

Tsunami Awareness Week

Local News

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South Bend, Washington - Governor Christine Gregoire has proclaimed March 23-28, 2009 as Tsunami Awareness Week in Washington State in order to promote the importance of understanding and preparing for tsunamis.

A tsunami is a series of destructive waves affecting shorelines. Sudden raising or lowering of the Earth's crust during earthquakes generally causes a tsunami, although landslides and underwater volcanic eruptions can also generate them. Tsunamis may occur at any time of the day or night, under any and all weather conditions, and in all seasons. Beaches open to the ocean, by bay entrances or tidal flats, and the shores of coastal rivers are especially vulnerable to tsunamis.

Every attempt has been made by local Emergency Management offices to locate evacuation routes and public congregation areas that are safe, within a reasonable distance for foot or vehicle traffic, and accessible within a short period of time. These are difficult criteria to meet in some geographic areas, primarily as a result of private property issues. For that reason, residents who may be impacted by tsunami activity are urged to work together to develop an evacuation plan within their neighborhood or community. The neighborhood plan should address property access issues, evacuation routes, and what might be expected in terms of numbers of people needing to access a locally organized congregation area.



Take action now and [be prepared!](#) The steps you take today can improve your chances of survival and your comfort. This is especially true for a tsunami event when there may be only minutes to move to a safer place. The Pacific County Emergency Management Agency (PCEMA) in coordination with the Washington State Military Department, Emergency Management Division, has installed an All Hazard Alert Broadcast (AHAB) siren system which consists of 11 sirens installed in the areas of Ilwaco, Seaview, Long Beach, Surfside, Ocean Park, and Bay Center. The AHAB siren system is tested the first Monday of each month. During the test the sirens will sound the Westminster Chimes for 10 seconds followed by a 15 second verbal message stating, "The following is a test of the siren system. It is only a test. This is a test of the siren system. If this had been an actual emergency you should tune to your local radio station or listen to this system for further instructions. This was only a

test." In an actual event, the AHAB sirens will sound a wailing tone for three continuous minutes, and may be followed by a verbal message. **Sirens are not designed to be heard indoors and the sound may also be impacted by adverse weather.** Residents are encouraged to have alternate methods of warning such as NOAA weather radios, which are tested weekly and can be heard indoors. For further information about tsunamis and the AHAB siren system, or to hear sound clips of the Westminster Chimes and the actual warning tone, please visit the PCEMA website at <http://www.co.pacific.wa.us/pcema/Tsunami.htm>. Residents with questions or concerns may contact the PCEMA office at (360) 875-9340 or (360) 642-9340.