

*Executive Department***EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION**

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May 20, 1986

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Governor Atiyeh ✓  
Gerry Thompson ✓  
Bob Oliver  
Denny Miles  
Jon Yunker  
Neal Fisher

FROM: Lyn Hardy  
Administrator

SUBJECT: Critique of Tsunami Warning of May 7, 1986

Attached is our critique, along with other comments, of the May 7 Tsunami Warning. It has been a very frustrating experience, over the years, trying to convince EMD staff that we must keep a minimum of five people in the office at all times and be prepared to move into full activation of the Emergency Operations Center on a moments notice. If you have not had a real event for several years, you have a tendency to take a "ho hum" approach to training.

Also, it is nice to be able to demonstrate to your superiors and the general public that there are some capabilities in Emergency Management.

Therefore, we viewed the Tsunami Warning as a very positive learning experience. It was especially positive inasmuch as the wave did not materialize and there was no loss of life or damage to property. The danger was very real, however, as we experienced in 1964. The Emergency Management Division would like to compliment Gerry, Bob Oliver and Denny Miles on the high level of their professionalism during the event.

We will try to incorporate all the lessons learned into our operating procedures to be better prepared for the next event. A major change will be to activate the "HAM" radio net sooner. We subsequently found out they had the most accurate and up-to-date information available about actual wave action. They are a great resource.

If you have any comments, please forward them to us so we can include them in our report.

LH:ak

Attachment

## TSUNAMI INCIDENT CRITIQUE AND DEBRIEFING

5/8/86

Lyn Hardy convened the Tsunami Incident Critique and Debriefing Session, and requested Mary Stevenson to record the proceedings of this meeting. A copy is to be sent to the Governor's Office.

Lyn expressed the need for updating our computerized mailing list; Archie, Kim, David, and Lyn will meet to organize this. He noted that more duty books need to be printed, and that one should be established for the EOC for use out on the floor.

As a result of a telephone call received from a local emergency manager, the agenda for the Public Officials' Conference will include discussion of the Governor's role, responsibility, and authority in emergency situations. Under ORS 401, the Governor assumes a leadership role in an emergency situation when:

1. A local jurisdiction fails to act appropriately;
2. Handling the situation is beyond the capability of the local jurisdiction; or
3. The emergency situation is multi-jurisdictional in nature.

Some of the persons who called Lyn were not on the list of usual contacts. Earl Smith of the Civil Air Patrol offered to stand by with communications gear and support airplanes. In future incidents like this, the C.A.P. should be put on alert. They will be added to the checklist.

Joe Holden had offered to fly over the Coast and remain in the air at the estimated time of arrival of the tsunami here. Aeronautics Division should always be put on alert in a tsunami situation.

When the "All-Clear" message is given, everyone who received initial notification should be called back. This should be part of the written procedures.

John Olson noted that the initial call came at approximately 4:00 p.m., and that Mary took the information from the NAWAS. At that point, Bulletin #1 indicated a Tsunami Watch to be in effect. The information thereafter changed rapidly, and notifications were started. Bob Oliver was immediately informed, and he and Denny Miles came right down to get as much information as possible. Then Bob, Denny, and John went up to talk to Gerry Thompson. Subsequent to their discussion, the Governor's Office issued a recommendation for evacuation of low-lying areas on the Oregon Coast.

Colonel Brandaw and Colonel Lockwood were called in on the discussion, and wrestled with the definition of "low-lying areas". It was decided to leave this up to each local jurisdiction.

There was concern for people who might be using State Parks; the Oregon State Police took care of notifying people by driving to each park and warning visitors of the potential tsunami danger.

Overall, John felt that the incident was handled very well by the EMD staff, and he expressed appreciation for their teamwork.

One problem occurred when trying to locate Cherilyn Foglio (Gresham) through the American Red Cross. We will work with the Red Cross to improve that process.

David Yandell expressed his opinion that the incident had been handled well from here.

Lyn felt that there had been the potential for setting up the EOC, and that we need to be ready for this if telephone lines are jammed. David assured him that we had been ready for that yesterday, had the need arisen.

