



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS BULLETIN

SPRING SAFETY • MARCH 2026

## Spring Tsunami Safety

A tsunami is a group of very large ocean waves. They happen when the earth moves suddenly under the water, usually during an earthquake. Some people call them “tidal waves,” but that is not correct. Tides come from the moon. Tsunamis come from earthquakes.

Spring is the start of beach season in California, so it’s a good time to learn about tsunami safety. This helps everyone stay safe when they visit or live on the coast. The “coast” is any place located on or very close to the edge of an ocean.

Most people in California live in places that are already safe from tsunamis. Only people who are right on the coast or in marked tsunami zones need to move to higher ground during a warning.

**If you are at the beach, there are three natural warning signs to watch for:**



1. **FEELING AN EARTHQUAKE**
2. **SEEING THE OCEAN PULL BACK INTO A VERY LOW TIDE**
3. **OR HEARING A LOUD ROARING SOUND LIKE A FREIGHT TRAIN COMING FROM THE WATER**

If you notice any of these, go to high ground right away. Follow any instructions local officials give and stay away from the beach until they say it is safe.

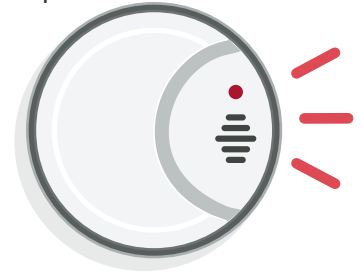
Each spring, California holds **Tsunami Preparedness Week**. It’s a good way to learn about areas that have a risk of a tsunami happening and what you should do. You can register and find resources at [The Tsunami Zone \(tsunamizone.org\)](https://www.tsunamizone.org).

Many people also find this short [“Sue Nami” video on YouTube](#) helpful. It explains tsunami safety in a friendly and fun way.

# Spring Safety Checklist

When we set our clocks forward in spring, it's a good reminder to check safety items at home.

- This is a great time to test your **smoke alarms** and **carbon monoxide alarms** to make sure they are working. Some alarms use batteries that need to be replaced. Others have **10 year sealed batteries** that do not get changed, but the whole unit needs to be replaced when it reaches the end of its life. Testing your alarms each spring helps keep everyone safe.
- Spring is also a good time to look through your **emergency supplies**. Check for expired food, water, or medications, and replace anything that is out of date. Keeping your supplies fresh helps you stay ready for many types of emergencies.
- If you do not have an emergency kit yet, this is a great time to build one. A kit can help you if you need to stay home during an emergency or leave quickly. You can find a simple guide for building a "Stay Kit" or a "Go Bag" at: <https://www.ready.gov/kit>



These small steps only take a little time, and they help keep you and the people you care for safe all year long.

## Emergency Messaging Made Easy

Emergency alerts can feel confusing, but they're made to tell you **what to do right now**. Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs) are the loud messages that pop up on your cell phone during emergencies. There are different kinds of alerts:



### ADVISORY

- An ADVISORY alert means something is happening that you should **be aware of**, but it is not dangerous right now.
- Think: "I need to pay attention now."
- Examples of times when there might be an "Advisory alert" are strong winds or poor air quality.



### WATCH

- A WATCH alert means there are signs something dangerous is going to happen
- It is **not happening yet**.
- Think: "Get ready for possible danger."
- Example: a *Tsunami Watch* means waves *might* come later.



## WARNING

- A WARNING alert means **danger is happening now** or will happen really soon.
- Think: “Take action top protect myself now.”
- Example: a *Tsunami Warning* means you should move to high ground immediately.



## EVACUATION or SHELTER ORDERS

- An EVACUATION or SHELTER alert means you have to do what the alert says, like **leave an area** or **stay inside**.
- *Evacuation Order*: leave now and follow the directions from local officials
- *Shelter-in-Place*: stay indoors and close your windows and doors.

### Learn More from Official Sources

- NOAA / National Weather Service – [Watch Warning Advisory Explained](#)
- FEMA Ready.gov – [Evacuation Guidance](#)
- FEMA Ready.gov – [Shelter-in-Place Guidance](#)

## CMIST: A Simple Way to Prepare

C-MIST is a memory tool to help you remember important things you need to plan for to stay safe in any emergency. C-MIST stands for:

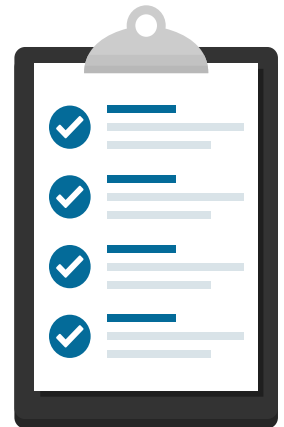
**Communication** **Maintaining Health** **Independence** **Support and Safety** **Transportation**

Emergencies can happen in many ways, and it is not realistic to plan ahead for every disaster that could happen. **C-MIST** is a simple way to prepare by focusing on the basic things you need to be safe and healthy every day. You can use CMIST by thinking about each part of CMIST and asking simple questions:

- How will I **COMMUNICATE** if my phone does not work?
- How will I get my **MEDICINE**?
- As an **INDEPENDENT** adult, how will I plan to get help from others?
- How will I stay **SAFE** at home?
- How will I get help or **TRANSPORTATION** if needed?

Writing down these answers can help guide a personal or family emergency plan.

Use this [CMIST Personal Planning Tool](#) to put it into action!



# Dam Safety: Be Ready for Flooding

Dams help control water and protect communities. Heavy rain or emergencies can cause problems with dams. In 2017, damage at Oroville Dam led to large evacuations in Northern California, showing how quickly an emergency situation can happen.

Stay safer around dams by taking these simple steps:

- **KNOW YOUR AREA** – Find out if you live or travel near a dam or flood-prone area
- **PAY ATTENTION TO ALERTS** – Follow emergency messages from local officials
- **KNOW WHEN TO LEAVE** – Be ready to evacuate if told to do so
- **PLAN AHEAD** – Know your evacuation route and where you would go
- **THINK ABOUT YOUR NEEDS** – Plan how you will communicate, get medicine, and travel if flooding happens

Dams are watched and taken care of by the state and federal government to help protect people and communities. Use [this online map](#) to see if you live in an area that is in danger if a dam doesn't work or is damaged.



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