

<http://pacific.scoop.co.nz/2009/09/huge-tsunami-sweeps-many-to-their-death-in-american-samoa-and-samoa/>

## Huge Tsunami Sweeps Many to their Death in American Samoa and Samoa

11:29 September 30, 2009

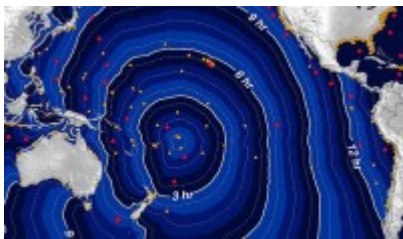
Pacific.Scoop

By Josephine Latu of *Pacific Media Watch*

A huge tsunami struck American Samoa and Samoa early day, causing many deaths in both Pacific island groups.

Reports from Sky News put the death toll in American Samoa at 14, while Radio New Zealand reports at least five confirmed deaths in Samoa so far.

The tsunami was generated by a powerful subsea quake measuring 7.9 in magnitude which struck at 6.48am about 190km southwest of American Samoa and 200km from Samoa, according to the US Geological Service.



The Samoan earthquake epicentre. Graphic: Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre

An aftershock quake measuring 5.6-magnitude happened 20 minutes later. Entire coastal villages have reportedly been “wiped out”, including the village of Manono in Samoa, a local journalist told Radio New Zealand.

Samoa resident Theresa Falele Dussey said houses and cars were swept away by the huge waves, measuring 0.7m to 1.57m above sea level, according to the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre.

Residents have fled inland amid power outages and jammed phone lines, while students reportedly ransacked a petrol station and convenience store in Pago Pago.

*Samoa Observer* editorial executive Russell Hunter said law enforcement officers had visited bus stops, urging people not to board buses but to get to higher ground.

## **TSUNAMI BULLETIN NUMBER 002**

PACIFIC TSUNAMI WARNING CENTER/NOAA/NWS  
ISSUED AT 1850Z 29 SEP 2009

THIS BULLETIN APPLIES TO AREAS WITHIN AND BORDERING THE PACIFIC OCEAN AND ADJACENT SEAS...EXCEPT ALASKA...BRITISH COLUMBIA... WASHINGTON...OREGON AND CALIFORNIA.

... A TSUNAMI WARNING AND WATCH ARE IN EFFECT ...

A TSUNAMI WARNING IS IN EFFECT FOR

AMERICAN SAMOA / SAMOA / NIUE / WALLIS-FUTUNA / TOKELAU /  
COOK ISLANDS / TONGA / TUVALU / KIRIBATI / KIRMADEC IS. / FJI /  
HOWLAND-BAKER / JARVIS IS. / NEW ZEALAND / FR. POLYNESIA /  
PALMYRA IS. / VANUATU / NAURU / MARSHALL IS. / SOLOMON IS.

A TSUNAMI WATCH IS IN EFFECT FOR

JOHNSTON IS. / NEW CALEDONIA / KOSRAE / PAPUA NEW GUINEA /  
HAWAII / POMPEI / WAKE IS. / PETCARBON / MIDWAY IS. / CHUK /  
AUSTRALIA

The alert from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre.

“As I was driving to work about an hour and a half ago the roads were full of people both on foot or whatever transport they could get making their way to open, higher ground where they would be safer and have less chance of being hit by falling debris,” he told ABC radio.

A superintendent of the National Park of American Samoa, Mike Reynolds, told a Yellowstone dispatch operator in the US that four tsunami waves, each up to 5m high, reached 0.8 km to 2.5km inland on island of Tutuila, where Pago Pago is situated.

The National Park of American Samoa’s visitor centres have been completely destroyed.

Tsunami warnings have been issued by the West Coast/Alaska Tsunami Warning Center to surrounding South Pacific nations, including a red alert for Tahiti, which is also expected to be hit with a tsunami.

New Zealand’s tsunami warning has been downgraded to an alert.

Source: Pacific Media Watch