

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Tsunami Preparedness Week

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The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) is encouraging the community to learn more about tsunamis during Tsunami Preparedness Week, which begins today and runs through March 17.

VITEMA is also urging the community to practice walking the evacuation route if they reside, work or often play in the tsunami inundation zone. VITEMA's USVI Tsunami Evacuation Maps can be found at this link: <https://www.redsismica.uprm.edu/English>. The Tsunami Evacuation Maps outlines the tsunami inundation areas and delineates coastline inundation in addition to safe areas, evacuation route, and assembly points.

Community members can register their Tsunami Preparedness Week activities and participation at www.tsunamizone.org.

This year's tsunami preparedness activities come two months following an earthquake near Honduras in the Caribbean sea, that could have affected the USVI. Many residents complained that the only alert they received from VITEMA was one announcing the cancellation of the tsunami advisory, but no notification alerting residents of the earthquake and possible tsunami.

Ms. Barnes blamed the delay on connectivity problems at VITEMA, which she said was rectified around the same time the tsunami advisory was cancelled — hence the reason why, she said, both advisories came almost in tandem. Some residents dispute Ms. Barnes's response, however, contending that they only received the latter alert.

Listed below are possible tsunami preparedness activities that you can plan:

1. Attend a publicly organized tsunami walk drill
2. Organize your own tsunami walk drill
3. Put together a preparedness kit
4. Make a family plan
5. Establish an out of town contact
6. Participate in a work-related tsunami exercise
7. Re-tweet Tsunami Preparedness Info
8. Participate in a school evacuation drill
9. Watch a tsunami preparedness video
10. Print out a map of your evacuation zone

For more information on the U.S. tsunami warning system, see www.tsunami.gov.