GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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VI to Join Regional Tsunami Preparedness Exercise March 19

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The Virgin Islands will join some half a million Caribbean residents for the fifteenth regional tsunami preparedness exercise on March 19.

Director of Disaster Management Mr. Jasen Penn said Exercise Caribe Wave is an opportunity to learn or practice the tsunami safety response of heading inland or to higher ground. He encouraged all residents to participate in the exercise to improve their personal safety and the safety of the Territory.

Mr. Penn said, “As an island community, we are extremely vulnerable to the threat of a major tsunami. This means is it vital for everyone to understand what they can do to protect themselves and their families.”

The director said if persons take only one action to prepare for possible tsunamis, it should be to download and become familiar with the tsunami evacuation maps that are available from the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) website.

“What I hope every single person will do is to look at the maps and think about the places they spend time, not just their home or workplace, but also their church, their favorite restaurant or social gathering place, the location they go for weekend activities, et cetera; and learn the best route to higher ground or inland from each of those places,” Mr. Penn said.

The scenario for this year’s exercise is an earthquake off the coast of the Cayman Islands at 10:00 a.m. local time, followed by a tsunami warning requiring evacuation issued by regional authorities shortly thereafter. This scenario is similar to the February, 2025 Honduras earthquake and subsequent tsunami advisory.

As part of the exercise, residents should expect to hear the activation of the National Early Warning Multi-hazard Alert System including the early warning sirens.

To participate in the exercise, register your home or organisation online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/NationalEarthquakeandTsunamiExercise2026. Then, on March 19, practise the earthquake safety response of drop, cover and hold; then practise moving to higher ground or inland.

Caribe Wave is coordinated locally by the DDM. It is sponsored by the UNESCO/IOC Intergovernmental Coordination Group for Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazards Warning System for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (ICG/CARIBE-EWS), in coordination with the Caribbean Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de los Desastres Naturales en América Central (CEPREDENAC), EMIZA Antilles, and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

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Additional Documents or Media

- press_release_vi_to_join_regional_tsunami_preparedness_exercise_march_19.pdf