

Appendix I Tsunami Response Plan Concept of Operations

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Special Case: Local Source Tsunami

Should an event produce a potential tsunami that could impact the County within two hours, public warning and evacuation operations will take place immediately. Warning and evacuation will not be delayed by information gathering or threat assessment.

Alert

Upon receipt of a Tsunami Watch or Warning from the California State Warning Center, NETCOM will notify all agencies as per the Tsunami Alert Notification Procedure. The OES staff will evaluate the threat and recommend many – if not all – of the following actions to the County Sheriff (Or Alternate):

- Conduct public warning in the Tsunami Inundation Area
- Notify all Operational Area public safety agencies and organizations
- Move all public safety resources out of the Tsunami Inundation Area
- Activate Operational Area EOC
- Hold over all public safety personnel at the end of current shift
- Stage additional safety resources outside of the Tsunami Inundation Area
- Begin Emergency Public Information efforts

Warning

In the event of a Tsunami Warning, population in the designated risk areas will be warned and advised to voluntarily evacuate to higher ground or safe refuge areas. The public will be instructed to move by the quickest method available to a point no less than 50 feet above sea level. The expected arrival time of the tsunami will also be provided if available. After warning the general public, alerting, and moving institutional populations such as schools or convalescent care facilities has the highest priority.

Evacuation

The Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office will lead and direct the tsunami evacuation effort. In each incident area, fire agencies, Public Works, and CERT through field divisions. Resources will report to the Incident Commander and assist in the public warning and evacuation efforts. Evacuations are voluntary.

Public safety agencies will evacuate the tsunami inundation area at least thirty minutes prior to the expected arrival of the first wave. The public will remain outside the tsunami inundation area until the All Clear is sounded.

Traffic Control/Security

Law Enforcement will establish traffic control along evacuation routes and perimeter security operations at selected points. Evacuated residents and sightseers will be prohibited from entering the Tsunami Inundation Area under the authority of California Penal Code 409.5.

Two Tsunami Observation Posts will be established to monitor the arrival of the initial and any subsequent tsunami waves. Observers will maintain contact with NETCOM and report all activity.

Search and Rescue

For the purpose of coordinating emergency rescue operations, the Santa Cruz coast areas may be organized into six incidents:

- Watsonville
- Los Olas/Rio Del Mar
- Capitola
- New Brighton Beach
- Wharf/Boardwalk/Downtown Santa Cruz
- North Coast Beaches

Each incident will establish an Incident Command Post and will be resources with fire, law, EMS, public works, and communication assets. Each incident will establish Unified Command and an incident command team. Communications assets will be allocated to and coordinated within each incident prior to re-entering the inundation area.

Initial Incident Objectives:

- Conduct Search and Rescue
- Identify and Isolate Hazards
- Conduct Recovery Operations
- Conduct Security Operations

Damage Assessment

The Damage Assessment Unit at the Operational Area EOC will coordinate all damage assessment teams. Information will be forwarded to the Operational Area EOC Planning Section for evaluation and consolidation.

Emergency Public Information

The Public Information Officer (PIO) at the Operational Area EOC will coordinate all public information activities and will supervise field PIOs assigned to each incident. The PIO may recommend establishing a Joint Information Center (JIC) closer to the scene of the incident. The PIO may also recommend activating an Emergency Public Information Hotline.

Inundation Area Re-entry Policy

Tsunamis may produce several waves with subsequent waves larger than the first. Once public safety personnel and equipment have evacuated the inundation area, they will not re-enter the area until the "All Clear" message has been transmitted by NETCOM.

REFERENCES

Local Planning Guidance on Tsunami Response, Second Edition; A Supplement to the Emergency Planning Guidance for Local Governments. California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, May 1998.

Local Guidelines for Controlling Movement of People and Property During an Emergency. California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, July 1999.

Legal Guidelines for Flood Evacuation. California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, November 1997.

Tsunami Warning Systems and Procedures; Guidance for Local Officials. Oregon Emergency Management and the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, 2001.