

# Japan quake, tsunami provided valuable info for scientists

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*On the anniversary of the 1906 earthquake, research seismologist Walter D. Mooney, who's based in Menlo Park at the U.S. Geological Survey, talks about what scientists have learned from the recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan.*

**What have we learned about earthquakes and tsunamis from Japan's recent seismic event?** Sometimes the earthquakes are larger than anticipated based on existing data. We probably will be much more conservative in the future on estimates of earthquakes — conservative meaning we will assume earthquakes will be stronger.

**Do large earthquakes across the Pacific Ocean mean a higher chance of one occurring here in the Bay Area?** We don't have any evidence that there is significant distant triggering.

**What have we learned about tsunamis from the Japanese situation?** The earthquake was more efficient at generating tsunami waves than it was at shaking structures. We can engineer for the ground shaking caused by these larger earthquakes. What took us by surprise was the tsunami effect and how big these waves were. It brings up questions of land-use policy.