Tom Worden noted that there was a problem in getting connected with Washington State's Department of Emergency Services via the LEDS to see what they were sending out to their locals. He related the confusion resulting from the action of the Wahkiakum Sheriff in ordering evacuation of Puget Island; such overreaction created problems.

At 4:15 p.m., Tom called the Tsunami Warning Network (known as "Operation Goldfish") established on the Coast. All stations were connected for a conference call within seven minutes. They were on "hold" for 5-6 minutes, a warning was issued, and the information was broadcast over the air within 3-4 minutes. Copies of the Oregon Emergency Broadcast System Operational Plan and the Oregon Tsunami Warning Network are attached to this critique. Tom noted that, in this process, he discovered a radio station in Florence that he hadn't known about. Lyn felt strongly that a HAM radio operator should have been called in, and certainly should be present during future incidents of this nature, since HAMS can use their network to establish contact and verify information quickly. This will be added in under the State Plan, where widespread observations are required.

Joseph Murray announced that there was a problem involved in getting information out via LEDS if using the "COA" coding when an incident involves the coastal counties. Two of the drops don't receive "COA" messages, but should; Joseph discovered that fact by requesting all stations to acknowledge the message he sent via the system. Clatsop County and Lane County are affected by this. Abby suggested that we send out "situation update" announcements "APB" so that all local jurisdictions could answer inquiries from concerned citizens. Joseph added that Rosemarie at Oregon State Police Communications reminded him, after the "All Clear", that OSP usually can spare an experienced LEDS operator to come over and help in emergency situations, and that we should feel free to call them for help. Joseph went on to say that he checked the National Weather Service Teletype at 10:30 p.m., and discovered printouts that had included additional wave heights and ETA's. This was a reminder to everyone to keep checking the NWS Teletype during an emergency situation of this nature. In general, Joseph felt that the tsunami emergency was handled smoothly from here.

Tom informed those present that he had received a call from Kent Parsons, of the Highway Division, telling him that there is an "E-Mail" drop in most State Parks. These can be used when we get the drop codes and a telephone list of the custodians who are usually at the parks.

Ken Vogeney felt that the Tsunami Warning Centers should have issued messages on a more regular basis, at least once every 30 minutes, so that this information could have been relayed to the affected areas. In light of information coming in about wave heights from one reporting station, it seemed premature for the Warning

to be cancelled when there was still a possible danger. While cancelling the Warning was not this agency's responsibility, it was necessary to pass on the message as directed. Everyone agreed that the Warning should have been switched back to a Watch status for at least another hour or more after the apparent danger had passed. Ken was pleased with the way everything was handled from this agency.

Tom felt that there should have been quicker response to the exaggerated rumors about the "fifty-foot wall of water", etc.

Lyn noted that there are two sides of the coin in whether or not the Governor's Office sets up their "command post" here or provides direction from upstairs. Abby stated that, during one of the Mt. St. Helens ash-spewing incidents, Denny Miles and Bob Oliver were set up in one of our staff offices and they were readily accessible to our staff and the media; however, they also had privacy when needed. It was agreed that it would have been smoother, from a logistical standpoint, if the Governor's staff were all in either our complex or in Room 50.

Tom felt that his job as Rumor Control Officer went very well.

Lyn stated that it is important to remember that the role of this agency, in respect to the two different types of emergencies (Trojan and Other), is that of support in communications, P.I.O., and general back-up. In Trojan incidents, the Department of Energy takes the lead and will provide a P.I.O. to support Denny Miles. In "other" incidents, the Emergency Management Division will provide a P.I.O. to support Denny.

Kim said that, in doing the compilation of the Computer Log of this incident, she would prefer to organize it according to notes from individual personal logs, rather than in an overall chronological log.

Overall, Lyn felt that the press action for the event was handled well. The agency received good "P.R." and the media people did not create a problem for the E.M.D. It was suggested that we might want to obtain some copies of the footage and stills taken by the many press people here during the evening.

Joseph noted that, after 11:00 p.m., he received no media calls; they apparently all went to Denny Miles.

It was agreed that Incident Reports should be completed and Incident Numbers assigned for both the Mt. St. Helens Advisory and the Tsunami Warning.

Kim Bemis and Mary Stevenson will help to assemble and synthesize all the information, with John having primary responsibility for this task, since John was Operations Officer for this incident.

