



# KINGDOM OF PEACE AND JUSTICE CENTER

**Civil Training Program: Risk Management  
and Emergency Preparedness**

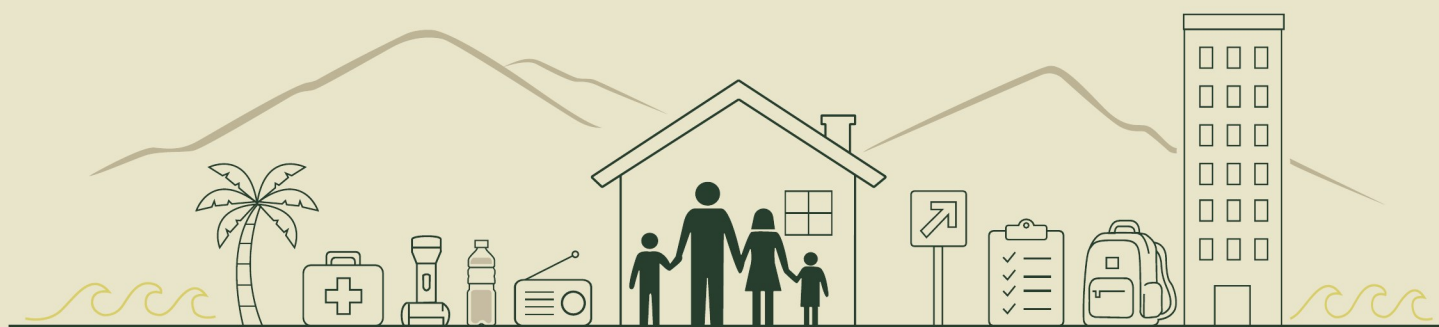
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# TSUNAMIS

## MODULE 2

## PHASE 2: DURING

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Educational document for the general public  
in Latin America and the United States

Edition 1 - 2026

## **EDUCATIONAL GUIDE FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT: TSUNAMIS**

### **MODULE 2 · PHASE 2: DURING THE TSUNAMI**

For the home, the family, and the community

| First edition · September 2026

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**SCOPE:**

This guide is intended for individuals and families who wish to prepare their home and surroundings. It is intended for educational and preventive purposes. It does not replace local civil protection regulations, the judgment of the relevant authorities, or the assessment of a qualified professional. Each person and each family should adapt these recommendations to their home and circumstances. In an emergency, always follow the instructions of the authorities in your country.

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# TSUNAMIS

MODULE 2 | PHASE 2: DURING

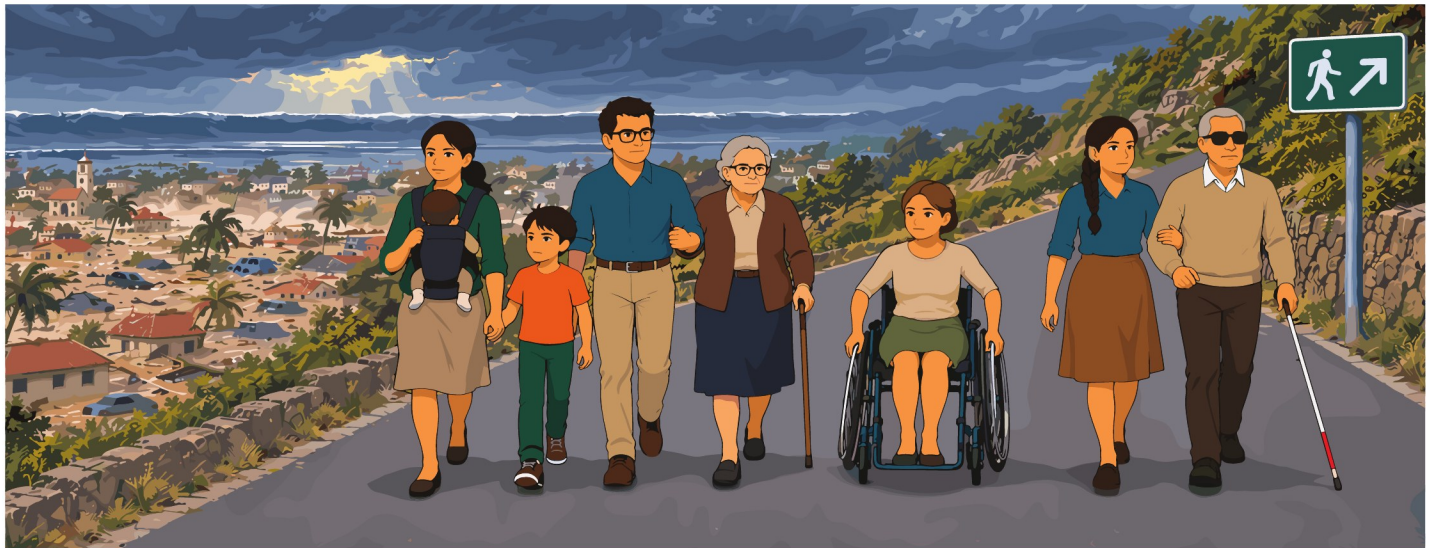


## LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To immediately recognize the natural and official signs of a tsunami and evacuate without delay to the established safe zone, helping those who need it without compromising your own life, and to stay outside the danger zone until the competent authorities authorize the return.

During a tsunami threat, the time available to reach safety can be extremely short. In the case of a tsunami generated close to the coast, the first waves may arrive within minutes, and there may not be enough time to receive an official warning.

For this reason, during this phase **no time should be lost trying to confirm the danger first hand, watching the sea, gathering belongings, or waiting for further instructions, when clear natural signs of a possible tsunami are already present.**



The priorities are:

- recognize the natural or official warning signs immediately
- protect yourself from the earthquake first, if it is still happening
- evacuate as soon as possible toward a safe zone
- move away from the coast, beaches, ports, river mouths, rivers, estuaries, canals and any other channels through which water could enter
- follow the evacuation routes and the instructions of the local authorities
- help, when possible without risking your own life, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and others who need assistance
- remain outside the danger zone until the right authorities clearly indicate that it is safe to return.





## 2.1. RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS AND ACT IMMEDIATELY

Anyone in a coastal area exposed to tsunamis should know two kinds of warning: **natural warnings** and **official warnings**.

### 01 NATURAL WARNINGS

The main natural signs that may indicate an approaching tsunami are:



A strong or prolonged earthquake.



A sudden, abnormal change in sea level, which may appear as water rapidly receding or rising.



An unusual, loud noise or roar coming from the sea.

