

Former *Annual New Zealand Notice to Mariners, No. 11*, published 1 July 2025 is cancelled. Additions and amendments to the former notice are indicated by sidelines.

Authority: National Emergency Management Agency, Harbourmasters

Important Note: The contents of this notice are to be brought to the attention of all ships’ officers and crews.

Background

Tsunami is a series of waves resulting from undersea earthquakes, volcanic eruptions or landslides and those originating in any part of the Pacific may have serious effects upon shipping in New Zealand’s waters.

The attention of mariners is drawn to the Tsunamis section, Chapter 5 of the Admiralty publication *The Mariner’s Handbook* (NP100).

Should an earthquake be felt whilst a vessel is at her berth the vessel should immediately have her engines placed on standby, be secured for sea and only essential personnel given access to the gangways. A continuous listening watch should also be maintained on vessels’ radios, refer to paragraph 3 below. These steps should be taken whilst awaiting further instructions.

Tsunami Warning System

These procedures have been formalised with Maritime New Zealand, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), New Zealand Police, shipowners, port authorities, regional councils and harbourmasters.

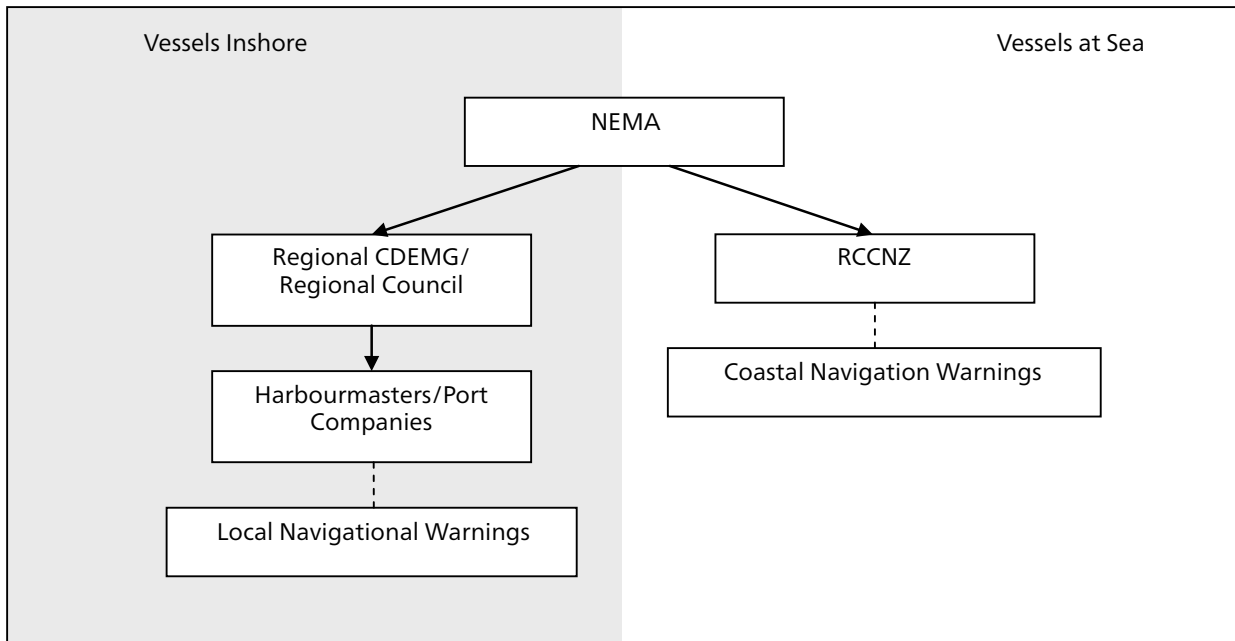
Inter-agency Communication

1. In the event of a potential threat of a tsunami approaching New Zealand, NEMA will advise:
 - (a) Each regional Civil Defence Emergency Management Group (CDEMG), and
 - (b) The Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ).

Note: For tsunami originating near New Zealand (‘local source’ tsunami) timely advice by NEMA may not be possible. The only ‘warning’ may be an earthquake felt on board a vessel in the harbour.

Each regional CDEMG via regional council and harbourmasters/port authorities will inform the mariner as quickly as possible. Port authorities would likely take their own precautions as per their Emergency Operating Procedures. RCCNZ via Maritime Radio will provide Coastal Navigational Warnings.

