WHAT IS A TSUNAMI?

- A series of waves brought on by a large-scale underwater disturbance that vertically displaces ocean water;
- Originates from the Japanese word "tsu-nami" (harbor wave);
- Propagates across great distances retaining their wave energy and destructive force;
- Tsunami is NOT a tidal wave.

2 Deep Ocean Tsunami Propagation

- In deep oceans, tsunami propagate with speeds that can exceed 700 kilometers per hour (450 miles per hour);
- Tsunamis are not dangerous in deep water: a single wave is about a meter high, and its length can extend for hundreds of kilometers, making a sea surface slope so gentle that the wave passes unnoticed.

3 Tsunami Run-up on a Shore

- As the tsunami waves enter shallow waters, it slows down, and the wave amplitude grows;
- A tsunami may run ashore as a breaking wave, a wall of water or a tide-like flood;
- A receding sea sometimes precedes a tsunami;
- Horizontal inundation can penetrate hundreds of meters (or even a few kilometers) inland.

What can I do to protect myself from a tsunami?

- Develop a family disaster plan. Everyone needs to know what to do on their own to protect themselves from an earthquake.
- Be familiar with local Emergency Management earthquake and tsunami plans. Know where to go to survive a tsunami.
- Be prepared to survive on your own for a minimum of seven days.
- Prepare a disaster supply kit for your home, automobile and work.
- Take a first aid course and learn survival skills. Knowledge is your greatest defense against potential disaster.

Remember:

1. Never go to the coast to watch a tsunami! Tsunamis move faster than a person can run.
2. Do not return to shore after the first wave. Wait for the "All Clear" signal before you return.
3. If you see an unexpected rise or fall in the coastal water, a tsunami may be approaching. Move inland or uphill quickly.

References:

Killer Waves: http://library.thinkquest.org
Pacific Tsunami Museum: http://tsunami.org
USGS: http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/1187
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