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USVI to Participate in Caribe Wave 2020 Tsunami Preparedness Drill

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Following the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency's series of earthquake town hall meetings [held between Jan. and Feb.](#), VITEMA is encouraging community participation in the upcoming Caribe Wave 2020 tsunami preparedness and response drill scheduled for March 19 at 9 a.m.

Caribe Wave is the annual tsunami exercise of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The purpose of this exercise is to advance tsunami preparedness efforts in the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions. This year's scenario will simulate a tsunami generated by a magnitude 8.0 earthquake located on the Enriquillo-Plantain Garden Fault Zone in Jamaica, VITEMA said.

“Tsunamis are a tough subject to deal with, but we continue to encourage our residents to take every necessary precaution to educate themselves, protect their loved ones, and to be prepared should a tsunami impact our territory,” said VITEMA Director Daryl D. Jaschen. “Caribe Wave 2020 will connect us to the greater Caribbean area as we make sure our schools, businesses, and government agencies test their emergency planning processes.”

At 9 a.m. on March 19, VITEMA said it will launch Caribe Wave 2020 in the territory with a Live Test of the Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS). All residents and visitors will receive an emergency alert message on their television, radio and cellphone which will state: “This is a TEST and start of Caribe Wave Tsunami Drill. Drop, Cover, Hold. THIS IS A TEST.” During the self-led drill, participants will practice how to “Drop where you are, Cover your head and neck, and Hold On until the shaking stops.”

Participants will also practice evacuation to a “safe zone,” review their tsunami response procedures and participate in tsunami preparedness discussions, the agency said.

Last year, 2,021 residents registered their participation in Caribe Wave 2019, according to VITEMA. This year, with recent seismic activity occurring in the Caribbean region, the participation expectation is higher.

“Caribe Wave provides us all an opportunity to test our emergency warning systems and make sure our residents are receiving emergency alerts,” said Mr. Jaschen. “While we are testing our technology and response capability, it is important that residents test their entire family plan.”

All residents are encouraged to register for participation at: tsunamizone.org/register and mark your household, school, church, business and community to be counted in this Caribbean-wide endeavor.