Tsunami waves are powerful and may contain dangerous debris such as trees, cars and boats.

During a tsunami…

Images taken from the Triton Hotel, Sri Lanka, during the 26th December 2004 tsunami.

Source: National Geophysical Data Centre NOAA Satellite and Information Services.

Tsunamis may be seen as a massive wall of water approaching land. There is usually more than one wave and the first is often not the largest.

After a tsunami…

Satellite images of Lhoknga, Sumatra showing the vast degradation of the land and the watershed after the 26th December, 2004 earthquake and tsunami.

Countries may suffer great economic losses from damage to buildings and infrastructure as well as population loss - a vital asset for rebuilding.

Flood waters can create serious health risks by contaminating water and food supplies.

Many people have been killed by tsunamis often resulting in psychological trauma for survivors:

Location
Indonesia, 1883
Puerto Rico/Dom. Republic, 1918
Chile, Hawaii, Japan, 1960
Papua-New Guinea, 1998
Indian Ocean, 2004
Samoa Tsunami, 2009

No. of Deaths
~ 30,000
~ 30
~ 2,000
~ 2,000
~ 230,000
~ 200

Source: Compiled by the Seismic Research Centre, UWI.