Diagram 11.1: Inter-agency Communication in a Tsunami event



For more information on navigational warnings, see *Annual New Zealand Notice to Mariners, No. 9*.

Instructions to Vessels Inshore – Local Navigational Warnings

2. Warning Types

- (a) Verbal: Vessels will be advised verbally by the harbourmaster or port company.
- (b) Sound signal: The signal to be given to warn vessels in harbour to take action is a series of five prolonged blasts. In some ports this signal could be made by sirens (on instructions from the CDEMG).

Harbourmasters may take full control of all shipping operations in their area and masters are required to give their unreserved cooperation.

Table 11.2: Warning Type by Port

Verbal Signal				Sound Signal
Auckland	Greymouth	Onehunga	Tauranga	Kaingaroa, Chatham Islands Owenga, Chatham Islands Waitangi, Chatham Island
Akaroa	Kaikōura	Opua	Timaru	
Bluff	Lyttelton	Picton	Westport	
Chatham Islands	Marsden Point	Port Chalmers	Wellington	
Dunedin	Napier	Port Taranaki	Whakatāne	
Gisborne	Nelson	Port Tarakohe	Whanganui	

Keeping Radio Watch following the Warning

3. On arrival in port, masters will be advised by the harbourmaster as to which frequency is to be guarded in the event of an alert. On hearing these warnings, masters are to set radio watches. These watches are to be maintained until the threat is declared over by the same authority that issued the original advice. All further instructions will be passed by radio.

Table 11.3: Frequencies to Guard by Port

Port	Callsign	VHF Channels Listening watch on 16 at all times, and
Akaroa	Akaroa Harbour Control	03, 12 (not 24 hours)
Auckland	Auckland Harbour Control	12, 16
Bay of Islands	Russell Radio	63 (not 24 hours)
Bluff	Bluff Harbour Radio	14, 12
Dunedin	Otago Harbour Control	12, 14, 62
Gisborne	Gisborne Harbour Radio	12 (not 24 hours)
Greymouth	Greymouth Harbour Radio	14, 63 (not 24 hours)
Kaikōura	Kaikōura Harbour Control	16, 65 (not 24 hours)
Lyttelton	Lyttelton Harbour Radio	12
Marsden Point	Whangarei Harbour Radio	11
Napier	Napier Harbour Radio	12
Nelson	Nelson Harbour Radio	12
Onehunga	Auckland Harbour Control	12
Picton	Picton Harbour Radio	18
Port Chalmers	Otago Harbour Control	12, 14, 62
Port Taranaki	New Plymouth Harbour Radio	12, 61
Tauranga	Tauranga Port Radio	12
Timaru	Timaru Harbour Radio	9
Wellington	Wellington Harbour Radio	14
Westport	Westport Harbour Radio ZMH92	14 (not 24 hours)
Whanganui	Whanganui Harbour Radio ZMH211	16 only

Ordering Vessels to Sea

4. In certain cases it may be necessary for the harbourmaster to order vessels to sea to avoid serious damage being caused to ships and harbour structures by strong wave action in their harbours.

Mariners are to advise harbourmasters whenever it is intended to carry out maintenance on engine, propulsion or steering, which will immobilise their vessels.

It should be appreciated that the time available for action after receiving the alert signal may be as long as 14 hours or as brief as minutes, depending on the origin of the tsunami.

Instructions to Vessels at Sea – Coastal Navigational Warnings

5. In the case of vessels at sea when a warning of an approaching tsunami is received, advice will be given by the existing navigational warning system.

These warnings may include instructions for ships' immediate movements. It should be noted that the risk of tsunami for vessels at sea is much less (in most cases none) than inshore or in harbour.

Request to all Vessels to Provide Assistance

6. Should a disaster occur ashore, all vessels in port or at sea in New Zealand waters may be called upon to provide assistance at the request of the authorities:
- (a) Providing temporary shelter and food for homeless civilians;
 - (b) Providing rations, water, fuel, and power to local authorities;
 - (c) Evacuating civilians to another port;
 - (d) Providing radio communications;
 - (e) Providing firefighting parties and first aid assistance ashore.

Harbourmasters will coordinate with masters what assistance each ship in port is able to provide. Ships at sea will be contacted by the normal communications system.

For further information see:

<https://www.civildefence.govt.nz>, Title search – National Tsunami Advisory and Warning Plan.