

DAILY PREPAREDNESS BRIEF

Fortune Favors the Prepared | Household Edition

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PREPAREDNESS CONDITION 3 — ELEVATED — pay attention this week

Monday, 18 May 2026 | Trend: STABLE-DETERIORATING

TODAY'S BIG-PICTURE PICTURE — IN PLAIN LANGUAGE

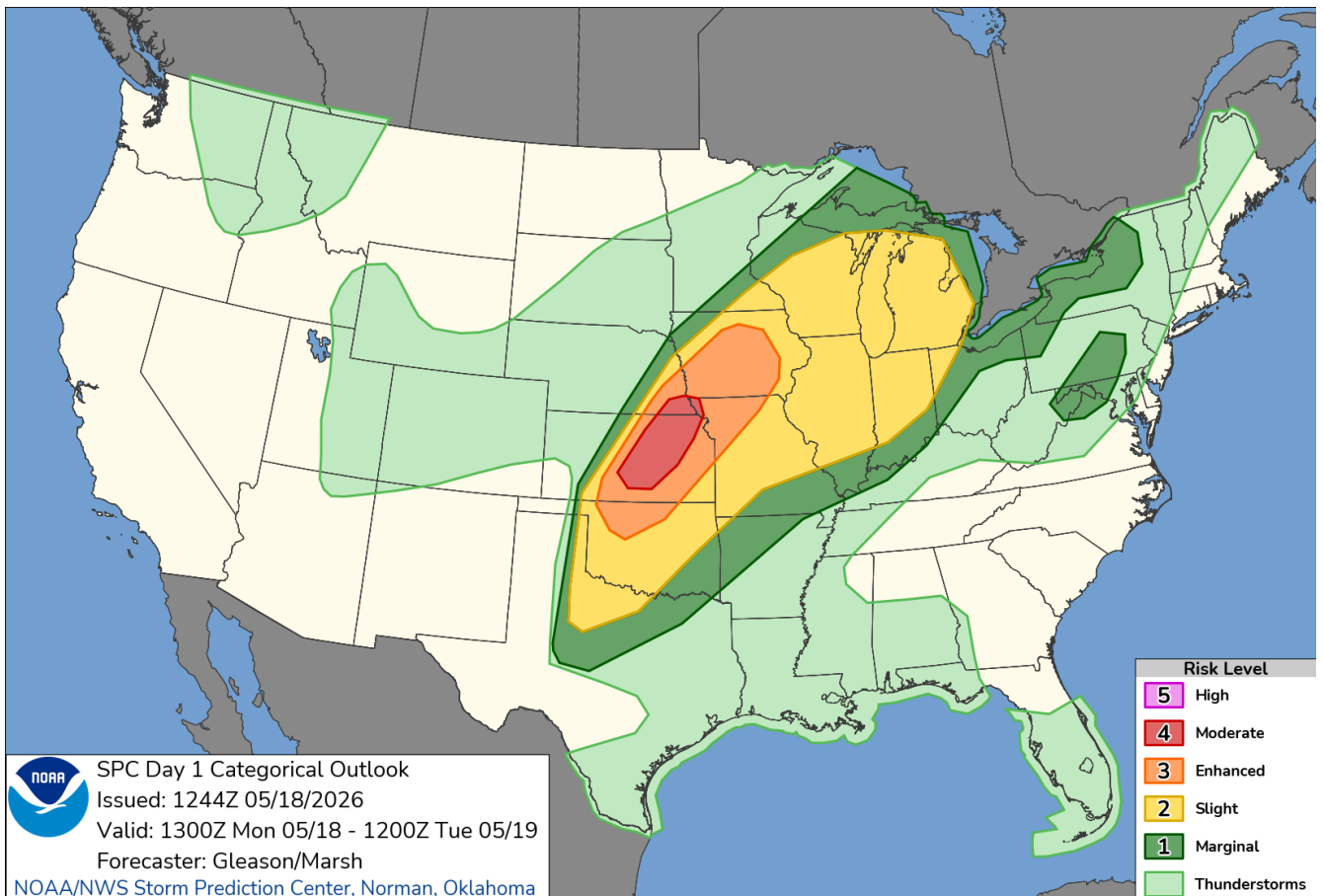
Weather: Multi-day severe storms and flash flooding hit the central US 18-22 May, peaking mid-week. Very high fire-weather risk in the Southern Plains today and Monday. Heat wave on the East Coast through Wednesday. **Late-season snow anomaly:** [NWS](#) Cheyenne Winter Storm Warning active I-80 Summit through Monday 6pm MDT with up to 24 inches forecast in Wyoming's Snowy Range, Colorado high-country Watches upgrading to Warnings. Second major May snowstorm in two weeks against a snowpack at 25-50% of historical average and ongoing exceptional drought — unusual for late May.

