



# Japan Tsunami Marine Debris



## What to do if you see debris in Hawai'i's ocean or beaches

### – GENERAL GUIDANCE –

**Be Safe:** If you don't know what it is and it looks hazardous don't touch it. Collect as much information as you can from a safe distance.

**Report:** Call DLNR at (808) 587-0400 or send an email to [dlnr.marine.debris@hawaii.gov](mailto:dlnr.marine.debris@hawaii.gov) and [disasterdebris@noaa.gov](mailto:disasterdebris@noaa.gov) to report findings of possible tsunami marine debris, including:

- Large quantities of debris,
- Debris with living organisms on it, or
- Large sized debris (too large to remove by hand).

Please send the following information to help DLNR staff determine if a more thorough investigation is necessary. This information will also be logged in NOAA's sightings tracker.

- Photo of the debris,
- Detailed description of the object and any growing organisms on it,
- Date and time sighted or found,
- Location of sighting, and
- Finder's contact information.

**Radiation:** Radiation experts agree that it is highly unlikely that any tsunami generated marine debris will hold harmful levels of radiation from the Fukushima nuclear emergency. Some debris in West Coast states has been tested, including items known to be from the tsunami, and no radioactive contamination above normal was found. Marine debris in Hawaii has been monitored since April 2011, and no radioactive contamination above normal levels has been found.

### – GUIDELINES BY DEBRIS TYPE –

#### Litter and small marine debris items

*Examples: plastic bottles, floats, plastic tubs or beer crates, aluminum cans, buoys, and Styrofoam.*

Marine debris has been and continues to be a problem here in Hawai'i. In most cases, it is extremely difficult to determine whether debris came from the tsunami without unique identifying information (e.g., registration number, person's name, etc.). Items with Asian characters, such as buoys, light bulbs, containers and bottles, wash up in Hawai'i and on the U.S. Pacific coasts all the time. Significant changes in type and amount of debris on a shoreline are potential indicators that debris from the tsunami may have arrived; however, this is very difficult to confirm. Remember, not every item found on our shorelines is from the Japan tsunami as marine debris in Hawai'i is an everyday problem.

If practical, we encourage you to remove small debris safely and recycle as much of it as possible. You can find Beach Cleanup Guidelines *on page 2*.

#### Marine debris with living organisms

Most marine debris will have marine life of some kind growing on it. In Hawai'i, preventing establishment of alien species that can become invasive and threaten native species is a constant concern. Gooseneck barnacles (photo right) are not considered a threat, since they commonly colonize objects floating in the Pacific. Potentially invasive species may be growing on items that were already in the



Gooseneck barnacles are not of concern

For more information on the Japan Tsunami Marine Debris, please visit <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/tsunamidebris/>, <http://disasterdebris.wordpress.com/>, and [www.hawaii.gov/dlnr](http://www.hawaii.gov/dlnr)

ocean at their place of origin for some time before being lost at sea, such as docks, piers, vessels, and other materials that were already in the water at the time of the tsunami. If you see anything other than gooseneck barnacles, please report the item as a biologist specializing in invasive species should inspect such items ASAP.

**What To Do:** If you can do so safely, remove the item from the water or shoreline and place it securely in a trash bag, otherwise leave it in place. **Do not wash or brush the organisms off.** Never move debris with organisms on it into other bodies of water – an aquarium or pond, etc. Report the item ASAP to DLNR and NOAA (*directions on page 1*).

### Hazardous materials

*Examples: Drums, fuel tanks and containers, gas cans or cylinders, chemical storage totes, aluminum canisters.* **Do not touch or attempt to move the item, report to the National Response Center online at [www.nrc.uscg.mil](http://www.nrc.uscg.mil) or call 1-800-424-8802.** Give authorities a detailed report about what you've observed. When safe report the item to DLNR and NOAA (*directions on page 1*). For more information on Japanese Gas Cylinder Identification Information, visit <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/tsunamidebris/pdf/hazmat.pdf> or <http://disasterdebris.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/japanesegascylinderinfo.pdf>.

### Derelict boat or other large debris item

Do not attempt to move or remove the boat or large items. Report the item to DLNR and NOAA (*directions on page 1*). If at sea, once an individual attaches to take possession of a derelict vessel they are then responsible for the vessel.

### Personal effects or possessions from Japan tsunami

*Example: Items with unique identifiers, names, registration numbers, or markings.*

Items that appear to be personal belongings should be treated with respect. They should be reported with as much relevant detail as possible. Report the item to DLNR and NOAA (*directions on page 1*).

Agencies will work with the Japan Consulate in Honolulu for appropriate arrangements.

### Human Remains

It is highly unlikely that human remains from the tsunami will reach Hawai'i, but if you should see any, call 9-1-1 and report it. Do not touch or attempt to move the remains.

### Beach Cleanup Guidelines

Always keep safety as a foremost concern. These basic guidelines are provided to help avoid any unintentional injury or distress:

1. Wear gloves when you are picking up trash and have clothing and sun-block to protect from the sun.
2. Be cautious and aware of the ocean waves; never turn your back on the ocean.
3. Always stay in teams of at least two. All children should be supervised by an adult at all times.
4. Don't touch or pick up dead animals, or attempt to move injured animals. Instead, contact the responsible authorities:
  - a. Report stranded, entangled, or injured marine mammals (whales, dolphins, and seals) by calling the NOAA Fisheries Marine Mammal Hotline at 1-888-256-9840.
  - b. Report stranded, entangled, or injured marine turtles by calling the Marine Turtle Research Program at (808) 983-5730, or see the Marine Turtle Stranding Contact Information page for more numbers [http://www.pifsc.noaa.gov/psd/mtrp/turtle\\_contact.php](http://www.pifsc.noaa.gov/psd/mtrp/turtle_contact.php).
5. At the end of your clean up, place trash bags next to park dumpsters or trashcans and ensure you securely tie the bags so debris does not redistribute down the beach. For remote locations, please take bags of debris to a refuse collection center.

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