

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Changes to Tsunami Notification Messages WCATWC Product Change Effective February 12, 2008

This message is sent to inform the emergency management community in British Columbia of some important changes that are being made to Tsunami notification messages by the WCATWC (West Coast and Alaska Tsunami Warning Center) in Palmer, Alaska. Effective Tuesday, February 12, a third level of Tsunami Action Message will be added to the notification suite of messages. The message titled "*Tsunami Advisory*" will now indicate a recommendation for a call to action by the emergency management community. The "*Tsunami Advisory*" message will be used as a low level warning. It will be used when there is an expectation of strong currents and/or low amplitude wave activity in the specified area. The follow description of the changes to "Tsunami Advisory" is taken from the WCATWC website:

WCATWC product definitions are changing to better align with other National Weather Service products and to provide more specific information regarding tsunami threat. The main change is to the Tsunami Advisory. Previously, a Tsunami Advisory indicated that a Tsunami Warning or Watch had been issued for another section of the ocean coast. As of February 12 2008, WCATWC Tsunami Advisories will be considered a low-level tsunami threat and indicate that a moderate tsunami impact is possible. No significant inundation is expected for areas under advisory, but strong currents dangerous to those in or very near the ocean are possible.

It should be noted that a message titled "*Tsunami Advisory*" was previously used by WCATWC. This message was only an information message and did not recommend a call to action. This change in meaning is significant and the emergency management community is urged to check existing tsunami plans to ensure there will be no confusion when this change is implemented on February 12, 2008.

As always, the Provincial Emergency Program will, upon receipt of Tsunami notification messages that may affect Coastal British Columbia, continue to issue value added messages through the British Columbia PENS (Provincial Emergency Notification System). We feel however, that it is important to be aware of the changes in message formats that are taking place at WCATWC, as many communities and stakeholders receive messages directly from WCATWC. For further information on these changes please visit the WCATWC website at:
<http://wcatwc.arh.noaa.gov/>