

PRESS RELEASE

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Virgin Islands To Join Caribbean Tsunami Exercise March 20

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The Virgin Islands will join the rest of the region for Caribe Wave, an earthquake and tsunami response exercise on March 20.

For this exercise, the simulated scenario is an earthquake off the coast of Jamaica that triggers a tsunami warning and evacuation. The purpose of this exercise is to evaluate tsunami response plans, increase tsunami preparedness, and improve coordination throughout the region.

Director of Disaster Management Jasen Penn said the earthquake and tsunami advisory on February 8 were a powerful reminder that tsunamis can happen here in the Caribbean at any time and with no warning.

The director said, “The scenario selected for Caribe Wave is a regional threat, similar to what could have happened if the Honduras earthquake had triggered a dangerous tsunami.”

Mr. Penn added that more than 100 Virgin Islands families, businesses, agencies, departments and schools have already signed up at <https://www.jotform.com/form/250475385281865> to participate in Caribe Wave.

“Strong participation in the exercise will ensure we can identify operational strengths and weaknesses, and make improvements across the Territory,” he said.

The exercise will include public notification via the National Early Warning Multi-hazard Alert System. Residents should expect to hear the sirens, emergency radio broadcast, app and other alerts at approximately 10:00 am. Motorists around the Territory should use extra caution on the road as pedestrians will be practising their tsunami evacuation procedures. If any real threat occurs during the exercise, the exercise will be terminated.

The Virgin Islands has joined regional tsunami exercises each year since 2009. The Territory has also been recognised as a Tsunami Ready community since 2014.

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 Antillas, and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).