### These signs do not all have to appear at the same time.

If you are in an area susceptible to tsunami flooding and you notice any one of them, **you must act immediately**.

If an earthquake is happening, **protect yourself from the shaking first**. As soon as you can move safely, begin evacuating immediately.



Do not wait for a siren, a phone message, a social media post or confirmation from the authorities if the natural signs clearly indicate a possible tsunami.

**In a tsunami of nearby origin, the natural warning may be the first and, in certain circumstances, the only sign available before the water arrives.**





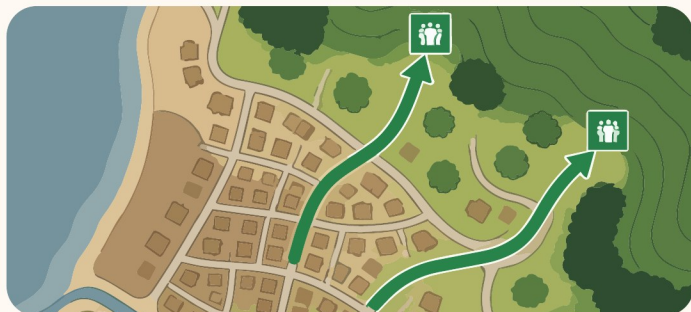
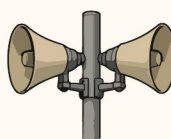
## 02 OFFICIAL WARNINGS

If the authorities issue a tsunami evacuation order or instruction, **follow the official instructions immediately.**



**Do not delay your departure in order to check personally what is happening at sea.**

During the emergency, stay informed through the official systems available —radio, mobile telephone, public alert systems, sirens or other means established locally— provided that doing so does not delay your evacuation.



Conditions can vary considerably from one place to another. For that reason, the instructions of the local authorities and the official hazard and evacuation maps take priority over general references to distance or height.





## 2.2. EVACUATE TOWARD A SAFE ZONE

The fundamental objective is not to reach the same distance or height everywhere, **but to leave the area susceptible to tsunami flooding and reach the safe area established for that community.** Therefore:



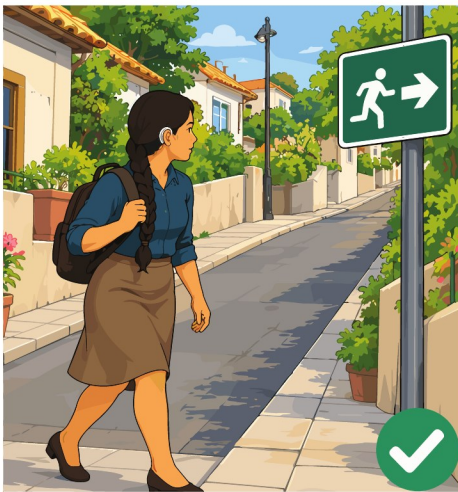
Follow the official evacuation routes where these are available.



Head for high ground or inland, away from the danger zone.



Use the meeting points or safe areas established in advance by the authorities.



Where evacuation signs exist, follow them.



Do not stray unnecessarily from the route.



Keep moving until you reach the safe zone.



Where no maps, signage or local instructions are available, move away from the coast and head **as high and as far inland as possible**, without stopping unnecessarily.

General references to height or distance that specialized agencies may provide are indicative, for situations where no local information exists, and they **do not replace the official flooding and evacuation maps.**







## 2.3. EVACUATION: ON FOOT WHENEVER POSSIBLE

In general terms, **evacuation on foot should be the preferred option when possible and when established by the local evacuation plan.** After an earthquake there may be:



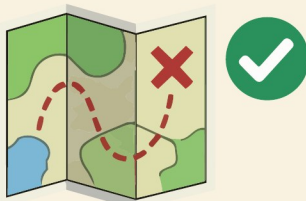
- |                                          |                                  |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • blocked streets                        | • damaged bridges                | • traffic lights out of service    | • large concentrations of vehicles |
| • cracks or deformations in the pavement | • fallen poles, trees or objects | • unstable buildings or structures | • traffic jams                     |

**The mass use of cars can block evacuation routes, obstruct pedestrians, and prevent emergency vehicles from getting through. Therefore:**

Evacuate on foot whenever you can do so safely.



Use the pedestrian routes identified in advance.



Do not use a car simply to carry belongings or to avoid walking.



Do not block evacuation routes or access reserved for emergency services.



### EXCEPTIONS

**An absolute ban on the use of vehicles should not be established for all people and all locations.**

In certain circumstances, local plans may provide for vehicle evacuation, particularly where distances are very long, where there are people with reduced mobility or other specific needs, or where geographical and infrastructure characteristics require it. **In those cases, the instructions and procedures established by the local authorities must be followed.**



**The fundamental rule is: do not improvise a means of evacuation that goes against the plan established for the area.**







## 2.4. DO NOT WASTE TIME GATHERING BELONGINGS

If there is an immediate tsunami danger, evacuate with whatever you have available at that moment. If the emergency backpack or kit is ready and you can pick it up **without delaying the evacuation**, take it.



**No material object justifies delaying an evacuation in the face of an imminent tsunami.**

Do not waste time:

- |                                                                    |                                                 |                                          |                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| • looking for money                                                | • collecting clothing                           | • retrieving toys or personal belongings | • going back into a home or building to recover belongings |
| • gathering documents that are not ready to be carried immediately | • looking for phones, chargers or other devices | • securing property                      |                                                            |



## 2.5. NEVER GO NEAR THE SEA TO WATCH THE TSUNAMI

One of the most dangerous behaviors during a tsunami threat is heading for the beach, the port, the seafront, a river mouth or any other coastal point to watch the phenomenon, take photographs or record video.



**Never go to look at a tsunami.**

If you observe an abnormal withdrawal of the sea, do not approach the shore or the exposed seafloor.

If you can see a mass of water approaching from a danger zone, your absolute priority must be to keep moving away and reach safety.



**Do not stop to photograph, film or live stream the phenomenon.**



**Do not allow others in your care to do so.**





## 2.6. ALSO STAY AWAY FROM RIVERS, ESTUARIES, CANALS, PORTS, AND RIVER MOUTHS

The danger of a tsunami is not limited to the shoreline.



Keep moving away from flood-prone areas until you reach the safe area designated for the community.

Waves and currents can travel inland through:

- |                |             |         |                                       |
|----------------|-------------|---------|---------------------------------------|
| • river mouths | • estuaries | • bays  | • coastal lagoons                     |
| • rivers       | • canals    | • ports | • other channels connected to the sea |

For this reason, do not use river banks or canals as evacuation routes, unless they form part of a route expressly established as safe by the authorities.