The incident log, when completed, will be sent to all agencies involved, including the OSP and the Governor's Office. A cover letter will explain that this is our Critique and that any additional comments will be welcomed. Copies will also be sent to all Directors and Coordinators in the Coastal counties, and also to John DeFrance (Columbia County) and the Tsunami Warning Centers.

Mary Stevenson commented that staff roles in these situations should be assigned quickly and definitively so that disorganization and confusion about who is doing what will be avoided. She observed that this had occurred initially in the tsunami incident, but was corrected by mutual cooperation within a few minutes.

Lyn agreed that this definitely needed to be done, and that, as Agency Representatives, he, Bob King, and Archie Mustard need to establish a duty roster between the three of them, with one person always in touch by personal pager.

Lyn was pleased with the fact that one of our staff (in this instance, John), had assertively assumed command of the situation. This is an inherent rule in this agency, and should be taken on in any given situation when no obvious leadership delegation is evident. In these situations, someone must also decide which staff remain on location and which are released to leave, particularly if the situation appears to be one of potentially long duration. Standing memoranda on this subject will be circulated again to staff and also attached to this report.

It was noted that there were two separate contacts in the Military Department, and this proved to be confusing for a time. The same thing happened in the Health Division. Therefore, it is important that EMD staff communicate with each other promptly as to whom each has spoken and in which agencies.

Region Ten was notified initially, but was not called back. This should have been done.

It was recommended that the telephone numbers of the National Parks in Oregon be added to the SDO books.

Also, each Duty book should contain a copy of the list of State E.M.D Directors, especially those in surrounding states. Archie will be asked to research other necessary contacts.

A debriefing between Lyn Hardy, Gerry Thompson, and Bob Oliver resulted in the following suggested changes:

1. Press people should be removed from the E.O.C. after they have obtained their initial story and pictures. Even if they are not in the way, they do have a tendency to overhear conversations and discussions that might be easily misconstrued or misquoted, which could lead to the creation and spread of rumors. This directive will be added to the E.M.D.'s Standard Operating Procedures.
2. Things would have gone more smoothly logistically if Gerry Thompson and staff would have moved downstairs. It was agreed as to how the new telephones now being installed in the E.M.D. complex would accommodate this, and that next time, this will be the process.
3. Gerry suggested that the Legislative Leadership should be notified. If any incident leads to a requirement to spend State funds beyond present appropriations, the Legislative Emergency Board would have to authorize that expenditure. It was agreed to add the Speaker and President, or, if they cannot be located, the Legislative Administrative Committee Administrator, to the E.M.D.'s Call List.

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Attachments

ADDENDUM TO TSUNAMI CRITIQUE

From Tom Worden:

"I have comments on two things. First, based on the rather rapid announcements coming over the NAWAS during the Tsunami Incident, and the confusion they caused at the time, two or three persons began copying down the information in the hope that we would be able to get the correct message. That tied up some people who could have been getting other things started. Use of the portable tape recorder solved that problem. I remember, at one point, asking Kim to type up the first message so that it was readable for the LEDES operator, and that simply delayed getting the warning out over LEDES. I think that the tape recorder should be there all the time; I will put a supply of batteries on the shelf.

"The second item is the P.I.O. function. Early on, most of us were fielding media questions, mostly from radio stations; they wanted audio (voice) transmissions. I felt it was best to give them the information on hand rather than wait, but I gave no thought to calling Denny and having him contact the stations. I don't even think I knew he was around. I feel very strongly that, if Denny is going to deal with the media, then he ought to be down here, where many of the calls are going to be coming. You may remember that I sent both radio and television stations our telephone number to use when they wanted disaster-related information, so I think that is what stimulated some of the calls.

\* "Dealing with rumors in the media is also something that deserves quick attention, but because Denny seemed to also be playing an administrative role, I don't think we responded as well as we could.

"One final thing: Perhaps an extension of the Governor's telephones should also be placed in Lyn's office for a mini-EOC and where information is easily obtained, and for an incident that is multi-jurisdictional but does not have the potential for a state-wide disaster."

\* Difference of  
Channel 2 - shld or shld not  
10 Miles shld