A tsunami is a series of waves or surges commonly caused by an earthquake beneath the sea floor. Tsunamis may come to our coast from great earthquakes far away, from earthquakes nearby, and from submarine landslides triggered by strong earthquake shaking.

Tsunami waves are unlike normal coastal waves. Tsunamis are more like a fast moving river in flood stage and can be filled with debris. **Stay out of the water** when a tsunami is active.

**Natural Warnings** Ground shaking from an earthquake, a loud ocean roar, or the water receding greatly and exposing the sea floor are all nature’s warnings that a tsunami may be coming within minutes: **go to higher ground or inland immediately.**

**Official Warnings** For tsunami triggered along a distant shore, you may receive notification from local officials that a tsunami may hit San Luis Obispo County. These notifications could be delivered by phone calls, text messages, sirens, or through the media. Follow the instructions provided by emergency personnel.
The first tsunami surge is not necessarily the highest, and the largest surge may occur hours after the first wave. It is not possible to predict how many surges or how much time will elapse between waves for a particular tsunami.

The entire California Coast is vulnerable to tsunami.

### Causes of Tsunami on California’s Central Coast

**Tsunami Caused By Earthquake**

- **Upward Wave**
- **Still Water Level**
- **Lithosphere**
- **Mantle**

**Tsunami Caused By Underwater Landslide**

- **Upward Wave**
- **Still Water Level**
- **Lithosphere**
- **Mantle**

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### While in a Tsunami Hazard Zone...

*If you feel a large earthquake, take the following steps:*

1. **During the quake...**
   - **DROP** under a sturdy table or object, **COVER** your head and neck and **HOLD ON**.
   - If outdoors, move to a clear area if you can safely do so—away from trees, beach cliffs, signs and other hazards—and **DROP** to the ground.
   - If you have mobility impairments that prevent you from getting up on your own, **DO NOT DROP** to the ground but do **COVER** your head and neck and hold on.

2. **Move to high ground**
   - **GO TO HIGH GROUND!** The shaking is your tsunami warning.
   - Avoid downed power lines and weakened overpasses.
   - If you are outside of a Tsunami Hazard Zone, stay where you are.

3. **Stay there!**
   - **STAY THERE!** Tsunami waves may arrive for hours.
   - Remain on high ground until officials have announced it is safe to return to the coast; this may take eight hours or longer.

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### Are YOU In a Tsunami Hazard Zone?

**Check the maps inside...**

The **MAPS INSIDE** indicate Tsunami Hazard Zones for the San Luis Obispo County Northern Coastline (Cambria, San Simeon and Northern Coast of County).
This area is remote and relatively undeveloped. Thus, no inundation area was generated north of Point Piedras Blancas.

Use the "30 Foot Contour" as a reference, although no significant damage is expected from Point Piedras Blancas to the county line, even with the largest of tsunamis.

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**How to use these tsunami inundation maps:**

Identify where you live, work, and play. The areas highlighted in red indicate portions of the coastline that may potentially be affected by a tsunami. These maps reflect the largest possible tsunami likely to hit our coastline, if you are located in an inundation area and feel a large earthquake that shakes for 20 seconds or longer, evacuate to high ground immediately. Use this map to plan a safe route out of the affected area. If roads are impassable, evacuate by foot. Practice evacuating so that you and your family know what to do during a tsunami.

These maps are for emergency planning and response and are not intended for any other purposes. They are based on the best currently available data and are subject to change and updates.