).

A **LOCAL SOURCE TSUNAMI** could come onshore within 15-20 minutes after the earthquake-before there is time for official warning from a national warning system.

Ground shaking from the earthquake may be the only warning you have. In the event of a strong earthquake (strong enough to make it difficult to stand) evacuate quickly to a safe area!

A **DISTANT SOURCE TSUNAMI** may take several hours to come ashore. A distant source tsunami would allow time for officials to issue an official **Tsunami Warning** and carry out a full evacuation of the hazard areas.

About Warning

If a tsunami warning is issued, it will be announced over the Emergency Alert System (EAS) on commercial radios and televisions. It will also be sent over the NOAA weather, all-hazard radio system.

In some areas of the county, tsunami warning sirens are in place or are being installed. If you hear a **steady 3-minute siren**, tune your radio to 740 AM or listen to your NOAA weather radio for official information.

San Mateo County emergency officials are also implementing other warning systems. These include an automated telephone notification system that will call phones in the tsunami hazard areas. Your telephone number and address must be listed in the public directory in order to receive this automated notification.

A second system will send a warning in the form of a text message to cellular phones, email addresses, and pagers. You can sign up for this free service on the internet by going to **www.smcalert.info** and follow the instructions for "new users".

In isolated areas along the beaches of San Mateo County you may not hear a warning. A **SUDDEN CHANGE IN SEA LEVEL** such as a rapidly receding sea should prompt you to go to high ground or inland immediately. Then, listen to your radio, television, or NOAA weather radio for official information.

About Evacuation

If you live or work in one of the tsunami hazard areas shown on the map in the pamphlet, you

should be prepared to evacuate in a tsunami emergency.

Remember: In case of a strong earthquake do not wait for official instructions, evacuate quickly to a safe area then listen to the radio for official information and instructions.

Some communities have identified **Tsunami Evacuation Sites**. These are safe areas that you can quickly move to in the event of a local source tsunami. Evacuation Sites are just safe areas and do not offer any logistical services. However, they can serve as an assembly point for families and neighbors. Evacuation Sites are marked with this sign.



In the event of a distance source tsunami, residents in the hazard areas will be instructed to go inland or to an official **Evacuation Shelter** and remain there until told it is safe to return. This could be several hours. Designated evacuation shelters include:

- Half Moon Bay High School
- Pescadero High School

Other facilities may be opened as shelters as the need arises. These will be announced over the Emergency Alert System. Evacuation shelters will offer basic logistical services. But remember, it will take some time for the shelter staff to arrive and get set to receive evacuees.

For All Tsunamis:

1. In coastal areas, if you feel a strong earthquake, go immediately to high ground, inland, or a designated evacuation site.
2. Follow the evacuation orders given by local officials. This may involve evacuating by foot if advised to do so.
3. Monitor radio (KCBS 740 AM or 88.5 FM), television, or NOAA Weather Radio for official information. En Espanol KSJO 92.3 FM.
4. If tsunami warning sirens sound, monitor the radio and be prepared to quickly evacuate.
5. Stay away from low lying areas (beaches, bluffs, etc.).
6. If you need help with evacuation, tie a large WHITE sheet or towel to your front door knob so that it is visible from street. This will alert people that you need assistance.

Be Prepared:

ASSEMBLE AN EMERGENCY “GO KIT” TO TAKE WITH YOU WHEN EVACUATING. MINUTES COUNT! INCLUDE IN YOUR KIT:

- First aid kit and reference guide for its use
- Bottled water
- Food (packaged), snacks
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Essential medications
- Cash
- Food for pets
- Portable radio, flashlight, and batteries.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Half Moon Bay Police Department
537 Kelly Ave
Half Moon Bay, CA. 94019
(650) 726-8288
E-Mail: policedept@coastside.net

In case of tsunami evacuate to the east to an Evacuation Site or to high ground.

Central San Mateo County Coast Tsunami Hazard Areas



City of Half Moon Bay



TSUNAMI INFORMATION

If you feel a strong earthquake . . . Do not wait for official warning . . . a tsunami may be coming in a few minutes. Large waves may continue to come ashore for several hours.

- Protect yourself until the earthquake is over – duck, cover, and hold
- Go to high ground or inland immediately
- Go on foot if at all possible
- Wait for an **“all clear”** from local emergency officials before returning to low-lying areas or the beach
- Where posted, follow signs to evacuation sites or evacuation shelters

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