



TsunamiReady® Program Definitions

24-Hour Warning Point (WP): A communication facility at a state or local level, operating 24 hours a day, which has the capability to receive NWS alerts and warnings, plus has the authority and ability to activate the public warning systems in its area of responsibility.

Note: For jurisdictions without a local communication/Dispatch Center that can serve as a 24-hour WP, another jurisdiction (e.g., county, adjacent community or municipality, state, etc.) may act in that capacity for the jurisdiction. This scenario is most likely in smaller jurisdictions (e.g., in Alaska and the U.S. territories) with less than 5,000 residents. This type of working arrangement should be addressed in both jurisdictions' plans and operational protocols. Such an arrangement might also require a standing mutual aid agreement through a memorandum of understanding (MoU) or some other formal means. The smaller jurisdiction should designate responsible officials who are able to receive warnings 24/7 from their surrogate 24-hour WP. NWS recommends the smaller jurisdiction designate several primary and backup points of contact as the responsible officials. These responsible officials should have the authority and ability to activate the public warning system in their jurisdiction in a timely manner. It is also recommended that the responsible officials in the smaller jurisdiction have a 24/7 redundant means to receive alerts, such as NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards, InteractiveNWS, and related services provided by AWC (see section 1.3).

Communications/Dispatch Center: Agency or interagency dispatch centers, 911 call centers, emergency control or command dispatch centers, or other facility and staff who handle emergency calls from the public and communication with emergency management/response personnel. This center may act as a 24-hour warning point.

Critical Facilities: A critical facility provides services and functions essential to a community, especially during and after a tsunami. Examples of critical facilities requiring special consideration include:

- Police stations, fire stations, critical vehicle and equipment storage facilities, and emergency operations centers needed for tsunami response activities before, during, and after a tsunami
- Medical facilities, including hospitals, nursing homes, blood banks, and health care facilities (including those storing vital medical records) likely to have occupants who may not be sufficiently mobile to avoid injury or death during a tsunami
- Schools and day care centers, especially if designated as shelters or evacuation centers
- Power generating stations and other public and private utility facilities vital to maintaining or restoring normal services to tsunami-hit areas
- Drinking water and wastewater treatment plants
- Structures or facilities that produce, use, or store highly volatile, flammable, explosive, toxic, and/or water-reactive materials

Distant Tsunami: (Also referred to as a teletsunami). A tsunami originating from a faraway source, generally more than 1,000 km/621 miles or 3 or more hours tsunami travel time from its source to the area impacted. What may be a distant tsunami in one location can be a local tsunami for another location. A distant tsunami may also be referred to as a “far-field” tsunami hazard. The most common distant threats are from dangerous and unpredictable currents resulting in possible significant harbor and shoreline damage.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC): The physical location at which the coordination of information and resources to support incident management (on-scene operations) activities normally takes place. An EOC may be a temporary facility, a permanently established facility or located at a higher level of organization within a jurisdiction. EOCs may be organized by major functional disciplines (e.g., fire, law enforcement, medical services), by jurisdiction (e.g., federal, state, regional, tribal, city, municipality, county), or by some combination thereof.

Emergency Operations Plan (EOP): A document maintained by various jurisdictional levels setting procedures for responding to a wide variety of potential hazards. It should include the following:

- a) Describe how people and property will be protected
- b) Detail who is responsible for carrying out specific actions
- c) Identify the personnel, equipment, facilities, supplies, and other resources available
- d) Outline how all actions will be coordinated

Emergency Management/Response Personnel: Includes federal, state, Territory, tribal, sub-state regional, and local governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector organizations, critical infrastructure owners and operators, and all other organizations and individuals who assume an emergency management role.

Incident: An occurrence, natural or manmade, that requires a response to protect life or property. Incidents can, for example, include major disasters, emergencies, terrorist attacks, terrorist threats, civil unrest, wildland and urban fires, floods, hazardous materials spills, nuclear accidents, aircraft accidents, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, tropical storms, tsunamis, war-related disasters, public health and medical emergencies, and other occurrences requiring an emergency response.

Integrated Warning Team (IWT): A local or state level team that consists of emergency management, America’s Weather and Climate Industry (typically the broadcast media), and the NWS, that shares the common goal and responsibility of improving the warning system and reducing fatalities, injuries and property damage due to natural hazards.

Inundation: The horizontal distance inland that a tsunami penetrates, generally measured perpendicularly to the shoreline.

Local Tsunami: A tsunami generated from a nearby source with less than 1 hour tsunami travel time from its source to the area impacted. What may be a local tsunami in one location, can be a regional or distant tsunami for another location. A local tsunami may also be referred to as a “near-field” tsunami hazard. A local tsunami includes tsunamigenic influences due to tectonics in the source zone such as uplift, subsidence, landslides, and strong shaking. It is the focus of major destruction.