## 2.7. IF YOU CANNOT REACH A SAFE ZONE: VERTICAL EVACUATION

The first option must always be to reach, by the established routes, a safe zone outside the flood area. However, a tsunami may be imminent and a person may not have enough time to reach high ground or move far enough inland.



In those circumstances, **vertical evacuation may constitute a last-resort alternative**, provided the city has a structure identified or considered appropriate for that purpose.



**Do not assume that any three-story building or concrete structure is automatically safe from a tsunami.**

Many buildings have not been designed to withstand the forces produced by a tsunami.



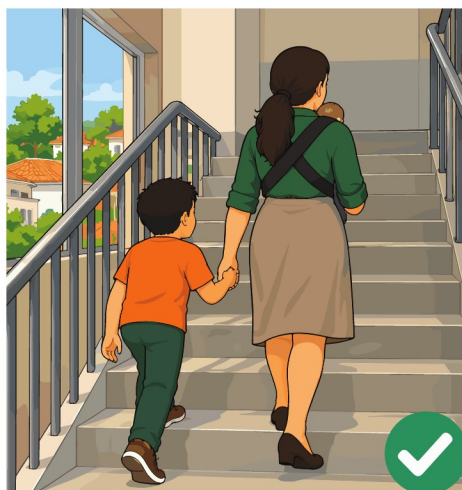




Where buildings or structures officially designated for vertical evacuation exist:



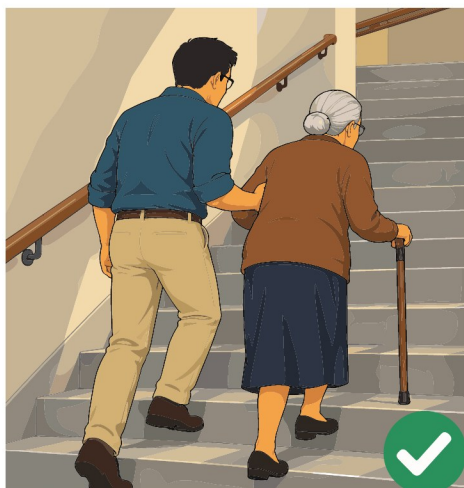
Go to the nearest one.



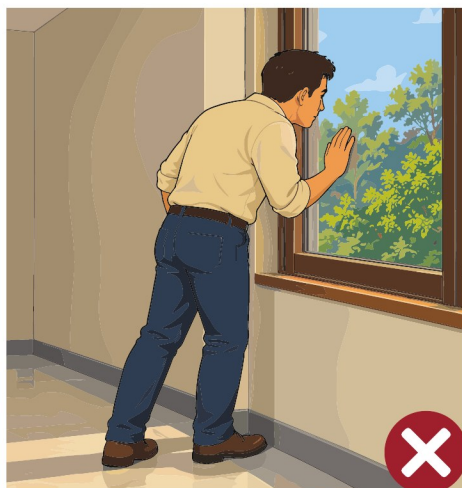
Use the stairs.



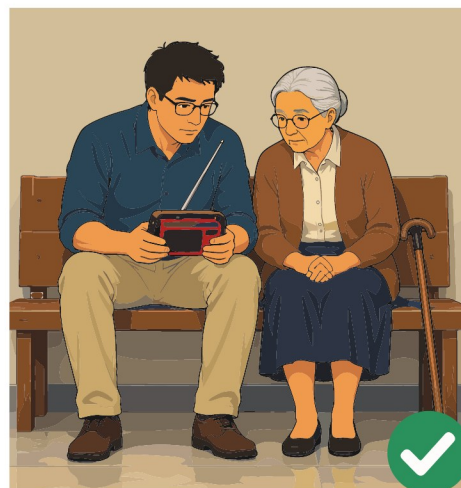
Do not use elevators.



Climb to the levels established as safe.



Stay away from windows and other items that could break.



Stay in place until you receive instructions from the authorities.



If there is no officially designated structure and the water is imminent, look for the available alternative that allows you to reach the greatest possible height and protection, giving priority to sturdy structures.

**This decision should be understood as an extreme survival measure and does not mean that the chosen building is necessarily capable of withstanding the tsunami.**







## 2.8. IF THE WATER REACHES YOU

The absolute priority is to avoid this situation through an early evacuation. A person caught in tsunami waters faces extremely violent currents, rapid flooding, and numerous objects and debris capable of causing serious or fatal injuries. If, despite evacuating, the water reaches you:



Try to stay afloat.



If you can, hold on to a floating object that is sufficiently sturdy.



Try to keep your head above the water.



Protect yourself from being struck by debris and structures as much as possible.



Do not waste your energy trying to fight directly against a strong current.



If you manage to reach a stable structure or a high point, try to get to safety.



The water may contain wood, vehicles, metal, glass, construction materials and other dangerous objects.

**Deliberately seeking out or holding on to a floating car is not recommended.**  
A vehicle carried by the water can overturn, sink, strike structures or become a hazard itself.





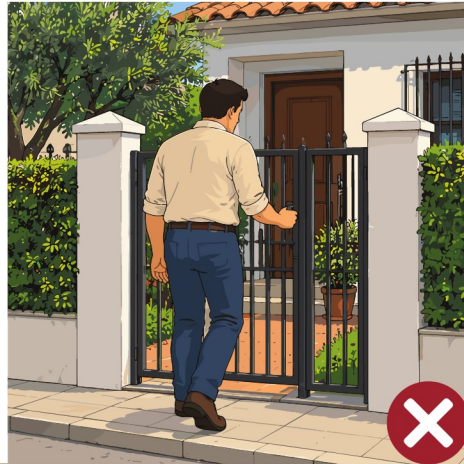


## 2.9. A TSUNAMI IS NOT NECESSARILY A SINGLE WAVE

Do not consider the emergency over after seeing the first wave or after the water recedes. A tsunami may consist of **a series of successive waves and currents**, and the first wave will not necessarily be the largest. Dangerous conditions can continue for many hours. Therefore:



Do not go back to the beach.



Do not return to your home if it is inside the evacuated zone.



Do not cross flooded areas.



Do not approach to look at the damages.



Do not interpret the water receding as the end of the threat.

**Stay outside the danger zone until the competent authorities expressly announce that it is safe to return.**





## 2.10. MINORS

During a tsunami threat, children and adolescents need clear instructions and firm guidance from the adults responsible for them. There are two priorities:



Guarantee their immediate physical evacuation.



Prevent separations, delays and behavior driven by fear or confusion.

