



# City of Saint Paul, Alaska Tsunami Siren and Evacuation Exercise

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After-Action Report/Improvement Plan

April 3, 2023

## EXERCISE OVERVIEW

<b>Exercise Name</b>	Tsunami Siren and Evacuation Exercise
<b>Exercise Dates</b>	March 29, 2023
<b>Scope</b>	<p>This exercise was planned for Wednesday, March 29, 2023 at 10:15 AM on Saint Paul Island, Alaska. Exercise included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Weather Service, Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and the Alaska Broadcasters Association who conducted a test of the Alaska tsunami warning system as a part of tsunami preparedness week in Alaska (March 26<sup>th</sup> – April 1<sup>st</sup>).</li> <li>• The test tsunami alert was broadcast on radio and television stations. The broadcast stated that it was only a test.</li> <li>• City of Saint Paul activated the emergency siren.</li> <li>• Saint Paul School performed an evacuation drill from the school to City Hall.</li> <li>• NOAA all hazards weather radio listeners heard a tone alert followed by a test message.</li> <li>• This TEST was intended to reach the southern coastline along the Pacific and Gulf of Alaska.</li> <li>• The TEST would be canceled in the event of any significant seismic activity.</li> </ul>
<b>Mission Area(s)</b>	Response
<b>Core Capabilities</b>	Public Information and Warning, Planning, Critical Transportation, and On-Scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement
<b>Objectives</b>	Test emergency notifications systems including all hazards emergency sirens, NIXLE and KUHB emergency messaging. Conduct tsunami evacuation drill with Saint Paul School
<b>Threat or Hazard</b>	Tsunami
<b>Scenario</b>	At 10:15 AM on March 29, 2023, the City of Saint Paul receives notification from National Weather Service and State of Alaska DHS&EM of a possible tsunami wave inundation resulting from an underwater shelf earthquake in the Bering Sea.
<b>Weather</b>	34 degrees, west/southwest winds at 18 MPH, no precipitation, cloudy
<b>Sponsor</b>	City of Saint Paul
<b>Participating Organizations</b>	City of Saint Paul and Pribilof School District
<b>Point of Contact</b>	Phillip A. Zavadil, 907-341-3994, pazavadil@stpaulak.com

## ANALYSIS OF CORE CAPABILITIES

Aligning exercise objectives and core capabilities provides a consistent taxonomy for evaluation that transcends individual exercises to support preparedness reporting and trend analysis. Table 1 includes the exercise objectives, aligned core capabilities, and performance ratings for each core capability as observed during the exercise and determined by the evaluation team.

Objective	Core Capability	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
Community Notification Prior to Exercise	Public Information and Warning	X			
Preparatory Meeting	Planning	X			
Activation of Siren	Public Information and Warning	X			
Messaging During Exercise	Public Information and Warning		X		
School Evacuation Drill	Critical Transportation	X			
Traffic Control	On-Scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement	X			
All Clear Messaging after Exercise	Public Information and Warning		X		

**Table 1. Summary of Core Capability Performance**

## RATINGS DEFINITIONS

**Performed without Challenges (P):** The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.

**Performed with Some Challenges (S):** The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. However, opportunities to enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency were identified.

**Performed with Major Challenges (M):** The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s), but some or all of the following were observed: demonstrated performance had a negative impact on the performance of other activities; contributed to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and/or was not conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.

**Unable to be Performed (U):** The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were not performed in a manner that achieved the objective(s).

## OVERVIEW OF EXERCISE PERFORMANCE

The strengths and areas for improvement for each core capability are described in this section.

### Community Notification Prior to Exercise

#### Strengths

**Strength 1:** Notifications were sent out via NIXLE and KUHB a week prior to the exercise.

#### Lesson Learned

**Lesson 1:** Not everyone in the community knew about the exercise. One individual came to City Hall during the exercise because they thought there was a tsunami.

#### Areas for Improvement

**Area for Improvement 1:** Expand notifications beyond NIXLE and KUHB.

### Preparatory Meeting

#### Strengths

**Strength 1:** Attendees openly discussed tasks and roles in the meeting and asked questions.

#### Lesson Learned

**Lesson 1:** Preparatory meetings for other exercises are essential for conducting a successful exercise.

#### Areas for Improvement

**Area for Improvement 1:** Prepare an agenda for the meeting.

### Activation of Siren

#### Strengths

**Strength 1:** The Federal Signal Commander Software is easy to understand and activate the siren.

#### Lesson Learned

**Lesson 1:** None.

#### Areas for Improvement

**Area for Improvement 1:** Review activation of siren process with all emergency dispatchers.

**Area for Improvement 2:** Prepare siren activation SOP.

### Messaging During Exercise

#### Strengths

**Strength 1:** Aubrey sent out a message via NIXLE a minute into the exercise.

**Strength 2:** Ethan sent out a message on KUHB during the exercise.

**Lesson Learned**

**Lesson 1:** There was not an automated message about the tsunami that came through via NIXLE, even though it was expected.

**Lesson 2:** There was not an automated message about the tsunami that came through via KUHB, even though it was expected.

**Areas for Improvement**

**Area for Improvement 1:** Make sure the automated emergency messaging system for KUHB is functioning properly.

**School Evacuation Drill****Strengths**

**Strength 1:** Staff and students did well. The entire school walked from the school to Rec Hall in 7 minutes, 30 seconds.

**Lesson Learned**

**Lesson 1:** None

**Areas for Improvement**

**Area for Improvement 1:** None identified.

**Traffic Control****Strengths**

**Strength 1:** Traffic control was performed efficiently.

**Lesson Learned**

**Lesson 1:** None.

**Areas for Improvement**

**Area for Improvement 1:** None identified.

**All Clear Messaging after Exercise****Strengths**

**Strength 1:** NIXLE and KUHB messages were sent with no issues.

**Lesson Learned**

**Lesson 1:** Preparing the wording for the messaging prior to the exercise is beneficial.

**Areas for Improvement**

**Area for Improvement 1:** We experienced issues with the voice messaging over the siren system. Preparing a protocol on how to use the mic and voice message system on the siren, posting by the siren computer and training dispatchers will avoid the message not going through the next time.

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Aubrey Wegeleben, City Clerk and Public Information Officer for the City of Saint Paul conducted a Facebook poll after the exercise. The following questions were included in the poll:

1. Were you aware there was going to be a Test of the Emergency Siren?
2. Where were you when the siren went off?
3. Were you able to hear the siren clearly?
4. Were you able to understand the voice message?

A total of 6 responses to the poll were received. The responses to each poll question are listed below:

1. 6 responses Yes.
2. Home, Senior Center, 10-Plex, School
3. My front door has to be Open and not Closed so I could hear the Alarm. Heard the siren. If it happens in the middle of the night while sleeping I can hear that it would take a minute to hear the siren. I than would have to go outside on the living room patio to hear what type of announcement is being said. Could barely hear the siren. Yes, I was able to hear the siren.
4. The voice messages need to be Loud and Clear. Heard the instructions. I just needed to go outside to understand the whole voice message. Couldn't understand the message. I wasn't able to hear the voice message inside but loud and clear outside.

## APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This IP has been developed specifically for [Organization Name] as a result of the [Name] CMS Tabletop Exercise.

Core Capability	Assessment Area (Objective)	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element <sup>1</sup>	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Public Information and Warning	Improve public alerting procedures	AHAB siren activation procedures	Develop AHAB siren activation standard operating procedures	Planning	City of Saint Paul	Phillip Zavadil	April 1, 2023	December 31, 2023

<sup>1</sup> Capability Elements are: Planning, Organization, Equipment, Training, or Exercise.