



## The Tsunami Watch

When an earthquake of sufficient magnitude to generate a tsunami occurs in the Pacific Ocean area, PTWC personnel determine the location of the earthquake epicenter - the point on the earth's surface above the subterranean focus of the earthquake. If the epicenter is under or near the ocean, tsunami generation is possible. On the basis of seismic evidence, the Center issues a tsunami watch, which tells participants that an earthquake has occurred, and where and when, and that the possibility of a tsunami exists. Because tsunamis move through the water in accordance with known physical laws, accurate estimated times of arrival can be given for each location in the Pacific. Tsunami travel time charts have been prepared for this for different locations in the Pacific.

## The Tsunami Warning

The first positive indication of the existence of a tsunami usually comes from tide stations nearest the disturbance. When confirmation is received, the PTWC issues a tsunami warning, alerting warning system participants to the approach of potentially destructive tsunami and preparing tsunami times of arrival for all locations.

Tsunami Watches, Warnings, and Advisory Bulletins are disseminated throughout the Pacific to the Member States in accordance with procedures outlined in the Communications Plan for the Tsunami Warning System. The primary purpose of this plan is to serve as the communications operating manual for the PTWC and for participants.

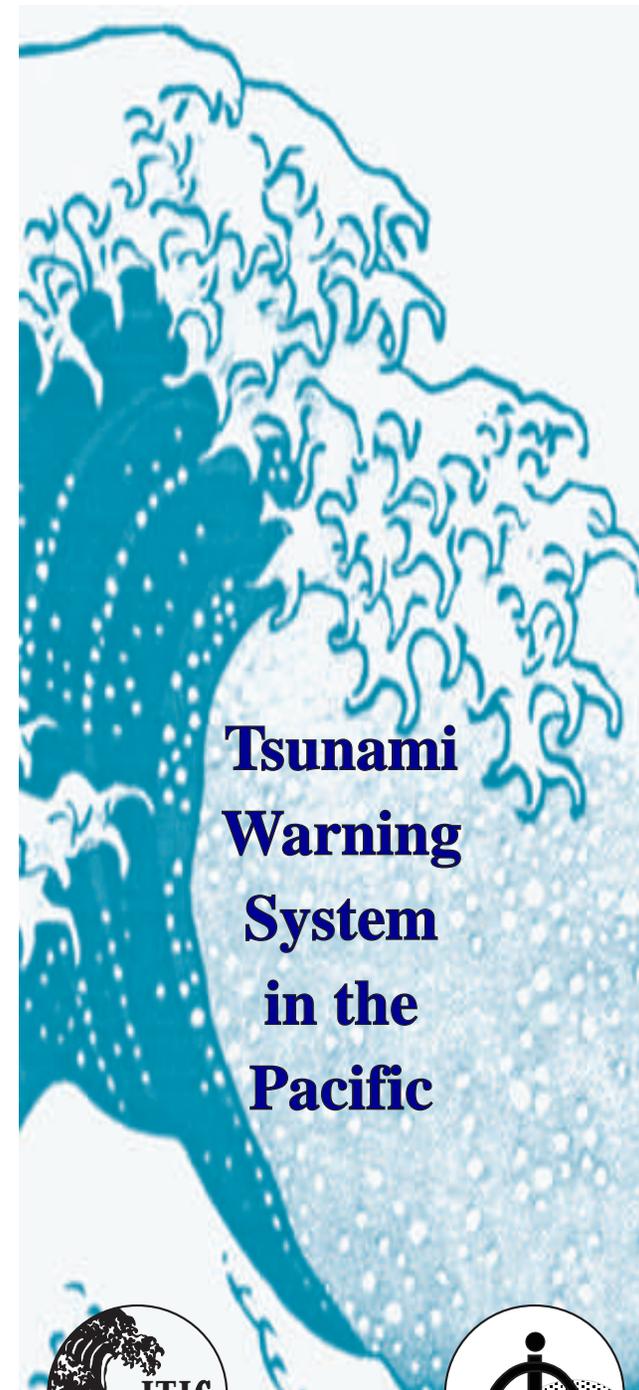
Dissemination agencies in the participating Member States have the continuing responsibility for educating the public concerning the dangers of tsunamis and for developing safety measures that must be taken to avoid loss of life and to reduce property damage.

## Tsunami Safety Rules

1. All earthquakes do not cause tsunamis, but many do. When you hear that an earthquake has occurred, stand by for a tsunami emergency.
2. An earthquake in your area is a natural tsunami warning. Do not stay in low-lying coastal areas after a strong earthquake has been felt.
3. A tsunami is not a single wave, but a series of waves. Stay out of danger areas until an "all-clear" is issued by competent authority.
4. Approaching tsunamis are sometimes preceded by a noticeable rise or fall of coastal water. This is nature's tsunami warning and should be heeded.
5. A small tsunami at one point on the shore can be extremely large a few kilometers away. Don't let the modest size of one make you lose respect for all.
6. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center does not issue false alarms. When a warning is issued, a tsunami exists. The tsunami of May 1960 killed 61 people in Hilo, Hawaii, and they thought it was "just another false alarm."
7. All tsunamis—like hurricanes—are potentially dangerous, even though they may not damage every coastline they strike.
8. Never go down to the shore to watch for a tsunami. When you can see the wave you are too close to escape it.
9. Sooner or later, tsunamis visit every coastline in the Pacific. Warnings apply to you if you live in any Pacific coastal area.
10. During a tsunami emergency, your local civil defense, police, and other emergency organizations will try to save your life. Give them your fullest cooperation.

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**International Tsunami  
Information Center**



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