Adults should convey reassurance through short, understandable instructions.  
**They should not give lengthy explanations while evacuating,  
nor create unnecessary alarm.**

01

### EVACUATING WITH BABIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

Young children must remain under the direct control of a responsible adult at all times. During the evacuation:

- Keep young children holding your hand
- do not let them run ahead of the group or fall behind
- if a child cannot move quickly enough, help them or carry them



- babies should be carried in the safest and quickest way available
- If an appropriate baby-carrier is already prepared and immediately available, you may use it



- do not waste time looking for strollers, carriers or other items that are not immediately available
- take particular care with cracks, debris, glass, wires, damaged structures and other consequences of the earthquake that may have caused the tsunami



**Adults should avoid loading children unnecessarily with baggage that could hinder their movement.**

If a child's emergency backpack is already prepared, is light and does not affect the child's ability to evacuate, they may carry it. However, **the speed and safety of the evacuation take priority over carrying any belongings.**





## PREVENT SEPARATIONS

In crowded places, an evacuation can produce confusion and separate family members. Therefore:

- keep physical contact with young children
- make sure each minor stays with the adult or group assigned in advance
- do not allow a child to leave the evacuation route to look for family, friends, pets or belongings
- do not change route or meeting point unnecessarily
- once the safe zone is reached, keep the group together and take a count of the people in your care.



If a child becomes separated during the evacuation, **do not go back toward the danger zone when doing so would expose you to the tsunami.** Report the situation to the authorities or emergency personnel as soon as possible from a safe zone.



### 2.11. HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHILD'S FEAR OR PANIC

Sirens, shouting, earthquake damage, crowds and other stimuli can provoke intense fear.



Simple phrases can be used, such as:

"We are going to the safe place."

"Give me your hand."

"Stay with me."

The responsible adult should:

- Speak in a firm, calm voice
- use short instructions
- keep the child focused on the evacuation
- avoid conversations about possible deaths, destruction or other consequences while moving
- prevent the child from stopping to look at the sea
- keep moving toward the safe zone.



A child should not be promised that “nothing is going to happen” when the adult does not know how the emergency will unfold. It is better to give a concrete, reassuring instruction:  
“We are going to the safe place and I am with you.”

**IF THE CHILD FREEZES AND FEAR PREVENTS THEM FROM CONTINUING:**

- establish direct verbal contact
- give the instructions one at a time
- physically help them to continue if you can do so safely
- if the child is small and it becomes necessary, carry them
- do not stay in place trying to persuade them with lengthy explanations.

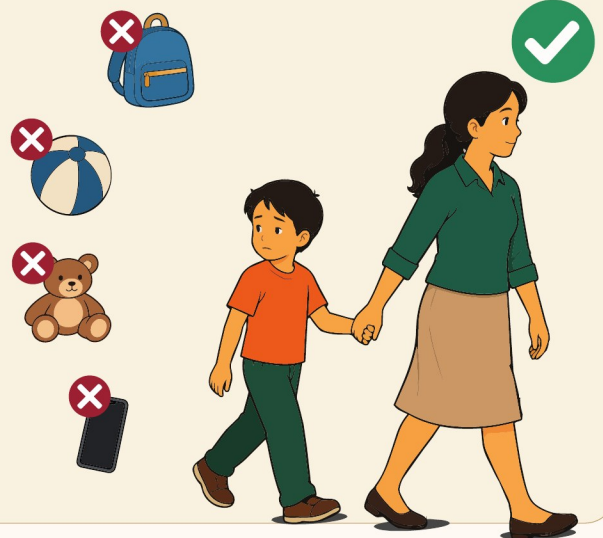


The priority continues to be leaving the threat zone.



**2.12. DO NOT GO BACK FOR TOYS, OBJECTS OR PETS**

During a real evacuation, do not allow a minor to try to go back for a toy, a backpack, a phone, or any other object of emotional importance.



Likewise, do not allow them to leave the route to chase a pet that has escaped.

Explain to them in advance, and if necessary, remind them during the emergency, **that people are the priority and objects can be replaced.**

If something is lost during the evacuation, keep going.







## 2.13. IF THE MINORS ARE IN A SCHOOL, EDUCATIONAL CENTER, TEMPLE, CLUB OR OTHER INSTITUTION

When a tsunami threatens while minors are in the care of an institution, the emergency and evacuation plan established for that establishment must be applied.



The responsible adults —teachers, caregivers, coordinators, coaches, religious leaders, officials or other designated personnel— **must immediately take charge of the group.**

### 01 INSTITUTIONAL STAFF IN CHARGE MUST:

- begin the evacuation according to the established procedure
- lead the minors along the planned route
- take the records or lists of people only if they are immediately available and if doing so does not delay the evacuation
- keep the groups together
- take headcounts when conditions allow it
- prioritize assistance to those who need additional support
- prevent minors from leaving the group
- head to the previously established safe point or meeting point
- keep the minors under supervision until a safe reunification can take place according to institutional procedure.



## 02 PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS RESPONSIBLE

If the child is already under the protection of an institution that is carrying out its evacuation plan, **family members must not enter an area threatened by a tsunami to pick them up.**

Doing so may:

- expose the family member to the tsunami
- increase traffic
- interfere with the evacuation
- cause the child and their family to head for different places
- make reunification more difficult afterward

**Family members must follow the official instructions and the reunification procedure established by the institution.**



This measure requires advance planning: **Families must know, before an emergency, where the institution will evacuate to and how reunification will be carried out.**



### 2.14. VERTICAL EVACUATION WITH MINORS

If it is not possible to leave the area susceptible to flooding and an appropriate vertical evacuation structure must be used:

- keep children with the adults in charge of them
- use the stairs
- do not use elevators
- keep children away from edges, broken windows, unstable elements and areas presenting a risk of falling
- help those who have the greatest difficulty moving first, without causing pushing or blocking the stairs
- reach the level or safety area established
- take a headcount when possible
- remain there until the authorities indicate it is safe to leave the place.



**“Send all the children up first” must not be applied as a general rule.** On a stairway full of people, this kind of instruction can cause people to push past one another, shove, and create obstructions.

**The evacuation must maintain an orderly flow and give priority to assisting those who genuinely cannot move by themselves.**







## 2.15. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND PEOPLE WITH ASSISTANCE NEEDS

An inclusive evacuation must recognize that people have different abilities and needs.



