

To All First Responders:

Because of recent concerns about Anchorage's risk for tsunami, the Office of Emergency Management would like to remind public safety departments that tsunamis **DO NOT** pose that threat to the Anchorage bowl area, Girdwood, Portage, Turnagain Arm, Eagle River or Chugiak.

Below you will find a quote from Dr. Sokolowski, former director of the Alaska Tsunami Warning Center, stated in a presentation to the Corps of Engineers at the 2000 Catastrophic Earthquake Damage Workshop:

"Anchorage is considered to have very limited threat of a major tsunami moving up and through the Gulf of Alaska and Cook Inlet. Studies by NOAA and USGS indicate that the design of Cook Inlet limits any major tsunami from affecting the Port area of Anchorage even from a major tsunami generated from an event in Japan or Hawaii. Furthermore, unless conditions are perfect with respect to tides and season no affect will be seen at the Port. Some low lying areas in the Portage area could be affected by a major event in the Pacific. The most plausible scenario is the failure of the area known as Castle Mountain across Cook Inlet. This is termed an inland tsunami and would require a major portion of soil breaking away for the other side of Cook Inlet. The size of this wave would be dependant on the amount of soil that has fallen an the level of the tide."

On January 22, 2007 the Office of Emergency Management hosted a media event to discuss the misconceptions about Anchorage's risk of tsunami. The event was attended by representatives from local, state and federal agencies. All agencies agreed that Anchorage residents have no reason to worry at all. The Cook Inlet serves as a natural protector for the city. **Therefore, the Municipality of Anchorage will NEVER issue an alert to its citizens to evacuate because of tsunami.**

Past alerts have generated community wide calls to the local and State EOC and to dispatch centers as to the need for evacuation. These questions are likely generated in response to the Emergency Alert System which broadcasts tsunami warnings for all of Alaska. Limitations of the Emergency Alert System (which is managed by the State of Alaska) prevent more targeted messages to specific communities. For example, Fairbanks receives tsunami alerts via the Emergency Alert System along with the rest of the state.

OEM would welcome your assistance to distribute this information to all your staff -- especially 911 dispatchers who may use this as a helpful reference tool for public response during future tsunami alerts.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please contact the Office of Emergency Management will any questions or concerns.