

When is it safe to return to beach, boating and diving activities after a tsunami

As general rule avoid coastal water, tidal estuaries, rivers and streams for at least 24 hours after any tsunami warning, as even small waves, create dangerous currents. This would include working in the inter-tidal zones and activities such as diving or near shore boating activities.

In the case of an extremely large tsunami, including those generated elsewhere in the Pacific, such as the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami or the 2011 Japanese Tsunami, then a marine threat may be issued for 48 hours or longer. Even after the threat has been lifted, unusual currents may persist and extra care should be taken in maritime activities - anecdotally surf rescues here in New Zealand were much higher than normal in the week after the Boxing Day Tsunami.

Information may be provided on when it is safe to beach and maritime activities, by the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, based on advice of the Tsunami Experts Panel.

Note: Boats are generally safer in water deeper than 20 metres than if they are close to the shore. If at sea when local tsunami is generated, then remain offshore until at least 2 hours after hazardous waves have been observed. Take care when returning to shore as strong and unusual currents will persist for at least 24 hours.