A person may need assistance related to:

- |                 |                            |                           |
|-----------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| • mobility      | • comprehension            | • medications             |
| • vision        | • orientation              | • service animals         |
| • hearing       | • transportation           | • personal assistance     |
| • communication | • use of medical equipment | • other functional needs. |



**Do not automatically assume that every person with a disability needs to be carried, guided, or assisted the same way.**

Whenever possible, ask directly:  
**“How can I help you?”**

**Respect what the person says about the safest way to assist them.**





## 2.16. PERSONAL OR INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT NETWORK

People who may need assistance to evacuate should have a support system and a pre-arranged procedure in place from the preparedness stage.

During an immediate tsunami threat, **a system that forces other people to travel into a dangerous area to collect someone must not be improvised**, unless this forms part of a safe procedure established beforehand and circumstances allow it to be carried out.

If you are part of a person's support network:

- follow the previously agreed procedure
- contact them when possible without delaying your own evacuation
- provide the planned assistance
- do not expose yourself unnecessarily to the tsunami
- do not leave a safe zone to re-enter a threatened area.



**Institutions must apply their previously established procedures for people who need additional assistance.**



## 2.17. PEOPLE WITH REDUCED MOBILITY

Needs can vary considerably. Some people may use:

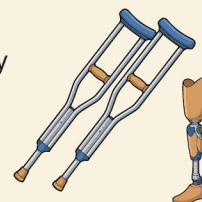
- manual wheelchair
- powered wheelchair



- cane
- walker



- crutches
- prosthetics
- other mobility devices



**Whenever possible, keep the person together with their mobility device.**

Do not remove a wheelchair, cane, prosthetic or other assistive device unless it is truly necessary to get past an obstacle or avoid immediate danger.

If a route proves inaccessible:

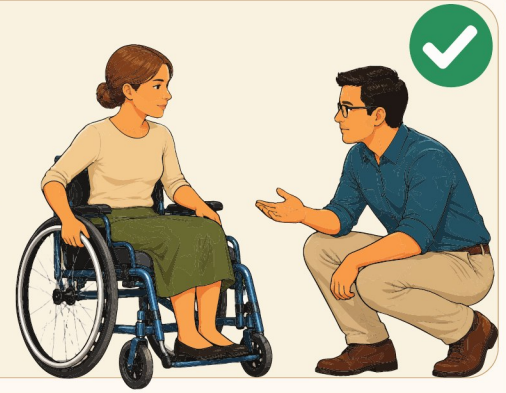
- use the accessible alternative provided in the plan
- request help where it is available
- follow the person's own instructions on how to assist them
- avoid lifting or carrying a person unnecessarily.





### IF PHYSICAL TRANSFER IS ESSENTIAL

- Do not improvise potentially dangerous carrying techniques.
- Incorrect handling can cause falls, spinal injuries, joint damage or injuries both to the person being evacuated and to those trying to help.
- If there is immediate danger and no other alternative, ask the person —when they can communicate— to indicate the safest way to move them, and use the help of several people if available.



**Specific transfer or carrying techniques must form part of the advance training of those assigned that role.**



### 2.18. POWERED WHEELCHAIRS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT

Do not assume that a powered wheelchair will necessarily be unusable after an earthquake. If it works and the route is passable, it may still be the safest and fastest means of mobility for the person.



However, emergency plans should provide alternatives for situations where:

- there is no power
- the equipment is damaged
- there are stairs
- the usual route is obstructed
- another means of evacuation must be used.

If the person depends on medical equipment, communication devices or other essential items, try to keep these with them whenever they can be carried without compromising the immediate evacuation.





## 2.19. PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS



**Do not take hold of or pull a person with a visual impairment without warning them.**



**Identify yourself and offer help.**

If they accept assistance:

- Ask how they prefer to be guided.
- Normally you can offer your arm so they can hold on and walk slightly behind you.
- Briefly describe obstacles, steps, changes in level, changes of direction and other hazards.
- Use clear indications such as “step up,” “debris ahead” or “we are turning right.”
- Do not separate the person from their cane, service animal or other mobility aid, unless there is an immediate safety need.

**Do not replace precise spatial instructions with vague expressions such as “over there,” “here” or “careful.”**







## 2.20. DEAF PEOPLE AND PEOPLE WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

Do not assume that a siren or a message broadcast over loudspeakers was perceived.



To communicate an evacuation:

- establish eye contact
  - use clear gestures
  - point out the direction of evacuation
- use short written messages when necessary
  - use the communication system the person normally uses, provided it is available and does not delay the evacuation

A written emergency message can be as simple as:

**“TSUNAMI — EVACUATE NOW — FOLLOW ME.”**

If the person uses sign language and someone trained to communicate with them is available, use that resource.



**The priority is to make sure the person has understood that they must evacuate immediately and where they must go.**





## 2.21. PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL, COGNITIVE OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND NEURODIVERGENT PEOPLE

Noise, sirens, shouting, crowds, unexpected physical contact, and the sudden change in routine may cause disorientation, anxiety or overstimulation.



1

### USE:

- short, concrete instructions
  - one instruction at a time
  - language familiar to the person
  - clear gestures where these are useful
- the company of someone familiar, when possible
  - communication or regulation items that are immediately available and do not delay the evacuation.

A written emergency message can be as simple as:

**“GIVE ME YOUR HAND.”**

**“COME WITH ME.”**

**“WE HAVE TO LEAVE NOW.”**

**“WE ARE GOING TO THE SAFE PLACE.”**

Avoid shouting unnecessarily, giving several orders at once, or providing complex explanations.



2

### PHYSICAL CONTACT AND RESTRAINT

**Wrapping a person tightly in a blanket must not be used as a general recommendation.** Physical immobilization or restraint can increase distress, make breathing difficult, cause a fall, or interfere with the evacuation.

Use physical contact only when necessary, to prevent an immediate hazard, or when it forms part of the support strategies known and accepted for that person.

If a regulation or comfort object is immediately available and helps the person keep evacuating, it may be taken, provided it **causes no delay and does not hinder movement.**







## 2.22. OLDER ADULTS AND OTHER PEOPLE WHO NEED ASSISTANCE

Assistance must not be limited exclusively to people with a recognized disability.



Others who may also need help:

- |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• older adults</li><li>• people with temporary injuries</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• pregnant women</li><li>• people with respiratory or cardiovascular difficulties</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• people who may have difficulty finding their way</li><li>• people who do not understand the language used in the alerts</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• visitors unfamiliar with the area</li><li>• people who are alone and need support to evacuate.</li></ul> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

When you can help them without compromising your own evacuation:

- clearly communicate that there is a danger
- point them toward the safe direction
- accompany them where necessary
- adapt your pace when circumstances allow
- request additional help if it is available.



