



Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of BC

Earthquake and Tsunami Information and Notification

March 2026

The following information is for reference only. A kayak guide must make informed decisions based upon location, geography, safe-zones, company policies, and other factors.

- **Earthquakes** are caused by the sudden movement of the earth's crust. The ground may shake violently causing significant damage.
- **Tsunamis**, sometimes incorrectly called 'tidal-waves', are large ocean waves created by earthquakes, landslides, explosions, or asteroid impacting the earth. A tsunami may have devastating consequences to coastal areas. A tsunami may manifest itself as a series of surging waves over the course of many hours. The first wave of a tsunami is often not the largest and surges may continue for hours, days, or more.
 - Tsunamis can create strong, dangerous currents
- There are different types of tsunamis on the BC Coast; **local** and **distant**. These types have different warning signs, arrival times, and impacts.
 - There are two different earthquake zones in BC Cascadia Subduction Zone (local) and Alaska-Aleutian Subduction Zone (Distant)

Tsunami Information

A tsunami may be generated after any of the above causes. In the event of the listed causes, consider moving immediately to high ground

- After a **locally** generated earthquake, a tsunami may arrive within minutes. A warning may not be broadcast.
- If you receive an official warning, a **distant** tsunami is coming within hours
- The outer coasts of British Columbia are more susceptible to tsunami effects
- Generally sea kayakers operate in near-shore waters which may be effected by a tsunami

Earthquake Notification

One can be alerted to an earthquake in several different ways:

- *When on shore* by feeling the shaking of the earth, hearing loud roaring from the sea, observing the water recede unusually far and expose the sea floor. *On the*

water feel an earthquake through the hull of your boat, see a rapid and extreme shift to an outgoing tide.

- Outdoor siren
- In BC, the Canadian Earthquake Early Warning system sends alerts to the public through “Alert Ready” the National Public Alerting System. Alerts appear on TV, radio, and compatible mobile phones
- Media (TV, Radio, Internet)
 - Text Message Notification via local alert station (Table 1)

