

# HOW TO SURVIVE A TSUNAMI

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A tsunami (from the Japanese word meaning “harbor wave”) is a series of traveling ocean waves of extremely long length generated by geological disturbances such as earthquakes, underwater volcanic eruptions, and landslides. They can form hundreds or even thousands of miles away. The waves have been known to range from 50 to 100 feet in height. (Tsunamis are often mistakenly referred to as tidal waves, but they are not the same thing. Tsunamis are not related to the gravitational forces which cause tides and, therefore, tidal waves.)

## **1 If you are near the ocean, be aware of the warning signs of an approaching tsunami:**

- Rise or fall in sea level
- Shaking ground
- Loud, sustained roar

## **2 If you are on a boat in a small harbor and you have sufficient warning of an approaching tsunami, move it quickly.**

Your first choice should be to dock and reach high ground. Your second choice is to take your boat far into open water, away from shore where it might be thrown into the dock or the land. Tsunamis cause damage when they move from deeper to more shallow waters; the waves back up against one another at the shallow shelf. Often tsunamis are not even felt in deep water.

## **3 If you are on land, seek higher ground immediately.**

Tsunamis can move faster than a person can run. Get away from the coastline as quickly as possible.

## **4 If you are in a high-rise hotel or apartment building on the coastline and you do not have enough time to get to higher ground away from the shore, move to a high floor of the building.**

The upper floors of a high-rise building can provide safe refuge.

### **Be Aware**

- The first tsunami wave may not be the largest in the series of waves.
- Tsunamis can travel up rivers and streams that lead to the ocean.
- Flooding from a tsunami can extend inland 1,000 feet or more, covering large expanses of land with water and debris.