



Tsunami Preparedness 101 - What You Need to Know

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Next week is *Tsunami Preparedness Week* (April 7 – 13, 2019). Although tsunamis are rare, it's important to understand the impact of a tsunami on Victoria and what to do in the event of a tsunami warning.

What is a tsunami?

A tsunami is a natural hazard, consisting of a series of long, surge-like waves that are usually caused by an underwater earthquake, landslide, or volcanic eruption.

Is Victoria at risk of a tsunami?

The City of Victoria is **not** at risk like coastal communities such as Tofino and Ucluelet, which are on the open water and have notification sirens. Victoria **does not expect a large, fast “wave”** like we've seen in places like Thailand and Japan.

The main tsunami threat to Victoria is from a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake off the Pacific Coast of Vancouver Island. Tsunami Modelling has been completed for our region for the most likely and highest impact scenario, which is a 9.0 magnitude Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. An earthquake that happens far away that we don't feel, may cause a very low-risk and low-impact tsunami event in Victoria.

The shaking from an earthquake is your warning of a **local tsunami**. The projected arrival for a local tsunami at Victoria's harbour is 76 minutes, with a maximum water level of 2.5 metres (8.2 feet). This estimate is based on a 9.0 Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. (In contrast, the 2011 Japanese tsunami caused by a 9.0 earthquake had a maximum water level of 40 metres or approximately 131 feet.)

Where will you be safe from a tsunami?

You are safe from a tsunami in the Capital Region if you are located **four metres (13 feet) above sea level**. Check the compass on your mobile device or Google Earth to find out your approximate elevation.

It's important to know if you are located in a tsunami hazard zone so that you can move to a safe area in the event of a tsunami warning. To see if you live, work or play in a tsunami hazard zone, view the City of Victoria's *Tsunami Hazard Map* at <http://tinyurl.com/tsunamihazardmap>.

What to do in a tsunami warning?

In the event of a tsunami warning, move to higher ground immediately (on foot or bike if possible) if you are in a low coastal area, beach, marina or harbour, and take your emergency kit with you. Do not stay to watch the tsunami waves and do not return until officials say it's safe to do so. Depending on your location, higher ground may only be a few blocks away.

If you are not located in a tsunami hazard zone, shelter in place and be prepared to assist family, friends and neighbours in need of shelter. Stay tuned to local media channels for updates.

How will you be notified of a tsunami warning?

If you are near the ocean and feel an earthquake that makes it difficult to stand for 60 seconds or more, drop, cover, and hold on, count to 60 once all shaking has stopped, and then move to higher ground or inland immediately. Do not wait for an official tsunami warning.

The City of Victoria receives notifications of potential **distant** tsunamis from the National Tsunami Warning Centre (NTWC). *Vic-Alert*, the City's subscriber-based emergency notification service and the provincial government's *AlertBC* system, both send out distant tsunami warnings.

For updates in an emergency, follow **@CityofVictoria** on Twitter and visit victoria.ca

For more information and to subscribe to *Vic-Alert*, the City of Victoria's free emergency notification service, go to VictoriaReady.ca.

ATTACHMENT: Tsunami Preparedness Graphic (Courtesy of Prepared BC)

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For More Information:

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