Communications: 33 [NOAA Weather Radio](#) transmitters are down or degraded across 14 states. Most are in Alaska. Critical gaps inside the severe-weather threat zone include Ulysses KS, Roswell NM, Carlsbad NM, Artesia NM, Hillsboro IL, Gunflint Lake MN, and Rio Grande City TX. Households in those areas should use two of three alternate alert paths this week: Wireless Emergency Alerts on your cellphone, [NWS](#) mobile app push notifications, and commercial broadcast TV or radio.

Cyber: Three new significant cyber threats this rollup: a widely-used web server software called NGINX is being actively exploited; Microsoft Exchange (the email server) has a new high-severity flaw; and Grafana suffered a code-theft incident. Most home users are not directly affected, but small-business owners running their own websites or email should check with their IT support this week.

Geopolitics: Lebanon ceasefire was extended 45 days on 15 May through approximately 29 June, but at least 657 people have been killed in Lebanon by Israeli attacks since the ceasefire began; 18 more were killed in the first day after the extension. US naval blockade of Iran continues at Day 36. Trump-Xi Beijing summit ended 15 May without a joint statement. **New this rollup:** The [New York Times](#) reported 17 May that the US and Israel are preparing for the possibility of renewed strikes against Iran as early as this coming week. **Household-level meaning:** (1) Pump prices could move up on confirmation — the bigger near-term hit to most households than the strike itself. (2) Travel plans into Middle East airspace should remain flexible. (3) Cyber-spillover effects on US critical infrastructure are likely if strikes proceed (Iranian or proxy retaliation against utilities, financial sector, healthcare). (4) Supply-chain ripple from the broader defense build-up: US munitions stockpiles are already roughly half-expended from the February-April operation, the Pentagon is asking Congress for tens of billions more in munitions funding, and any sustained renewed operation pulls capacity from other regions — not something households can act on directly, but worth knowing as context for why “defense supplemental” discussions you may see in the news this week matter.

Space weather: A minor geomagnetic storm watch is active for 18-19 May. This is below the level that affects daily life for most people. Northern-tier US states may see aurora overnight 19 May.



WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

Five concrete things to do between now and the end of the week.

1. Verify your severe-weather alerting (today or Monday)

If you live in KS, OK, TX, NE, IA, MO, AR, WI, MN, IL, or TN, the storm threat is multi-day this week. Open your phone settings and confirm Wireless Emergency Alerts are turned on. Install or update the [NWS](#) mobile app. Identify which local TV or radio station you would tune to if you needed weather information without the internet. If you live in an area with an [NWR](#) transmitter listed as out of service (Section "Weather" below), you should treat yourself as on backup alert paths this week.

2. If you have a yard or property in the Southern High Plains, fire-proof it today (TX/OK/NM/southern KS)

Extreme fire-weather conditions are forecast 18-19 May. Move grills and outdoor fires away from structures. Move flammable yard waste to the curb or to a non-burning location. Make sure your vehicle is fueled in case of evacuation. Identify two non-overlapping evacuation routes. Pack a go-bag for each person and pet.

3. Stage shelter and power-out plans for mid-week severe weather

The heaviest storms peak mid-week (Wednesday and Thursday) across central Texas, Arkansas, and the Tennessee Valley. Today is a good day to test your shelter location, charge backup batteries and phones, stage flashlights, refill drinking water, and verify that all members of the household know the plan. Households with elderly or disabled members should set up a check-in schedule.

4. If you run a small business with a website or email server, ask your IT support about NGINX and Exchange this week

The two new cyber threats this week (NGINX CVE-2026-42945 and Microsoft Exchange CVE-2026-42897) are both being exploited or are imminently exploitable. Most small-business websites run NGINX in some part of the stack. If you have your own email server (not Gmail or Microsoft 365 cloud), Exchange is a high-priority item. Ask your IT support whether your systems are patched and what the timeline is.

5. Top off your normal preparedness baseline

Pump prices remain elevated and could move up further on any Hormuz or Lebanon escalation. If you do not normally keep a full tank, this is a good week to do so. Refill any prescriptions that are due in the next two weeks. Top off household water storage to your normal target. Review your emergency contact list with a member of the household.

IF YOU DO ONE THING

VERIFY YOUR SEVERE-WEATHER ALERTING TODAY

Multi-day severe weather and flash flooding hit the central US 18-22 May, peaking mid-week. Significant [NOAA Weather Radio](#) coverage gaps inside the threat footprint mean some areas have a single point of failure on alerts. Check your phone's Wireless Emergency Alerts setting, install the [NWS](#) mobile app, and identify your backup commercial broadcast station. This is a 10-minute task that could save lives in your household.

