

# Marine Debris

## Handling Guidelines



### GRAB IT

Pick up small items like bottles or foam pieces. Be safe when handling debris and always watch out for sharp edges.



### TOSS IT

Dispose of collected trash properly. Recycle what you can, and leave the rest in a nearby trash bin or receptacle.



### BE CAREFUL

It is important to be careful when approaching any type of debris, especially items you do not recognize. Large pieces of debris may contain hazardous material such as oil, which requires an expert to remove. Contact your local authorities (*i.e. lifeguards or a park ranger*) if you encounter debris of this kind.



### REPORT IT

Tsunami debris can be reported to [DisasterDebris@noaa.gov](mailto:DisasterDebris@noaa.gov) with relevant information, including its location, the date and time found and any relevant description.

Not all debris found on U.S. shorelines or at sea is from Japan, so please use your discretion when reporting items.

# NOAA

## Marine Debris Program



Marine debris is everyone's problem. It affects everything from the environment to the economy; from fishing and navigation to human health and safety; from the tiniest coral polyp to giant blue whales.

The NOAA Marine Debris Program leads national and international efforts to research, prevent, and reduce the impacts of marine debris. The program also spearheads national research efforts and works to change behavior through outreach and education initiatives.



For more information about Japan tsunami marine debris, please visit:  
[www.marinedebris.noaa.gov/tsunamidebris](http://www.marinedebris.noaa.gov/tsunamidebris)

# Japan Tsunami

## Marine Debris



**NOAA** NATIONAL OCEANIC AND  
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

# Japan Tsunami Marine Debris

## What You Should Know

### What to expect

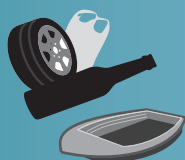
While we do not know exactly what debris is still floating at or near the ocean surface, it likely includes highly buoyant materials.

So far, confirmed debris items from the Japan tsunami include vessels, buoys, sports balls, a floating pier, and a motorcycle in a container. Other types of debris that could wash up include floating debris such as fishing nets, lumber, plastics, household items, foam pieces, and possibly chemical or oil drums.



### Tsunami debris vs. marine debris

Marine debris is an every-day problem, especially around the Pacific. Not every item found on our shorelines is from the Japan tsunami. Debris such as buoys or litter wash up on the U.S. Pacific coast all the time, making it very difficult to tell where the debris came from without unique identifying information.



### Radiation concerns

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 and Hawaii has been tested, including items known to be from the tsunami, and no radioactive contamination above normal levels was found.



## NOAA's Effort

### Data collection

NOAA is collecting at-sea observation data from aircraft, satellite, and vessels. We are also modeling the debris' movement, conducting outreach to communities, and monitoring debris accumulations.



### Coordination

NOAA and other federal agencies are also working with states and local communities to develop planning guides. These plans will include guidance for mitigating marine debris that poses a hazard to navigation, substantial threat of pollution, and adverse impact to public safety and health.



### Monitoring

Marine debris is persistent along many U.S. shorelines, so one of the few ways we will know when tsunami debris arrives is if the amount and type changes. NOAA is working with federal, state and local partners to monitor beaches and assess the types and amount of debris washing ashore.



## Beach Cleanup Guidance

### 3 Easy Steps to Keep the Sea Free of Debris

#### Volunteer

1 Help remove marine debris from beaches, rivers and inland waters by organizing your own beach cleanup with a group of friends or participating in a cleanup event with a local organization.

#### Come prepared

2 Be sure to bring gloves, drinking water, and a bucket or bag to collect debris found on the beach.

#### Clean up

3 Use caution when picking up debris. Contact the cleanup leader or appropriate authorities if you encounter sharp, large, or hazardous debris. Dispose of all items at the end of the cleanup; if items can be recycled, place them in the appropriate receptacles.

Don't forget to do your part!  
Always remember to:

**Recycle**  
**Reuse**  
**Reduce**

For more information, please visit:  
[www.marinedebris.noaa.gov](http://www.marinedebris.noaa.gov)