Plans made in advance must pay particular attention to identifying people who may need more time to leave the danger zone.





## 2.23. PETS AND SERVICE ANIMALS

Pets are part of many households and must be included in emergency planning. However, during an immediate tsunami threat there is a fundamental rule: **the evacuation of people must not be delayed in a way that exposes their lives to danger in order to recover, chase, or move an animal.**

If the pet is with you and you can evacuate it immediately, take it.



### DOGS

Whenever possible:

- use a leash
- preferably use a secure harness if the animal is already used to one
- keep it under control
- avoid retractable leashes during an evacuation in a crowd
- do not let it move freely.



A frightened animal can behave unpredictably even if it is normally docile.



**Do not establish a rule requiring a large dog to be muzzled simply because of its size.**

A muzzle may be appropriate for certain animals already accustomed to wearing one, or where there is a known risk of biting, but putting one on for the first time during an emergency can be difficult and cause more stress. That decision should be part of the owner's plan in advance.

### CATS AND SMALL ANIMALS

When possible, they should be carried in a suitable, secure box, bag, or carrier.

Do not waste time looking for a carrier if the danger is immediate and doing so substantially delays the evacuation.



The way the animal is moved must be adapted to the circumstances without compromising the safety of people.







## 2.24. DO NOT GO BACK FOR A PET THAT HAS ESCAPED



If a pet gets loose and runs toward the danger zone, **do not go back toward the coast or abandon the evacuation to chase it when doing so could put your life or the lives of others at risk.**

Keep moving toward the safe zone.

Report the animal afterward, when conditions allow a search to be organized safely.

Likewise, if the pet was left inside a home or building, and returning means entering a threatened area again, do not go back for it.



## 2.25. IF A PET MAKES THE EVACUATION EXTREMELY DIFFICULT

Do everything reasonably possible to evacuate the animal without dangerously delaying your departure.

However, if a person faces an immediate threat and an animal makes it physically impossible to continue toward a safe place, **protecting human life must be prioritized.**

Children, people with disabilities, other family members, institutional staff or third parties must not be exposed to a tsunami in an attempt to carry an animal that cannot be moved in those circumstances.

**This is an extreme survival decision and not a recommendation to abandon animals when there is time or a safe alternative.**





## 2.26. PETS DURING A VERTICAL EVACUATION

If a suitable vertical evacuation structure accepts animals, and you can bring them without compromising the evacuation:

- keep the dog on a leash or under control
- keep cats and small animals inside their carriers when possible
- prevent animals from interfering with stairs and circulation routes
- keep them away from edges and other places they could fall from
- Try to keep them separate from other animals when there is a risk of fighting.



**Do not automatically tie a pet to railings, pipes or other parts of the structure.**

Those elements may not be sturdy, may be needed as pathways, or may themselves become a hazard.

**Keep the animal under direct control whenever possible.**

### SERVICE ANIMALS

Service animals must stay with the person they assist whenever circumstances allow.

They must not be treated simply as pets, since they may perform essential functions relating to the person's mobility, orientation, alerts, or other needs.







## 2.27. GENERAL PRINCIPLE FOR INSTITUTIONS

In churches, temples, clubs, associations, community centers, and other private institutions, the responsibility during a tsunami threat is to **put the plan prepared before the emergency into action**, not to improvise a new one.



The designated staff in charge must:

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• recognize and communicate the threat immediately</li><li>• order the evacuation where appropriate</li><li>• direct people toward the planned exits and routes</li><li>• prevent crowding</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• prevent people from going back for belongings</li><li>• assist those who need additional help</li><li>• keep the emergency routes clear</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• check, when possible and without delaying departure, that the areas have been evacuated</li><li>• move to the safe point established in advance</li><li>• take the headcount there</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• report missing people or those who require assistance</li><li>• keep everyone outside the threat zone until the authorities authorize the return</li></ul> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



**No institutional staff member should remain in a danger zone unnecessarily while trying to complete administrative procedures, recover property, or carry out checks that put their life at risk.**

**People's protection is always the priority.**





## 2.28. IF YOU ARE IN A VEHICLE

If you are in an area threatened by a tsunami when you receive an alert or recognize natural warning signs, **do not stay in your vehicle waiting to see what happens**. Follow the evacuation routes and procedures established for your area.

If traffic is moving along and the authorities allow or direct vehicle evacuation, continue to the safe zone, following official instructions. However, if you encounter:

- severe congestion
- blocked roads
- damage to the roadway
- obstacles caused by the earthquake
- a situation where staying in the vehicle is clearly delaying your evacuation, and a safe pedestrian route exists that will get you to the safe zone more quickly, leave the vehicle, as far as possible, where it will not block evacuation routes, and continue on foot.



**Do not stay inside a car caught in a traffic jam when there is an immediate flooding threat and it is possible to continue toward a safe zone by other means.**



**Never try to drive a vehicle through an area that is already flooding.**

**Water can move vehicles, conceal damage in the pavement, contain debris, or rapidly increase in depth and speed.**



## 2.29. IF YOU ARE ON A BEACH OR VERY CLOSE TO THE SEA

If you feel a strong or prolonged earthquake, observe an abnormal change in sea level, hear an unusual noise coming from the ocean, or receive an evacuation order: **leave the coast immediately**.



Warn other people nearby if you can do so while you continue evacuating, **but do not delay your own departure trying to persuade those who refuse to leave.**

Do not wait to:

- see a wave
- confirm the news on the internet
- receive a call
- collect your belongings
- finish a recreational activity
- take photographs or videos
- find everyone you know who might be in the area

**Head immediately for the established safe area.**







## 2.30. TOURISTS, VISITORS AND PEOPLE UNFAMILIAR WITH THE AREA

People visiting a coastal area may not know:

- the areas susceptible to flooding
- the evacuation routes
- safe locations
- the local signage
- the location of high ground
- the alert systems used in the community



If you do not know the area and there is a tsunami threat:

- look for and immediately follow the evacuation signage
- follow the instructions of the authorities and emergency personnel
- observe where the organized evacuation is heading
- move away from the coast
- head for high ground or inland when you have no other information
- do not stay where you are trying to find out details that will delay your departure

If you are in a hotel, tourist establishment, campsite, resort or other facility, follow the establishment's evacuation plan whenever it is compatible with the official instructions.

### Language barriers must not prevent evacuation.

Institutions located in exposed areas should have understandable signage, pictograms and procedures that can also guide those who do not speak the local language.