Meteotsunami: Meteotsunamis have the characteristics similar to earthquake-generated tsunamis, but are caused by air pressure disturbances often associated with fast moving weather systems, such as squall lines. These disturbances can generate waves in the ocean that travel at the same speed as the overhead weather system. A meteotsunami affects the entire water column and can become dangerous when it hits shallow water, which causes it to slow down and increase in height and intensity. Even greater magnification can occur in semi-enclosed water bodies like harbors, inlets, and bays.

Regional Tsunami: A tsunami generated from a regional source, generally between 100 km/62 miles and 1,000 km/621 miles away or between 1 and 3 hours tsunami travel time from its source to the area impacted. What may be a regional tsunami in one location can be a local tsunami for another location. Regional tsunamis also occasionally have very limited and localized effects outside the region. In comparison with a local tsunami, it gives a little more time for authorities to respond than the case of local earthquakes.

Tsunami: A tsunami is a series of waves that can cause dangerous fluctuations of water along shorelines, and are generated by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, or landslides that cause a large scale and rapid displacement of the water. Tsunamis can last minutes, hours, or even days. Tsunami is a Japanese word meaning harbor wave. Tsunamis are often incorrectly called tidal waves; they have no relation to the daily ocean tides. (See also: Distant Tsunami, Local Tsunami, and Regional Tsunami.)

Tsunami Evacuation Map: A graphical representation of coastal areas that outlines the hazard zones and designates limits beyond which people must be evacuated to avoid harm from tsunami waves. Evacuation routes and assembly areas are generally designated to ensure efficient movement of people out of the evacuation area and to areas of safety. Tsunami evacuation maps should be based on tsunami inundation model outputs or the best available science.

Tsunami Evacuation Zone: Evacuation zones are much larger in surface area than hazard zones. There is a margin of error in estimation of the hazard zone. Some areas may not be flooded by tsunami activity but those areas may be isolated by flood waters. This essentially cuts these areas off from other areas. As such, people in those areas are requested to evacuate to prevent them from requiring rescue by first responders.

Tsunami Hazard Zone: The area expected to be flooded or inundated by water in coastal areas. Hazard is synonymous with inundation in this sense, even though there are instances where simple inundation (flooding) may not necessarily be hazardous.

TsunamiReady Community: An Indian tribal government*, local government† entity or facility‡ that has the authority and ability to adopt the TsunamiReady recognition guidelines within its jurisdiction.

***The term “Indian tribal government” means** the governing body of any Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, or community that the Secretary of the Interior acknowledges to exist as an Indian tribe under the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 479a et seq.) Sec: Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.; section 5122(6).

†**The term “local government” means –**

- a) A county, parish, borough, municipality (municipio – Puerto Rico), city, town, township, local public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments (regardless of whether the council of governments is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law), regional or interstate government entity, or agency or instrumentality of a local government.
- b) An Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, or Alaska Native village or organization that is not an Indian tribal government.
- c) A rural community, unincorporated town or village, or other public entity, for which an application for assistance is made by a State or political subdivision of a State.

See Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.; section 5122 (8)

‡**The term “facility” for a TsunamiReady community includes but is not limited to:** universities, colleges, military installations, state/national parks, power plants/utilities, major transportation centers (i.e., airports, harbors, ports, railroad stations and other large transit complexes), theme parks/entertainment complexes, corporate business complexes, factories and large event venues (i.e., stadiums, arenas, race tracks, convention centers and other venues that temporarily host large gatherings of people).

TsunamiReady Supporter: An organization, business, facility, or local government entity that has authority to adopt the TsunamiReady recognition guidelines within its purview, actively promotes the principals of TsunamiReady, but does not have the ability to meet all of the recognition guidelines.

Some examples of potential TsunamiReady Supporters might include, but are not limited to: businesses, churches, hospitals, shopping centers, malls, utilities, museums, aquariums, villages, small communities, individual schools, and broadcasters/broadcast stations.

TsunamiReady Supporter participation and eligibility is based on the determinations (e.g., by-laws, charters, agreements, implementation plans) of the Local or State TsunamiReady Boards. An entity applying for TsunamiReady Supporter status should also receive endorsement from local emergency management within the applying entity’s county, parish, or municipio jurisdiction.

TsunamiReady Sites: A generic term used to collectively identify all categories of TsunamiReady communities but not Supporter entities.

Tsunami Source: Point or area of tsunami origin, usually the site of an earthquake, volcanic eruption, or landslide that caused a large scale and rapid displacement of the water resulting in a tsunami. A comet or meteorite impacting the ocean may also be considered a tsunami source.

Tsunami Warning Center: Facilities operated by the National Weather Service that have responsibility to detect, forecast, and issue tsunami alerts. The National Tsunami Warning Center (NTWC) is based in Palmer, Alaska, and the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center is based in Honolulu, Hawaii. More information about each tsunami warning center's area of responsibility (AOR) can be found on tsunami.gov.