SHORT VERSION

Quick condition summary for readers in a hurry.

Weather posture

Multi-day severe weather and flash flooding pattern opens 18 May across the central US through 22 May, peaking mid-week. Extreme fire-weather concerns in the Southern High Plains 18-19 May. Heat wave on the East Coast through Wednesday. **Late-season snow anomaly:** [NWS](#) Cheyenne Winter Storm Warning active I-80 Summit through Monday 6pm MDT with up to 24 inches in the Snowy Range; Colorado high-country Watches upgrading to Warnings, peak Mon night through Tue morning across the I-70 corridor (Eisenhower Tunnel, Loveland Pass, Vail Pass). Second major May snowstorm in two weeks against a snowpack at 25-50% of historical average. ≥10 county emergency-operations-center activations are expected before the threat window closes.

Communications posture

33 [NOAA Weather Radio](#) transmitters down or degraded across 14 states. Most are in Alaska (17 sites). Seven critical CONUS gaps sit inside the severe-weather threat zone: Ulysses KS (Dodge City CWA, inside dry-microburst zone), Roswell NM, Carlsbad NM, Artesia NM (all three inside the extreme fire-weather zone), Hillsboro IL (St. Louis CWA, eastern Day 2 storm threat), Gunflint Lake MN (Duluth CWA, Upper Midwest Day 2 threat), and Rio Grande City TX (Brownsville/RGV CWA, Day 4-5 heavy rain corridor edge).

Cyber posture

Three new high-severity items this rollup. NGINX web-server software CVE-2026-42945 is being actively exploited. Microsoft Exchange CVE-2026-42897 was added to the [CISA](#) Known Exploited Vulnerabilities catalog 15 May with federal compliance due 29 May. Grafana disclosed a GitHub-token theft and codebase download 17 May. [Cisco](#) SD-WAN federal compliance deadline passed 17 May with active exploitation continuing.

Geopolitical posture

Lebanon ceasefire was extended 45 days on 15 May through about 29 June; 657 Lebanese have been killed by Israeli attacks since the CF began, with 18 more killed 16-17 May after the extension; one IDF soldier KIA Saturday 16 May (20th since invasion). US naval blockade of Iran continues at Day 36. Trump's Beijing summit ended 15 May without a joint statement; trade-truce extended, Iran commitment vague, Boeing 200-aircraft claim unverified. **Significant new development:** [NYT](#) reports 17 May that US and Israel are conducting intensive preparations for renewed strikes against Iran as early as next week — the largest US-Israeli buildup since the Iran-side ceasefire. Pentagon examining renewal of the halted operation. Putin to Beijing 19-20 May for two-day visit with Xi; joint declaration planned coinciding with the 25th anniversary of the 2001 Sino-Russian Treaty of Friendship.

Space weather posture

Minor geomagnetic storm (G1) watch is active for 18-19 May from a glancing-blow coronal mass ejection that left the sun on 16 May. Greatest expected geomagnetic activity in the 03-06 UTC 19-May window. No

significant impact to daily life for most people. Northern-tier US may see aurora overnight 19 May. Step down from Friday's G2 watch, which closed without verification.

IMPACTS TABLE

What is happening, who is affected, and what to do about it.

| THREAT | WHO IS AFFECTED | WHAT TO DO |
|---|---|---|
| Multi-day severe weather 18-22 May | KS, OK, TX, NE, IA, MO, AR, WI, MN, IL, TN | Stage shelter location; charge batteries; verify alerting; pre-position power-out plans |
| Extreme fire weather 18-19 May | TX, OK, NM, southern KS panhandle | Fuel vehicle; identify two evacuation routes; pack go-bag; move flammables from structures |
| East Coast heat wave through Wed | MD, DE, NJ, NY, CT, RI, MA, NH, VT, ME, PA, VA, WV | Hydrate; reduce outdoor work in afternoon; check on elderly neighbors; pre-set thermostats |
| Heavy wet snow Sun night-Mon | WY, CO Front Range, Wasatch (UT) | Treat as winter conditions; pre-position vehicle gear; check power posture |
| NWR transmitter coverage gaps | KS Ulysses, NM Roswell/Carlsbad/Artesia, IL Hillsboro, MN Gunflint Lake, TX Rio Grande City | Use two-of-three non-NWR paths: WEA on phone + NWS mobile app + commercial TV/radio |
| NGINX cyber threat (small business) | Small businesses with own website infrastructure | Ask IT support whether NGINX is patched against CVE-2026-42945 this week |
| Microsoft Exchange threat | Organizations with on-premises Exchange (not Gmail or M365) | Ask IT support whether Exchange EEMS mitigation is enabled; FCEB due 29 May |
| Pump-price exposure | All households | Top off fuel this week; budget for elevated prices through Q2 2026 |
| Andes hantavirus (US-side surveillance) | Currently single index case in UNMC biocontainment | No action required for general public; UNMC isolation posture verified |

WHY THE CONDITIONS ARE WHERE THEY ARE

Plain-language explanation of the two condition levels on the masthead and what would shift them this week.

