

## 7.7 magnitude earthquake in far Pacific creates small tsunami off Vanuatu

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Steam billows from Lake Vui in the volcano crater of Mount Manaro on the island of Ambae, part of the Vanuatu islands chain, Dec. 8, 2005. A 7.7 magnitude earthquake Friday, May 19, 2023, in the far Pacific created small tsunami waves in Vanuatu. Credit: AP Photo/Rick Rycroft

A 7.7 magnitude earthquake Friday in the far Pacific created small

tsunami waves in Vanuatu.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said waves less than half a meter (1.5 feet) were measured off Lenakel, a port town in the island nation. Smaller waves were measured elsewhere off Vanuatu and off New Caledonia.

Vanuatu's National Disaster Management Office advised people to evacuate from coastal areas to higher grounds. The office said people should listen to their radios for updates and take other precautionary measures.

New Zealand's National Emergency Management Agency said it expected [coastal areas](#) would experience strong and unusual currents, with unpredictable surges at the shoreline.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center also said small waves were possible for Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Guam and other Pacific islands.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake's epicenter was near the Loyalty Islands, southwest of Fiji, north of New Zealand and east of Australia where the Coral Sea meets the Pacific. It was 37 kilometers (23 miles) deep.

The area is part of the "Ring of Fire," an arc of seismic faults around the Pacific Ocean where most of the world's earthquakes occur.

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