
Nearly 7,000 In VI Join Tsunami Exercise

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Director of Disaster Management Mr. Jasen Penn said that the 16th Territory-wide earthquake and tsunami exercise held March 20 was among the Territory's largest national exercises.

“We estimate there were 6,854 individuals who joined us to practise earthquake and tsunami safety procedures on their own, or with their families, colleagues or schools,” Mr. Penn said.

He added that he is grateful for the support and participation from around the public service, the education sector, and the business community.

“Each year, these practise sessions help us improve our plans, update procedures, train new persons in tsunami preparedness and response, and ensure that the Territory remains ready to face a tsunami threat,” Mr. Penn said.

The director advised that all businesses and public service agencies should have comprehensive disaster plans that are tested regularly and that the team at Disaster Management can provide support and advice for anyone developing plans or testing their plans.

This year’s exercise involved the simulation of a magnitude 8 earthquake at 10:00 a.m. off the coast of Jamaica, followed by regional and then local alerting for a subsequent tsunami.

Department of Disaster Management Training Manager and exercise coordinator Carishma Hicks said that this year’s exercise focused on the National Early Warning Multi-hazard Alert System, emergency communication technology, and inter-agency-communication.

“These focus areas help make sure that key first response agencies can stay ready to activate their emergency response plans for tsunamis and other threats that occur without advance warning,” Ms. Hicks said.

The community is encouraged to share their feedback about the exercise with the DDM at www.surveymonkey.com/r/caribewave25 or by calling the Department at 468-4200.

National tsunami exercises help the Virgin Islands maintain its Tsunami Ready status, which was first achieved in 2014. This year 504,595 persons from around the region participated in Caribe Wave, which is led by the UNESCO/IOC Intergovernmental Coordination Group for Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazards Warning System for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (ICG/CARIBE-EWS).

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