### 2.31. PEOPLE IN PORTS, MARINAS, DOCKS, AND HARBOR AREAS

Ports, marinas, docks, river mouths, and other coastal facilities can experience extremely dangerous currents during a tsunami.

If you are on land inside a port or marina and there is a tsunami threat:

- leave the coastal area immediately
- follow the established evacuation route
- do not stay on the dock trying to secure a boat
- do not go back to recover equipment
- do not go near the water to observe changes in sea level



**Do not try to board a boat from land as an improvised method of evacuation.**

**The time spent preparing, releasing, or starting a boat may prevent you from reaching a safe zone.**



### 2.32. IF YOU ARE IN A BUILDING NEAR THE COAST

If you receive an evacuation order or recognize natural tsunami signs, do not stay in a building located inside a threatened area simply because the construction looks solid. When there is time to do so, evacuate by the established route toward the safe zone.

Do not use elevators after an earthquake or during an emergency evacuation when there is a risk of:

- power outages
- system failures
- structural damage
- becoming trapped.







If the time available no longer allows you to leave the area susceptible to flooding, apply the vertical evacuation provisions set out earlier, giving priority to the structures officially identified for that purpose where these exist.



### 2.33. IF YOU ARE ON A BOAT

The appropriate response for a person already at sea **is not necessarily the same as for a person on land**. A tsunami can behave very differently in deep water than it does near the coast, in harbors, and in shallow water. For this reason, no single universal rule should be set for all boats.



Decisions for boats depend considerably on local characteristics, the type of vessel, the location, and the time available.

If you are at sea and receive a tsunami warning:

- follow the instructions of the competent maritime and port authorities
- use the official maritime communication channels
- assess your location, how much time you have, the depth of the water, and local conditions
- do not automatically try to return to port without knowing the current instructions
- nor should you attempt to head out to sea without a plan if the authorities have not instructed you to or if conditions do not allow you to do so safely.



The instructions of the competent maritime authority take priority.





### 2.34. IF YOU ARE IN AN INSTITUTION WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE

In churches, temples, clubs, associations, community centers, educational establishments and other institutions, a disorganized evacuation can create additional risks. **The previously designated people in charge must immediately assume their roles.**



#### THE ORDER MUST BE UNMISTAKABLE

Use short, direct messages, for example:

**“TSUNAMI ALERT. WE MUST EVACUATE NOW. FOLLOW THE DESIGNATED ROUTE.”**

**Do not give speeches or lengthy explanations before beginning the evacuation.**



During the exit:

- open and keep the planned exits available
- direct the flow of people toward the established routes
- avoid pushing and uncontrolled running
- prevent people from going back for belongings
- keep doors, hallways, stairs and evacuation routes clear
- assist people who need support
- keep children with the adults responsible for them
- prevent groups from gathering in entrances or exits
- continue toward the safe zone without stopping unnecessarily.





Institutional staff that are in charge **should not delay the evacuation trying to complete a headcount inside the building.** The headcount should preferably be done once the safe place has been reached, by using the available records.



If a person is subsequently found to be missing, report it to the emergency services. **Do not send members of the institution back into the danger zone to look for them.**



### 2.35. AVOID PANIC WITHOUT MINIMIZING THE DANGER

During an evacuation, communication must combine **urgency, clarity, and control.** Do not shout contradictory messages or spread unconfirmed information.



#### Use operational instructions:

“We must evacuate now.”

“Follow this route.”

“Do not go back.”

“Keep going until we reach the safe zone.”



Avoid using expressions that minimize the situation if you have no official information to support them, such as:

- “Nothing is going to happen.”
- “It is only a precaution.”
- “There is no danger.”

**Clear communication reduces confusion and helps people understand what they must do.**



### 2.36. COMMUNICATIONS DURING THE EVACUATION

Communication is important, **but it must not delay the evacuation.**

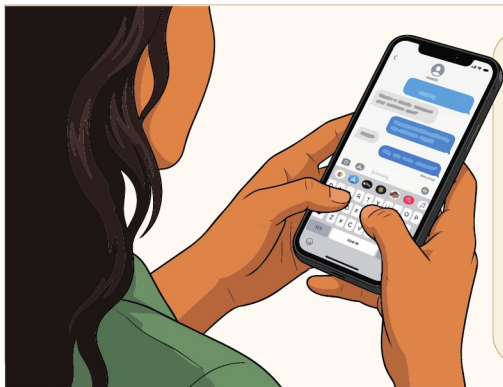
If there is immediate danger:

- evacuate
- stay informed through official media when you can do so while moving or once the safe zone has been reached
- contact family when circumstances allow.

Do not stay inside the threatened area:

- Making long calls
- posting on social media
- recording videos
- looking for news
- trying to verify rumors.





When possible, brief text messages can be useful to tell family that you are evacuating or are already somewhere safe.

**Do not spread information from unknown sources.**

**During an emergency, rumors and false messages can cause unnecessary movements of people and disrupt the official response.**



## 2.37. DO NOT RELY EXCLUSIVELY ON YOUR MOBILE PHONE

Telecommunications networks can:

- become saturated
- suffer power outages
- work intermittently after an earthquake
- be interrupted
- lose coverage



For this reason, the absence of a notification on your phone **does not mean** there is no danger.



If you recognize natural tsunami signs, **evacuate even if you have not yet received an electronic alert.** Likewise, once an official evacuation has begun, do not go back because your phone shows no warning.



## 2.38. IF AFTERSHOCKS HAPPEN DURING THE EVACUATION

After a strong earthquake, aftershocks can happen while people are moving.

If new shaking happens:

- protect yourself immediately from objects that could fall
- move away, when possible, from facades, poles, wires, walls, and damaged structures
- watch out for landslides on sloping ground
- when the shaking stops and you can move safely again, continue the evacuation



If you feel an aftershock, apply the action:  
**DROP – COVER – HOLD ON**





An aftershock **does not mean the tsunami threat is over.**  
**Do not go back to the coast or to an evacuated building after an aftershock.**



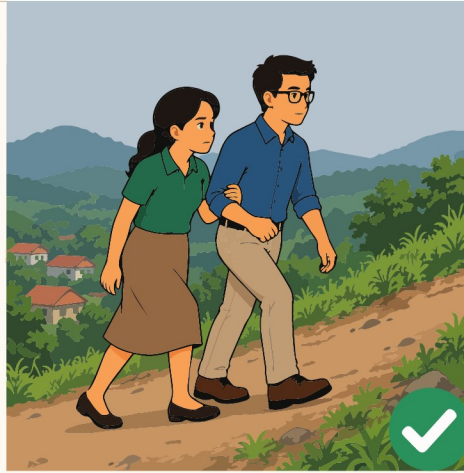
### 2.39. IF YOU FIND INJURED PEOPLE DURING THE EVACUATION

