

DAILY PREPAREDNESS BRIEF

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Tuesday, 24 March 2026 | Practical information for families, households, and communities

READINESS LEVEL: HEIGHTENED

Conditions are serious and could worsen. Awareness and a few practical steps are warranted. No need to panic.

The short version

A military conflict in the Middle East has closed the Strait of Hormuz — the narrow waterway that carries about one-fifth of the world's oil and a large share of global fertilizer. You can already see this in fuel prices. You will see it in grocery prices within 4–8 weeks. Shipping times for goods ordered online are increasing. Hospital computer systems were hit by a major cyberattack last week. Two browser vulnerabilities are being actively exploited right now and can be fixed in two minutes. A major nationwide protest is planned for Friday March 28.

This brief tells you exactly what is affected and what — if anything — you should do about it.

Full analyst report with sourcing, scenario analysis, and enterprise guidance: fortunefavorstheprepared.com/dtr/

Today's Impacts at a Glance

AREA	WHAT'S HAPPENING	YOUR ACTION
 Fuel & Energy	Prices elevated. Hormuz closure ongoing.	Fill tank. Keep above half.
 Groceries	Fertilizer up 30%+. Food price increases coming in 4–8 weeks.	Stock 2-week pantry buffer now.
 Shipping & Deliveries	Global shipping rerouted. Add 1–3 weeks for international orders.	Order time-sensitive items early.
 Air Travel	LaGuardia RWY 4 closed through Friday. NYC delays.	Check FlightAware. Use JFK/Newark this week.
 Cyber — Devices	Chrome/Edge zero-day being exploited now.	Update browser on every device. TODAY.
 Healthcare	Stryker (medical devices) cyberattack. Hospital disruptions possible.	Confirm appointments. Ensure 30-day med supply.
 Communications	No outage. Minor GPS degradation recovering.	No action needed for most. Ham ops: see page 3.
 Local Gov (CA/VA)	Ransomware: Foster City CA, Albemarle Co VA. Non-emergency services delayed.	911 unaffected. Call before visiting city offices.
 Weather	OH/PA/WV/VA/MD/NJ/NY: post-storm monitoring. N. NH/W. ME: snow possible overnight. Hawaii: flood threat resolving.	See Page 2 for full weather section and ham/EMCOMM conditions.
 Friday 28 March	Major nationwide protest. 1,000+ events. Prior events peaceful.	Plan alternate routes in major cities. Avoid downtown areas.

Weather & Space Weather

Active hazards for the United States — 24 March 2026. Updated each cycle from NWS official products.

REGION	HAZARD	WHAT TO DO
Ohio Valley / Mid-Atlantic (OH, PA, WV, VA, MD, NJ, NY)	Severe thunderstorm complex — POST-EVENT. Storm has passed. Monitor for residual flooding, downed trees, and road hazards through early Tuesday. No new convective threat today.	Check local roads before travel. Report downed power lines to your utility. Basement/crawlspace check if you had heavy rain overnight.
Northern New England (N. NH, W. ME)	Accumulating snow possible Monday into Tuesday as an inverted trough develops. Localized heavier bursts possible in northern NH and western ME. Roads may be slick overnight and early morning.	Check road conditions before travel Tuesday morning. Allow extra time for commutes. Keep vehicle emergency kit accessible.
Hawaii	Flash flood threat diminishing and largely resolved. Continued monitoring for any residual stream or drainage issues through Tuesday.	Avoid flood-prone areas and low-water crossings until streams fully recede.
All Other Regions	No active NWS watches, warnings, or advisories reported this cycle.	No weather action required. Monitor local NWS forecast for your area at weather.gov.

Space Weather — Geomagnetic & Radio Conditions

Space weather affects GPS accuracy, shortwave radio, and satellite communications. Most households will not notice any impact. Ham radio operators and anyone relying on GPS for precision work should read this section.

