



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Emergency Management Australia

EMA Schools Education

TSUNAMI INFORMATION



Tsunami Activity Sheet No. 4

What should you do in the event of a tsunami?

4. What should you do in the event of a tsunami?

The emergency management authorities have a plan in place for a range of possible emergencies. If a tsunami were heading for Australia, the emergency management authorities would use all the radio stations and television stations to let people know to move away from the danger zones.

You may have practiced evacuation at school. It would be a bit like this but you would head for higher ground and away from the beach or rivers that lead to the beach.

You can often tell that an earthquake is happening or that a tsunami is coming because the ground shakes under your feet, the furniture may rattle and pictures on the wall move. If this happens or you hear a warning, tell your family and friends and move quickly to higher ground, this could save your life and that of others.

Being prepared for any type of emergency is important. Have a plan in your family about what you would do if a fire or flood or even a tsunami happened. Know how to call for help and talk with your parents about who you should call.

In Australia the emergency number is **000**. You can call this number when there is an emergency, when things are not safe.

Ask your school about its emergency plan and know what you must do if there is something unsafe at school.

Tsunami survival (safety rules)

If you hear that a strong earthquake has occurred, stand by for a possible tsunami emergency, and be prepared to move from low-lying coastal or lakeside areas to high ground at short notice. All tsunamis are potentially dangerous and destructive.

- When an official warning is issued, it means a tsunami actually exists. Some tsunami victims have dismissed such warnings as false alarms and died as a result.
- Approaching tsunamis are sometimes preceded by a rapid rise or fall in sea level. This is nature's warning and should be heeded. Vessels should head for deep water immediately.
- A small tsunami at one point on the shore can be extremely large a few kilometres away so don't let the modest size of one make you lose respect for all.
- As a tsunami is not a single wave, stay out of danger areas until an official 'all-clear'.
- Never go to the shore to watch a tsunami. If you can see it, you are too close to escape.
- Cooperate with your local emergency management authorities if asked to evacuate.

1. Create a sign for a beach that warns people about how to act if a tsunami is approaching. Your sign should be understood by all people – young, old, English and non-English speakers. Make your sign to measure 30cm X 30cm. Display this around your classroom.
2. Work in groups of 3 or 4. Design and create a brochure with more detailed information about how to behave in a tsunami. Include the preparation of an emergency kit. Look at the one at the FEMA site <http://www.fema.gov/kids/dizkit.htm> for ideas.
3. What other things do you think should be included in your kit?
4. You may be interested in visiting the US Geological Survey site <http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/c1187/> to read personal stories of people who survived a tsunami in Chile in 1960.