Help when you can do so **without becoming trapped in the danger zone.**

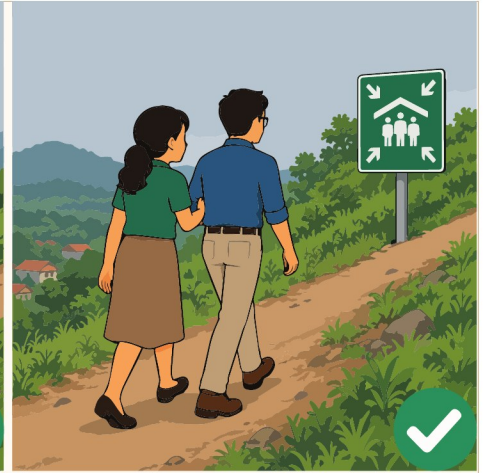
If a person can walk:



Help them up when it is safe



accompany them



continue toward the safe zone.

If a person cannot move:

- Request help from other people or from the emergency services when these are available
- use the means of transport provided in the emergency plan, if any exist
- do not carry out maneuvers you are not trained for, unless there is an immediate danger that makes moving them essential.



**When the tsunami is imminent, the risk of remaining in place must be continuously assessed.**

**The number of victims should not be increased by improvised rescue attempts that expose other people to an immediate threat.**





## 2.40. IF YOU OBSERVE A SUDDEN WITHDRAWAL OF THE SEA

An abnormal, rapid withdrawal of the water can be a natural tsunami sign.



If you observe this phenomenon:  
**Evacuate immediately toward a safe zone.**

The withdrawal of the water does not mean the danger has passed. It may precede the arrival of a wave or severe flooding.

- Do not go closer.
- Do not walk on the exposed seafloor.
- Do not collect fish, objects, boats or anything else.
- Do not stay to photograph or film.
- Do not wait to see what happens next.



## 2.41. IF THE FIRST WAVE APPEARS SMALL

Do not interpret a first low wave as a sign that the danger is over.

A tsunami generally consists of a series of waves and oscillations in sea level; the later waves may be larger than the earlier ones.

Even when a wave does not look large, the associated currents can be strong enough to:

- knock people over
- move vehicles
- drag boats
- destroy structures
- carry large quantities of debris.



**Stay in the safe zone.**







## 2.42. DO NOT GO BACK WHEN THE WATER RECEDES

After a wave, the water may withdraw again toward the sea.

**This does not mean the emergency has ended.  
New waves and dangerous currents may arrive.**

Do not go back to:



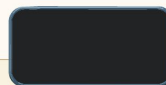
check on homes



look for belongings



look for vehicles



photograph the  
destruction



inspect damage



locate pets



help move objects



**Wait for the official announcement authorizing the return.**



## BEHAVIORS TO AVOID

During a tsunami threat or impact:

- **DO NOT** go to the beach to watch the phenomenon.
- **DO NOT** wait to see a wave before evacuating.
- **DO NOT** wait for an official alert when clear natural danger signs already exist.
- **DO NOT** go back for belongings.
- **DO NOT** re-enter an evacuated area.
- **DO NOT** leave a safe route to look for family members who are in the care of another institution.
- **DO NOT** chase a pet toward a danger zone.
- **DO NOT** use elevators during a vertical evacuation after an earthquake.
- **DO NOT** assume that any tall building constitutes a safe refuge.
- **DO NOT** cross flooded areas.
- **DO NOT** drive toward the water.
- **DO NOT** go near rivers, canals, river mouths, or ports to watch the tsunami.
- **DO NOT** spread rumors or unverified information.
- **DO NOT** stop the evacuation to record, photograph, or live stream the phenomenon.
- **DO NOT** go back after the first wave.
- **DO NOT** consider the emergency over until the competent authorities announce it.





## ESSENTIAL SURVIVAL RULES

In the face of a tsunami threat, remember:

- **PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THE EARTHQUAKE**  
If an earthquake is still happening, protect yourself from the shaking first. Evacuate as soon as you are able to safely do so.
- **RECOGNIZE THE NATURAL SIGNS**  
A strong or prolonged earthquake, a sudden and abnormal change in sea level, and a loud noise coming from the ocean can all constitute natural warnings.
- **DO NOT WAIT**  
If you recognize natural tsunami signs in an exposed area, evacuate immediately.
- **MOVE AWAY FROM THE COAST**  
Head for the established safe zone, following the official evacuation routes.
- **GO TO HIGH GROUND OR INLAND**  
If no local information is available, move away from the coast and go as high and as far inland as you can.
- **EVACUATE ON FOOT WHEN POSSIBLE**  
Avoid contributing to traffic jams. Respect, however, the specific evacuation procedures established for the area and the needs of people who require transportation.
- **DO NOT GO BACK FOR ANYTHING**  
Do not return for money, documents, phones, vehicles, clothing, toys, personal belongings, or pets when doing so means heading back toward the danger.
- **HELP WITHOUT BECOMING ANOTHER VICTIM**  
Assist children, older adults, people with disabilities, injured people, and anyone else who needs support, when you can do so without putting your own life at risk.
- **DO NOT GO TO LOOK AT THE TSUNAMI**  
If you can see it from a danger zone, you must keep moving away.
- **THE FIRST WAVE MAY NOT BE THE LARGEST**  
A tsunami can produce multiple dangerous waves and currents over a prolonged period.
- **STAY IN THE SAFE ZONE**  
Do not interpret the water receding as the end of the emergency.
- **RETURN ONLY WHEN AUTHORIZED**  
Do not leave the safe zone until the competent authorities expressly announce that the threat has ended and that it is safe to return.

## DURING A TSUNAMI, EVERY MINUTE COUNTS

Survival depends largely on recognizing the danger quickly and carrying out the actions that were prepared in advance without delay.

Do not wait to see the tsunami.

Do not go near the sea.

Do not waste time trying to save property.

Do not improvise routes when an evacuation plan exists.

Do not leave a safe zone because the first wave has apparently passed.

**Recognize the signs. Evacuate immediately. Move away from the coast. Find a safe zone.**

**Help those who need it when you can do so without putting yourself in danger.**

**Do not go back until the authorities say it is safe.**







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Civil Training Program: Risk Management  
and Emergency Preparedness

# TSUNAMIS

MODULE 2

PHASE 2: **DURING**

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EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENT FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC  
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES

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