A high-tech solution for surviving a tsunami wave

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In Ocean Park, on Long Beach Peninsula in Washington state, Jeanne Johnson, with her dog, Trixie, peers out of her two-person tsunami survival pod. The sphere has a hatch with a waterproof seal, and two small windows and two air vents that also can be made watertight. Photo by: Greg Gilbert/Seattle Times/TNS

OCEAN PARK, Wash. — Jeanne Johnson lives near the ocean in Washington state. She is worried about a giant wave called a tsunami. It is caused by an earthquake deep under the ocean. Johnson thinks she knows how to stay safe.

She just bought a tsunami escape pod.

The pod is a bright orange ball. Two people can fit inside. The pod is made of aluminum. It has a watertight door and tiny windows. It will keep her safe from drowning and rubble. The pod will let rescuers know where she is. It even has its own air supply.

Johnson is the first person to buy the pod.

**Getting Family To Safety**

Julian Sharpe invented the pod. He is an engineer and started his company called Survival Capsule LLC. He came up with the idea after a tsunami in 2004. The tsunami was in the Indian Ocean and killed more than 200,000 people.
At the time, his kids were very young. He had two dogs. Sharpe wondered how he could get them to safety during a tsunami.

Then in 2011, a tsunami killed 16,000 people in Japan. Japan is a country made up of islands in the Pacific Ocean. This is when Sharpe really started working on the escape pod.

“I would use this for my family,” Sharpe said.

Chuck Wallace is in charge of emergencies in a Washington county. He does not think the escape pod will really work.

Wallace said the pod could get stuck under something. It could also begin to leak.

**It Provides Peace Of Mind**

Johnson bought her pod for $13,500. It is not very big, just 4.5-feet across. When the company makes a larger pod, she would like to buy that. Her kids are older now. If they come to visit, she wants to save them too.

She is putting emergency supplies in the capsule. She is adding water, food, warm clothing and an emergency radio.

Johnson says having the pod is giving her peace of mind.

“I can hear the ocean in my windows,” she said. “I can walk on the beach with my dog.”

Johnson lives near the Cascadia Subduction Zone. It is an earthquake zone in the Pacific Ocean. It has caused at least 40 big earthquakes and tsunamis over the past 10,000 years. The most recent one was 300 years ago.

Johnson said she doesn’t think too much about tsunamis now. She bought the escape pod to make her feel safe. “So I can sleep at night and not worry.”