INDICATOR	STATUS
Geomagnetic Conditions	RECOVERING — A geomagnetic storm peaked at G3 (Strong) last week. As of 24 March, conditions have improved significantly. Current forecast: Kp 2–3 (unsettled-to-quiet). No active G-scale storm events. Conditions expected to continue improving through March 25–26.
GPS Accuracy	MINOR DEGRADATION at high latitudes (northern states, Alaska, Canada) from last week's storm, now improving. Standard GPS navigation is unaffected for most users. Precision GPS applications (surveying, aviation approach, precision agriculture) in northern states should verify accuracy before critical use.
Solar Activity	Solar flux at 124 sfu — elevated, which actually supports good HF radio propagation on mid-range bands. Active region AR4392 retains a complex magnetic configuration; no major flares forecast but worth monitoring. No radiation storm in progress.

For Ham Radio Operators & EMCOMM Teams

What's working: 40m (7 MHz) and 80m (3.5 MHz) are reliable for domestic NVIS circuits. Good for regional and state-level nets. 60m (5 MHz) also solid. Use these bands for any EMCOMM traffic that needs to move today.

20m (14 MHz): FAIR and recovering. Improving as the post-G3 ionosphere stabilizes. Suitable for longer domestic paths but verify the circuit before committing critical traffic. Expect further improvement by tomorrow.

Polar paths (CONUS to Alaska, CONUS to Europe): FAIR and improving from previously degraded/closed status. Usable with caution. Verify actual path performance before scheduling nets that depend on polar propagation. Full recovery expected March 25–26.

10m/12m/15m: POOR to FAIR. Post-storm ionospheric absorption still affecting higher bands. Not reliable for EMCOMM use this cycle.

Net controllers: Check NOAA Space Weather Center (swpc.noaa.gov) before scheduling critical HF nets. Real-time Kp index and band conditions are available free. PSKReporter and the Reverse Beacon Network show actual propagation in real time.

Weather Resources

Your local forecast and active warnings: weather.gov

Space weather and geomagnetic conditions: swpc.noaa.gov

Real-time HF propagation (ham operators): pskreporter.info | reversebeacon.net

Emergency alerts for your area: Sign up for Wireless Emergency Alerts on your phone — this is on by default on most devices. Verify it is enabled in your notification settings.

Supply Chain — Fuel, Food & Shipping

Fuel & Energy Costs *Elevated — Ongoing*

Why prices are up: The Strait of Hormuz — the narrow waterway between Iran and Oman — has been effectively closed to most commercial shipping since late February. About one-fifth of the world's oil moves through this passage. Major tanker operators have stopped transiting. Oil is trading around \$101 per barrel. That is lower than last week due to a temporary diplomatic pause, but the underlying disruption has not changed.

What you will pay: Gasoline prices are elevated and volatile. Natural gas prices are also up significantly, which affects home heating and utility bills. Diesel fuel — which drives trucking, farming, and freight — is especially affected, meaning higher prices ripple through almost every product you buy. Goldman Sachs projects oil could average \$110 per barrel through April if the situation holds.

What to do: Fill your vehicle's fuel tank and keep it above half going forward. If you heat with oil or propane, contact your supplier now about securing current pricing before any further escalation. If you run a business that is fuel-dependent — trucking, agriculture, food service — execute procurement at current prices and review fuel reserve capacity.

Food & Grocery Prices *Rising — Expect increases in 4–8 weeks*

Why prices are rising: Fertilizer is the hidden story. About one-third of globally traded fertilizer ships through the Strait of Hormuz, and those shipments have stopped. The price of urea — the most common fertilizer — jumped 32% in a single week at the Port of New Orleans. Farmers across the Northern Hemisphere are in the spring planting window right now, and many are facing supply shortages or sharply higher costs for the inputs they need.

What you will pay: You will not see this on the shelf this week. Farm input cost increases typically take 4–8 weeks to reach grocery store prices. The crops most affected are corn, soybeans, and wheat — and the meat, dairy, eggs, and processed foods that depend on them. This comes on top of food inflation that was already projected to run higher in 2026 than 2025.

