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8 Boats Capsized Near Santa Catalina Island

Tsunami advisories are issued for the California coast after a magnitude-8.9 quake in Japan

By Jonathan Lloyd and Jack Noyes | Saturday, Mar 12, 2011 | Updated 9:40 AM PDT

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Seal Beach closed Friday morning after authorities issued a tsunami alert following the 8.9 quake in Japan.

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Eights boats were capsized Monday near Santa Catalina Island and a section of an island pier was damaged Friday due to surging waves caused by the tsunami generated by the Japan earthquake, according to the National Weather Service (NWS) and L.A. County Office of Emergency Management.

Along the mainland coast, "Four docks were damaged and one destroyed at King Harbor in Redondo Beach," said Ken Kondo, L.A. County Emergency Management public information officer told NBCLA Friday night. He noted

there was "no significant damage reported in Marina del Rey area."

There are no reports of injuries. At King Harbor in Redondo Beach, two boats were pushed onto a dock, according to NWS.

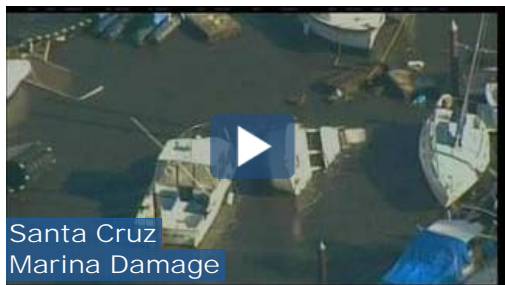
The National Weather Service issued tsunami advisories Friday morning for the West Coast because of the magnitude-8.9 earthquake that struck Japan.

However, most of the tsunami-related damage occurred in Santa Cruz and Crescent City harbors. Only small surges were reported in Southern California.

Beaches from Newport Beach south that were closed because of the tsunami advisory reopened as of 1 p.m., an Orange County sheriff's spokesman says. Beaches north of Newport Beach will remain closed until 4 p.m.

There have been no problems along the Orange County coastline so far, but people are still being advised to stay out of the water.

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Orange County officials closed access at all beaches, harbors and piers, warning residents to stay away from with strong currents.

"It's really stupid to go to the beach during a tsunami warning," said Dr. Lucy Jones, of Caltech. "These currents, even though we do get the water carried far inland, can cause a lot of damage. Historically, that's when some of the biggest losses happen. I've seen instances of huge container ships just being spun around in the harbor."

OC Sheriff's spokesman Jim Amormino said people should stay out of the water because the tsunami could produce a series of strong waves.

"Even though waves will be two to three feet they have very strong currents," Amormino said.

Currents may be hazardous to swimmers, boats, and coastal structures and may continue for several hours after the initial wave arrival. Coastal residents in the watch area should prepare for possible evacuation, officials said.

Los Angeles County coastal residents are advised to stay away from currents, said Sgt. Ron Walker of Manhattan Beach Police Department.

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