



Date: 25 February 2021

To: All Port Police Supervisors and all MOD Coxswains and Divers

From: Capt. McCloskey

Subject: Port Police Maritime Operations Division SOP for safeguarding Port Police Vessels during Tsunami Events

**INTRODUCTION:** This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) addresses actions to be taken to safeguard Port Police vessels if a tsunami is expected. This guidance will be in place until incorporated in a future version of the Port Police Supervisors Operations Guide, Emergency Operations Guide, or other superseding guidance.

A tsunami is a sea wave caused by an earthquake or underwater disturbance such as a volcanic eruption. Tsunamis can be barely noticeable at sea. When the energy wave reaches shore however they have the potential to cause damage by elevating water levels, creating high and powerful currents, or in some cases causing a huge crashing wave.

The following procedures to safeguard life and property must be evaluated in relation to the unique size and amount of advance warning time for each tsunami event.

**Safeguarding life is the highest priority.** Moving boats and equipment to high-ground or deep water should only be attempted if there is sufficient time and onboard supplies.

The application of good seamanship and common sense are required in making decisions on how best to react. MOD supervision or assigned coxswains should be consulted.

**TSUNAMI INFORMATION MESSAGE:** A MESSAGE (sometimes referred to as an Alert or bulletin) advises that an earthquake has occurred with possible potential to generate a tsunami using one of four levels (Watch, Advisory, Warning, or Information Statement). Usually there is no threat of a destructive tsunami, and the information is used to prevent unnecessary evacuations and responses.

There are four levels of Tsunami Information Messages:

**TSUNAMI WATCH:** This is an advisory that a seismic disturbance has occurred and a wave may have been generated. It is issued to alert emergency management officials and the public of an event which may later impact the watch area. The watch area may be upgraded to a warning or canceled based on updated information and analysis.

**TSUNAMI ADVISORY:** This advises that a tsunami has very likely been created which may produce strong currents or waves dangerous to those in or near the water. This is less serious than a tsunami warning, and is sometimes used if the tsunami is expected to be a meter or less in height.

**TSUNAMI WARNING:** This is issued when a potential tsunami with significant widespread inundation is imminent or expected. Widespread, dangerous coastal flooding accompanied by

powerful currents is possible and may continue for several hours after arrival of the initial wave. Emergency management officials should take action for the entire tsunami hazard zone, including evacuation of low-lying coastal areas, and the repositioning of vessels to deep waters if there is time to safely do so.

**TSUNAMI INFORMATION STATEMENT:** An earthquake has occurred, but there is no threat or it was very far away and the threat has not been determined. In most cases, there is no threat of a destructive tsunami.



## PORT POLICE PROCEDURE FOR A TSUNAMI EVENT

MOD Supervision and Watch Commanders will assess the threat and may initiate a call out of additional personnel as needed.

If a tsunami threat is likely to have significant impact on the Port of Los Angeles, the Watch Commander should refer to Port Police plans such as the Supervisors or Emergency Operations Guides and the Tsunami Playbook and consider actions including the relocation of vessels and equipment to safe refuge areas. Possible actions to protect Port Police vessels include the options of taking vessels to deep water and the possibility of trailering smaller vessels to high ground.

### Port Police vessels to go to Sea

If there is adequate time (generally at least two hours) prior to the ETA of the tsunami, designated dive and patrol vessels may proceed to deep water that is both three to four (3 to 4) miles from any landmass such as a shore or island AND with 100-200 fathoms of depth. Depending on the size and direction of the tsunami this may be on the front or back side of Catalina Island.

Priority should be given to the Dive Boat, Boat 42 and the larger patrol boats. Once police operations vessels are secured in safe locations, the remaining patrol boats and training vessels should be considered for movement to safety on trailers in that order.

Any vessel going to sea should gather emergency supplies (food/water, first aid, toilet paper) and load onto designated vessel. Emergency Management has provided the Port Police with six tsunami emergency ration buckets to be kept aboard the vessels most likely to shelter at sea (Two buckets have been provided to the Port Pilots , one for each Pilot Vessel).

These buckets (pictured below) contain water, emergency food rations, and sanitary supplies. This should be adequate to sustain two or three officers for a couple of days.



#### **Bucket Contents:**

- Water Pouch 4.227oz EACH 60
- SOS Food Bar 2400 Calorie 10
- Personal Toilet Paper 4
- Infectious Waste Bags 10gal ea
- Wet Wipe Towelettes 24
- Toothpaste 1.5 oz 4
- Toothbrush 4
- Deodorant Bar Soap 1.25oz 4

#### Port Police Vessels to be Trailered

If there is adequate advance warning prior to the estimated arrival of a tsunami there may be time for some vessels to be loaded on to trailers and parked at safe locations.

Possible high ground locations are available including Marine Exchange parking adjacent to the Hey Rookie pool, Friendship Park, or Peck Park. Personnel (police or security officers) shall be assigned to watch over the boats at any such parking location.

Note that the process of retrieving a trailer, meeting a boat at the launch ramp, and trailering it can take a two person boat crew approximately two hours per vessel even if the launch ramp is not crowded. In a tsunami event, access to the launch ramp may be impacted by boaters seeking to trailer their vessels. C&M may be able to assist by using a crane to place some boats on trailers.

Both personal and city vehicles should be moved from the tsunami inundation zone.