A note on scale: The US produces about 75% of the fertilizer it uses domestically, which provides some buffer. But fertilizer is globally priced, so international price increases drive up US prices regardless. And if farmers reduce fertilizer application this season to cut costs, crop yields will fall — which means the full price impact may not show up until later this year.

What to do: Stock a 2-week supply of household staples now. Rice, pasta, canned goods, cooking oil, protein. This is not hoarding — it is buying ahead of known price increases. Prices will be higher next month than they are today.

Shipping & Online Orders *Delays expected — add 1–3 weeks for international*

What has changed: Major shipping companies have suspended services through the Middle East. Cargo ships are rerouting around the southern tip of Africa — the Cape of Good Hope — instead of through the Suez Canal. This adds 10–14 days to voyage times on the routes connecting Asia to Europe and the Americas. Over 3,200 vessels are currently affected globally.

What this means for your orders: Products sourced from or transiting through South Asia, the Middle East, or East Africa will take longer to arrive. This includes electronics, pharmaceuticals, textiles, auto parts, and a wide range of consumer goods. Amazon and large retailers with deep inventory buffers will absorb much of this delay initially — but specific product shortages are possible in certain categories if the disruption continues into summer.

- Aluminum prices rising — Gulf region supplies ~10% of global primary aluminum. Affects construction materials, automotive parts, packaging.

- Plastic packaging costs increasing as petrochemical production in the Gulf is disrupted — affects bottled goods, packaged food, consumer products.
- Air freight capacity down ~18% globally — expedited shipping is harder and more expensive to find. If you need something urgently from overseas, book early.
- If you are expecting a shipment from the Middle East, India, Pakistan, or East Africa — add 2–3 weeks to your expected arrival date.

Cyber, Communications & Local Impacts

Cyber Threats — Your Devices & Your Employer's Systems *Action required — update browser TODAY*

What is happening right now: Two things are active simultaneously. First, Iranian-linked attackers hit Stryker Corporation — a major medical device company — on March 11, wiping approximately 200,000 computer systems and stealing 50 terabytes of data. Hospital networks are a confirmed target of this campaign. Second, two browser vulnerabilities in Chrome and Edge are being actively exploited right now, meaning attackers can compromise your computer through a malicious webpage with no other action on your part.

What this means for you personally: The Stryker attack is most relevant if you work in healthcare, medical technology, or a related supply chain. The browser vulnerability affects everyone who uses Chrome or Edge — which is most people. Update your browser today. This is the single most effective action available right now and takes under two minutes.

- **Update Chrome:** Chrome update: click the three-dot menu (:) → Help → About Google Chrome. It will check and install automatically.
- **Update Edge:** Edge update: click the three-dot menu (⋮) → Help and feedback → About Microsoft Edge. Same process.
- **Work systems:** Ask your employer's IT team whether this week's critical software patches have been applied, especially if you work in healthcare, finance, or government.
- **2FA:** Enable two-factor authentication (2FA) on your email and banking accounts if you have not already. This is your most effective general-purpose account protection.
- **Healthcare:** If you have a scheduled medical procedure or appointment in the next two weeks, call ahead to confirm the facility's systems are functioning normally.

Communications & GPS *Minor impact — no action needed for most households*

Current status: There is no active internet outage or cellular service disruption in the United States. A geomagnetic storm last week caused some GPS signal degradation at high latitudes (northern states, Alaska, Canada). That storm has now passed and conditions are improving throughout today and tomorrow.

For ham radio operators and EMCOMM teams: Post-G3 recovery is underway. Polar paths are now FAIR and improving — were previously degraded/closed. The 20m band is recovering to FAIR for daytime use. 40m and 80m are reliable for domestic NVIS circuits. Avoid committing critical traffic on polar routes until conditions fully recover by March 25–26. No active G-scale storm events. Solar flux at 124 sfu supports mid-band HF.

Looking ahead — a note for preparedness planners: The current conflict has placed telecommunications infrastructure on Iran's declared target list for potential retaliation. There is no active threat to US domestic telecom this cycle. However, this is a reasonable moment to ensure your household has a backup communications plan — a battery or hand-crank radio for emergency broadcasts, a designated out-of-area contact your family can check in with, and a physical meeting point that does not depend on cell service.