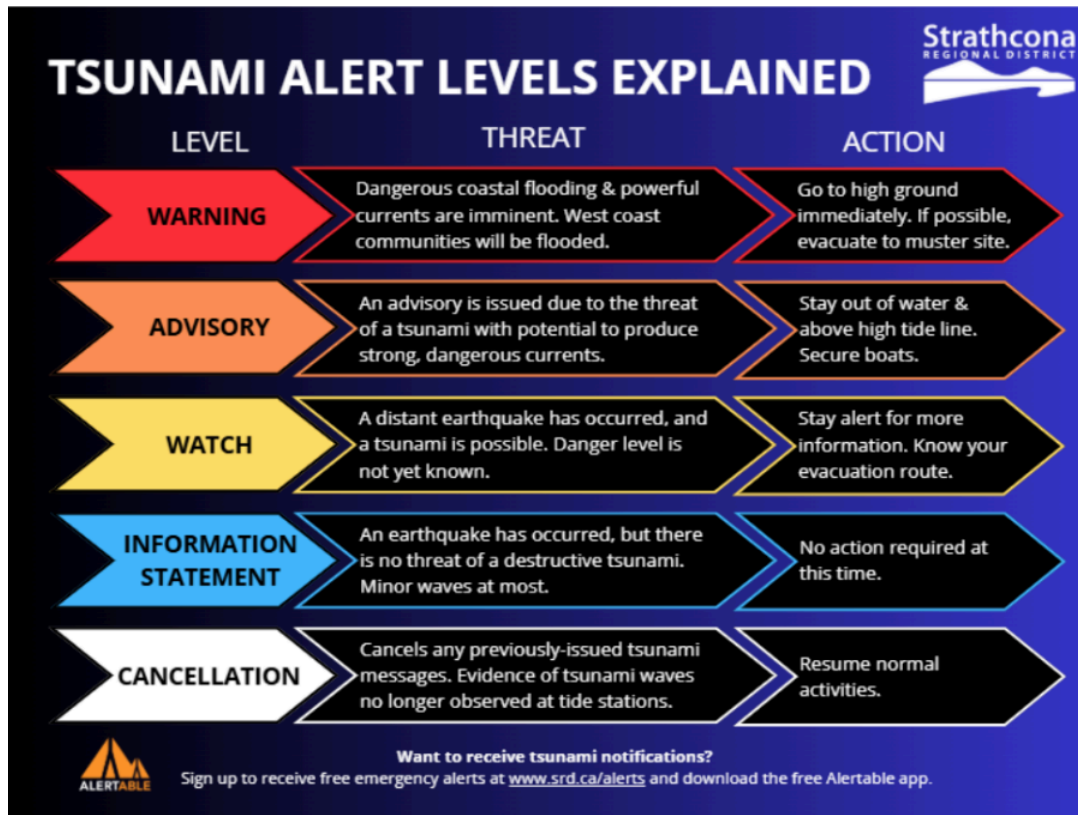
Tsunami Notification

- VHF – Tsunami Advisory Bulletins may be broadcast on Ch 16 or WX channels
- News media – local radio (FM/AM) and television
- Text Message Notification (Table 1)
 - To receive Tsunami notifications on your phone, sign up for alerts through the local alert system. These can be received via text, phone, email, and through the mobile app

Table 1. List of Alert systems utilized by local regional districts. This is not a comprehensive list, and individuals are strongly encouraged to research which systems are utilized in the area they will be guiding in. Individuals can sign up for alert features by going to the district website.

District	Communities	Alert Service
Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District	Port Alberni, Tofino, and Ucluelet.	Voyent Alert
Capital Regional District	Victoria, Oak Bay, Esquimalt, Sooke, Saanich Peninsula.	Alertable
Central Coast Regional District	Wuikinuxv Nation, Heiltsuk Nation (Bella Bella), and Nuxalk Nation communities, Bella Coola, Hagensborg, Firvale, Stuie, Denny Island, Ocean Falls and Rivers Inlet	Telephone, email, fax, VHF radio, social media, local FM radio, local TV
Cowichan Valley Regional District	Duncan, Ladysmith, and Lake Cowichan	Alertable
Comox Valley Regional District	Courtenay, Comox, and Cumberland.	Connect Rocket
Qathet Regional District	Powell River, Lasqueti Island, Savary Island	Alert Ready
Regional District of Nanaimo	Nanaimo, Parksville, and Qualicum Beach.	Voyent Alert
Strathcona	Campbell River, Sayward, and Gold River	Alertable
Regional District of Mount Waddington	Port Hardy, Port McNeill, and Alert Bay	N/A

Tsunami Alerts – What do they mean?



Protective Actions

If you receive a warning, get to high ground as soon as possible. You are responsible for your guests in an emergency. Non-locals are ineligible for local Emergency Support Services

If on land

- Gather group and hike uphill,
- If there is time, gather emergency provisions and communication devices.
- Leave the boats.

Launching/Landing or in shallow water

- Return to shore immediately and hike to high ground
- During earthquake, raft up and do not approach shore until shaking stops (count to 60)
- If returning to shore is impossible, head to deeper water

In deep water or making a crossing

- Paddle to water 100m (328 ft) or deeper and raft up and prepare for strong waves and currents.

Trip Planning Considerations

1. Know the tsunami risk in each area you run trips
2. Make your tsunami response plan
 - a. How will you be notified that a tsunami is coming?
 - i. Sign up for and get familiar with Alertable or local equivalent
 - ii. Make a habit of monitoring VHF Ch16, especially during launches, landings, and crossings
 - iii. Consider purchasing a radio equipped with the 'alert' feature
 - b. Have you made plans to receive notifications and alerts from your base?
 - c. Sheltering guests; how will you house/support them until they return home?
 - d. Evacuation routes at each campsite
3. Practice your plan and gather your supplies
 - a. Build tsunami preparedness into pre-season training
 - b. Consider mentioning tsunami evacuation in pre-trip talk. Have guests identify their grab and go bag in case they need to evacuate quickly.

Helpful Links

BC Emergency Alerts

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/emergency-alerts>

How Emergency Alerting Works

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/emergency-alerts/how-alerts-work>

Get Prepared for a tsunami

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-management/preparedbc/know-our-hazards/earthquakes-tsunamis/tsunami#risk>