

# THAMES VALLEY COMBINED CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION

(Important information please retain)



## WHITIANGA/WHAREKAHO COMMUNITIES Tsunami Action Plan



### IN SUMMARY

Distance Tsunami will result in an extended signal from ALL Fire Stations. Listen to your radio station for further details and be prepared to go to HIGH GROUND above the red 20 metre contour line.

There will be no warning for a near source Tsunami. If you note unusual behaviour in the tide, or experience a strong earthquake, go immediately to HIGH GROUND. Know where your nearest High Ground is and how to get there.

The following signs will assist you in the evacuation process. Eventually all Evacuation Routes and Assembly Points will be signposted. However that will not occur before this brochure is distributed.

### KNOW WHAT TO DO



**TSUNAMIS ARE SURVIVABLE.**



*Whitianga 14 July 1987*

*What Can Happen  
How Will I Know  
What Do I Do*



Last Update 14 November 2008

## WHITIANGA/WHAREKAHO COMMUNITIES TSUNAMI ACTION PLAN

### A Notice To All Residents/Visitors

The Mercury Bay communities, like many other coastal settlements in New Zealand, are at risk from flooding from both the sea and severe weather events. The purpose of this notice is to outline the 'Tsunami' risk as we understand it at this point in time. Studies are currently in progress and it could be that future modelling may indicate a lesser risk than that accepted at this time. Current research indicates that Whitianga and Gisborne are most at risk.

In the absence of more credible information we need to take the worse case scenario and plan accordingly.

Tsunamis are survivable.

In simple terms there are three things we need to know;

- What can happen?
- How will I know?
- What do I do?

Let's take each in turn using the exercise to ensure we have a plan in our minds and a determination to survive along with all other members of the community.

### **WHAT CAN HAPPEN?**

Yes you do live in an area subject to possible inundation from a tsunami event.

Tsunamis have a low probability (usually several hundred years between large events) but an extreme consequence on impact.

There are two types of Tsunami and we need to understand the difference.

- The first is known as a 'Distal' (Distance) tsunami. It occurs far from New Zealand and may take from three to twelve or more hours to arrive. Pacific monitoring ensures that we have the maximum warning time possible, an indication of the wave height, an expected arrival time and likely areas of maximum impact.
- The second is a 'Near Source' Tsunami originating close to the New Zealand coast. As such there will not usually be any time to issue a formal warning. For our area Mayor Island, to a lesser degree White Island and the Kermadecs pose such a threat.

### **HOW WILL I KNOW?**

#### **Distal (Distance) Tsunamis**

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre (PTWC) in Hawaii effectively monitors all seismic activity in the region. Any earthquake over 7.8 on the Richter scale is deemed a possible tsunami source. Information is immediately relayed to all member nations, including New Zealand, indicating a possible Tsunami Alert. The situation is monitored further and a full

Tsunami Warning is issued when it is known that a wave has been generated. Further bulletins will provide information on expected arrival times and points of greatest impact.

Normally no action is taken until a wave has been confirmed. Remember that there is still adequate time available to warn. However the events in May 2006 taught us that the international media now receives information direct from the PTWC and commences broadcasts. Should you see or hear such broadcasts tune into your local television or radio station where the latest information should be available.

When a warning is 'CONFIRMED' action will be taken to warn all communities at risk. The following actions will occur at Mercury Bay.

- The Fire Siren, or other clearly audible signal, will sound and continue for an extended period.
- Whitianga, Cooks Beach and Hahei Fire Brigades will have been alerted by pager and will be operating from their Fire Stations.
- Your local communications plan will be activated and essential personnel deployed.
- The fire appliances (and other vehicles) will travel the village announcing the impending arrival and time of a tsunami
- Television and Radio will have constant updates on the situation.

#### **Near Source (Local) Tsunamis**

Your first and probably only indication of a local tsunami will be a major earthquake or signs of extreme activity, including the harbour suddenly emptying out. A mild earthquake is unlikely to generate a tsunami.

**Note.** No formal warning is possible with a 'Near Source' (Local) Tsunami'.

### **WHAT DO I DO?**

**This is the important one. *Knowing what to do will save your life and others near you.***

It may be necessary to secure and leave your home within a short time frame. To do this you need to be aware of the information above and have made a 'Plan' to survive.

Each brochure will come with it a Civil Defence Emergency Management pamphlet entitled "Get to High Ground or Go Inland". It is strongly suggested you read this for important information on basic survival tips and what is required for Emergency Survival.

**You will need to find your own way to HIGH GROUND above the 20 metre contour line. (Red Line on Map)**

If you are disabled, have impaired hearing, or for any other reason may not be able to hear or react to a warning, please ensure your needs are known to someone. Consider a buddy system.

It is recognised that this may not be an easy situation for many. However we are talking about a low probability but extreme event. You may be uncomfortable for a time but you will be alive. Note the locality of your nearest 'High Ground'.

For further information and advice on the content of this pamphlet contact a member of your Local Emergency Management Committee as under.

<i>Sergeant Andrew Morrison</i>	<i>07 866 4000</i>
<i>Chief Fire Officer Merv George</i>	<i>07 866 5787</i>
<i>Lesley McCormick</i>	<i>07 868 0200</i>