
What to do if you find tsunami debris

Every year, marine debris from a number of sources washes up on coastlines around the world. Along with impacting tens of thousands of lives, the earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan in March 2011 also washed debris into the Pacific Ocean. While much of it quickly sank, over the next few years some debris will arrive on B.C.'s coast. There were initial reports of a debris field, but by now ocean currents will have broken it up into smaller, separate pieces of debris. It is unlikely that any debris washing up on B.C. shores will pose a significant environmental or public health risk. In general, report debris that can be attributed to the Japanese tsunami to DisasterDebris@noaa.gov.

Be Safe: If you don't know what it is, don't touch it. If the item appears to pose an immediate life safety risk, call 911 or your local police. If the item appears to be hazardous but does not pose an immediate risk, report it to the provincial spill reporting line provided under 'Hazardous materials' below.

Litter and other typical marine debris: Where it's safe and practical to do so, consider removing litter and recycling any plastics or metals. Removal of large items or personal possessions should be done only in consultation with land managers or responsible agencies. If items can be directly linked to the Japanese Tsunami please report them to DisasterDebris@noaa.gov with as much detail as possible.

Personal effects or possessions from the Japanese tsunami: Items that appear to be personal belongings related to the Japanese tsunami should be treated with respect. Report them to DisasterDebris@noaa.gov with as much detail as possible. If it is safe to do so, consider moving the object to a safe location and include this location in the email report.

Hazardous materials: As the tsunami washed material out to sea before nuclear safety concerns emerged, it is highly unlikely that any items would have been exposed to radiation. In the event that potentially hazardous items such as drums, fuel tanks and containers, gas cans, gas cylinders, or chemical storage totes wash ashore, **do not touch or attempt to move the item.** Ten-inch aluminum insecticide canisters may also be found in high tide zones. **Do not open the cap** since these fumigant canisters may contain small amounts of toxic gas. Call B.C.'s spill reporting line at 1-800-663-3456 with a detailed report of what you've observed.

Derelict vessel, equipment or cargo from a vessel: Report it to Transport Canada at 604-775-8867 or by e-mail to pacnwp-penpac@tc.gc.ca. **Do not attempt to move or remove the boat or cargo.**

Human remains: It is extremely unlikely any human remains from the tsunami will reach Canada. However, if you encounter any remains, immediately **call 911** or your local police and give authorities a detailed report about what you observed. Do not touch or attempt to move.

More information, including FAQs and information about organized beach clean-up activities, is available on the B.C. Ministry of Environment tsunami debris website at www.tsunamidebrisbc.ca.