Local Government Services — Ransomware *Localized to Foster City CA and Albemarle County VA*

What happened: The WorldLeaks ransomware group hit Foster City, California (state of emergency declared March 19–21) and reportedly hit Albemarle County, Virginia this week. The City of Los Angeles also reported a large data breach. In Foster City, all non-emergency public services were paused for several days while systems were recovered. LA Metro experienced system disruptions.

What was NOT affected: 911 and emergency dispatch services were confirmed unaffected in all cases. Police and fire operations continued normally throughout the incidents.

If you are in these areas: Non-emergency city services — permit applications, online payments, records requests — may still be limited or slow. Call ahead before visiting a city office. Emergency services are fully operational.

What To Do This Week

Specific, practical steps organized by urgency. None require special skills or major expense.

CATEGORY	ACTION
 Browser Update	Update Chrome or Edge on every computer and phone in your household TODAY. Menu → About → install update. Closes an actively exploited security gap. Takes 2 minutes.
 Fuel	Fill your vehicle's fuel tank and keep it above half going forward. If you heat with oil or propane, call your supplier about locking in current pricing.
 Pantry	Stock a 2-week supply of household staples: rice, pasta, canned goods, cooking oil, protein staples. Food prices will be higher in 4–6 weeks. This is buying ahead of a known cost increase, not hoarding.
 Medications	Ensure you have a 30-day supply of any prescription medications on hand. Drug supply chains are not currently disrupted, but this is good standard practice given current conditions.
 Air Travel	If you have flights through LaGuardia this week, check status on FlightAware or your airline app. JFK and Newark are less affected. If you have travel booked through Dubai, Doha, or Abu Dhabi — rebook through a European hub.
 Medical Appointments	If you have a scheduled procedure in the next two weeks, call ahead to confirm it is unaffected by any system disruptions at your facility. Particularly relevant for Midwest and Southeast healthcare networks.
 Comms Plan	Confirm your household has a backup communications plan: a designated out-of-area contact, a family meeting point, and a battery or hand-crank radio. A 5-minute conversation with your household now is worth it.
 Online Orders	If you are expecting a delivery from South Asia, the Middle East, or East Africa — or ordering from international suppliers — add 2–3 weeks to your expected delivery. Order time-sensitive items early.
 Friday 28 March	Large nationwide protest planned in all 50 states. If you are in a major city, plan alternate routes and avoid downtown areas near government buildings during midday. Events have been predominantly peaceful historically.

Signals that conditions are getting worse

You do not need to monitor news constantly. Watch for these specific signals:

- Fuel prices spike sharply again — would mean the diplomatic pause has failed and the conflict has escalated.
- Your grocery store begins limiting purchases of staple items like rice, flour, oil, or canned goods.
- Your internet, cellular service, or electricity is disrupted without a local weather explanation.
- Your hospital or doctor's office reports system outages or asks you to reschedule appointments.
- Local emergency alerts about power grid stability or infrastructure disruption from your utility company.
- Tornado, severe thunderstorm, or flash flood WARNING issued for your area by NWS — these require immediate shelter action, not just awareness.
- GPS shows unexpected large errors or your phone's location is significantly wrong — can indicate a major space weather event.

Resources for Your Household

Family Emergency Plan Workbook — step-by-step guide to documenting your household plan:

fortunefavorstheprepared.com/preparedness-book-of-knowledge-2/planning/family-emergency-plan-workbook/

Personal Preparedness Assessment — evaluate your household's readiness across 8 categories:

fortunefavorstheprepared.com/preparedness-book-of-knowledge-2/planning/personal-preparedness-assessment/

Full professional-grade Daily Threat Report — complete sourcing, analyst assessments, 72-hour scenario analysis, and enterprise action guidance:

fortunefavorstheprepared.com/dtr/

Semper Paratus, Semper Gumby.