

Japan Tsunami Marine Debris

What to do if you see debris



General Guidance

Be safe: Use common sense and follow general safety guidelines. If you don't know what an item is, don't touch it. If it appears hazardous, contact appropriate authorities.

Marine debris items or significant accumulations potentially related to the tsunami can be reported to DisasterDebris@noaa.gov with as much information as possible (including its location, the date and time you found it, photos, and any relevant descriptions). It is important to remember that not all debris found on U.S. shorelines is from Japan, so please use your discretion when reporting items.

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For more information, please visit:
www.marinedebris.noaa.gov



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GUIDELINES BY DEBRIS TYPE

Litter and other typical marine debris items

Examples: Plastic bottles, aluminum cans, buoys, Styrofoam

Common marine debris types may vary by location. If safe and practical, we encourage you to remove the debris and recycle as much of it as possible.

Potential hazardous materials (HAZMAT)

Examples: Oil or chemical drums, gas cans, propane tanks

Contact your local authorities, such as a park ranger or lifeguard, state debris hotlines (211 in Oregon, 1-800-OILS-911 in Washington, and 808-587-0400 in Hawaii), and the National Response Center at 1-800-424-8802 to report the item with as much information as possible. Do not touch the item or attempt to move it.

Do not contact DisasterDebris@noaa.gov for response assistance.

Derelict vessel or other large debris item

Examples: Drift boat, shipping containers, docks

Contact your local authorities, such as a park ranger or lifeguard, or state debris hotlines. If the debris item is a potential hazard to navigation, radio your nearest US Coast Guard Sector Command Center via VHF-FM Ch. 16 or 2182 MHz or notify the U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area Command at 510-437-3701. Do not attempt to move or remove item.

Mementos or possessions

Examples: Items with unique identifiers, names, or markings

If an item can 1) be traced back to an individual or group and 2) has personal or monetary value, it should be reported to DisasterDebris@noaa.gov. NOAA will work with local Japan consulates to determine if they can identify the item's owner.

Remains

It is highly unlikely that remains from the tsunami will reach the United States, but if you see human remains anywhere, contact local authorities (a 911 call) and report what you observed. Do not touch or attempt to move them.

Unknown item

If you don't know what it is, don't touch it. If you believe it is a hazardous item, contact local authorities and report it.