

## WHAT IS A TSUNAMI?

A tsunami is a series of waves most commonly caused by an earthquake beneath the sea floor. As tsunamis enter shallow water near land, they increase in height and can cause great loss of life and property damage where they come ashore.

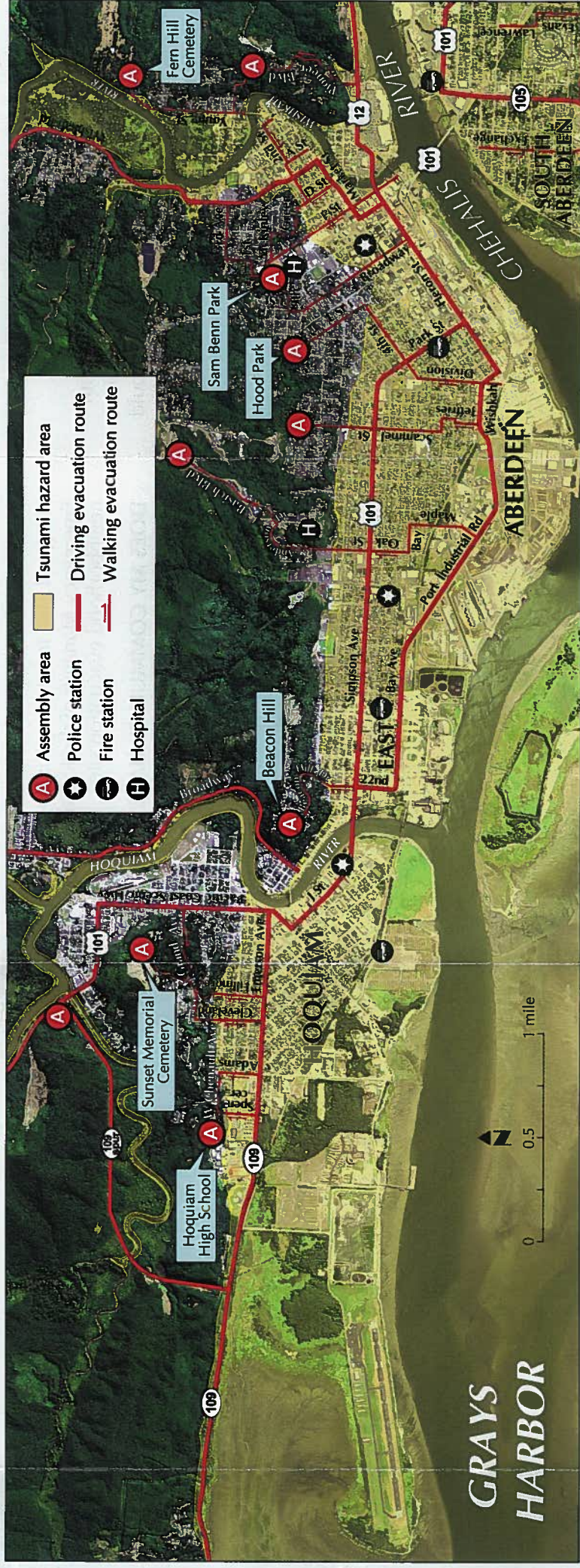
Recent research suggests that tsunamis have struck the Washington coast on a regular basis. They can occur at any time of the day or night, under any and all weather conditions, and in all seasons. Beaches open to the ocean, bay entrances, tidal flats, and coastal rivers are especially vulnerable to tsunamis.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A 'DISTANT' AND A 'LOCAL' TSUNAMI?

When a tsunami has been generated by a distant earthquake, it will not reach the Washington coast for several hours, and there is time to issue a warning. When a tsunami is generated by a strong offshore earthquake, its first waves would reach the outer coast minutes after the ground stops shaking. Feeling an earthquake could be your only warning!

## WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MYSELF FROM A TSUNAMI?

- Develop a family disaster plan. Everyone needs to know what to do on their own to protect themselves in case of disaster.
- Be familiar with local earthquake and tsunami plans. Know where to go to survive a tsunami. Identify an evacuation site within 15 minutes walking distance of home and/or work.



For a distant earthquake, follow the tsunami evacuation route signs. For a local earthquake, if car evacuation is not possible, go directly to the nearest high ground. Police and fire stations are shown as landmarks only. Do not go there for help—they will likely be deserted. Assembly areas have been designated where you can get help and services when you can't go home.

- Prepare three-day emergency kits for your home, automobile, and work.

## HOW DO I KNOW WHEN TO EVACUATE?

If you feel the ground shake, evacuate inland or to high ground immediately! A wave as high as 10 feet could reach the Aberdeen/Hoquiam area within an hour and a half of the quake. The first wave is often not the largest; successive waves may be spaced many minutes apart and continue to arrive for several hours. Return only after emergency officials say it is safe.

Isolated areas may not receive official warnings of distant tsunamis. If you notice a sudden drop or rise in sea level, move to high ground or inland immediately.

## WHERE DO I EVACUATE TO?

The map shows tsunami hazard areas in yellow. Go to the nearest high ground—at least 50 feet above sea level, if possible. If you don't have time to travel to high ground, but are in a multi-story building, go to an upper level. If you are on the beach and unable to get to high ground, go inland as far as you can.

## WHAT DO THE EVACUATION SIGNS MEAN?

Tsunami evacuation routes were developed to guide coastal residents and visitors to safer locations when car evacuation is possible. Evacuation signs have been placed along the



main roads to direct motorists to higher ground. In some places, there may be more than one way to reach safer areas. These routes are marked with multiple signs showing additional options for evacuation. You will need to know the evacuation routes for your area.

## HOW DO I GET INLAND OR TO HIGH GROUND?

Car evacuation may not be possible if an earthquake has damaged roads and power lines and resulted in significant debris. If this is the case, do not try to follow the evacuation routes out. Evacuate on foot directly to the nearest high ground. Avoid lakes and wetlands, which are prone to flooding and liquefaction during aftershocks.