Preparedness Condition 3 — ELEVATED

What it means: Pay attention this week. Make sure your normal preparedness baseline is in place — do not let routine items slide. This is not a panic level. It is the level where small gaps in your plan turn into real problems if more than one thing goes wrong at once.

Why we are at ELEVATED this cycle: Four things are happening at the same time, each carrying real household-level decision pressure inside the next 72 hours: **(1)** multi-day severe storms and flash flooding hit the central US 18-22 May, with [NOAA Weather Radio](#) coverage gaps inside the threat area; **(2)** three new cyber threats affecting widely-used software (NGINX web server, Microsoft Exchange email, Grafana) plus a federal cybersecurity deadline that just passed for [Cisco](#) SD-WAN; **(3)** US and Israel are reportedly preparing for renewed strikes against Iran as early as this coming week, which would push pump prices up and elevate cyber-spillover risk against US infrastructure; **(4)** a late-season heavy-snow event in Wyoming

and Colorado mountain corridors against an ongoing exceptional drought — unusual timing that compounds travel and water-supply concerns.

What would change the level: PREP-CON moves up to 2 SIGNIFICANT if a renewed Iran-strike order is observed or if the Lebanon ceasefire formally collapses. PREP-CON moves down to 4 GUARDED only if the cyber threats, severe-weather window, and Iran-preparation window all close benignly within seven days.

What you can do today: Top off fuel; refill prescriptions due in the next two weeks; verify Wireless Emergency Alerts is enabled on your phone; identify your backup commercial-broadcast station; review your emergency contact list with one other person in your household.

Communications Condition 4 — PARTIALLY DEGRADED (CONUS)

What it means: Some [NOAA Weather Radio](#) transmitters across the country are not working normally. For households inside an affected coverage area during severe weather, the alert paths you would normally rely on are reduced.

Why we are at PARTIALLY DEGRADED this cycle: 33 [NOAA Weather Radio](#) transmitters are affected across 14 states (14 fully out of service, 19 degraded). Most of those are in Alaska — 17 transmitters in a cluster covering Sand Point, Juneau, Kodiak, Fairbanks, and Anchorage forecast offices — which is significant for Alaska but sits outside this week's severe-weather corridor in the lower 48. The seven gaps that matter most this cycle are inside the active severe-weather threat area: **Ulysses, Kansas** (Dodge City forecast office, inside the southwest Kansas dry-microburst zone); **Roswell, Carlsbad, and Artesia, New Mexico** (Albuquerque and Midland/Odessa forecast offices, all three inside the extreme fire-weather corridor today and Monday); **Hillsboro, Illinois** (St. Louis forecast office, on the eastern flank of the Tuesday flash-flood threat); **Gunflint Lake, Minnesota** (Duluth forecast office, inside the Tuesday Upper Midwest storm corridor); and **Rio Grande City, Texas** (Brownsville forecast office, on the southern edge of the Wednesday-Thursday heavy-rain corridor).

What this means for you: If you live in or near any of those seven areas, do not rely on your [NOAA Weather Radio](#) alone this week. Use at least two of these three other alert paths: Wireless Emergency Alerts on your cellphone (check Settings to confirm this is on); the [NWS mobile app](#) with push notifications enabled; and a commercial broadcast TV or radio station you have already identified. Outside the seven gap areas, your normal alerting paths are intact.

What would change the level: COMCON would move up to 5 SIGNIFICANTLY DEGRADED if any of the seven critical-gap areas also took on a cellular-tower or commercial-broadcast outage in the same county during the severe-weather window — that would create a triple failure on alerting for that population. COMCON would move down to 3 NOMINAL-DEGRADED only when the severe-weather threat clears AND at least four of the seven critical-gap transmitters return to service.

WEATHER — REGION DETAIL

Threat areas in plain language plus [NOAA Weather Radio](#) coverage status.

Severe-weather corridor 18-22 May

Today (Monday): **MODERATE storm risk** central and northeastern Kansas into far southeast Nebraska — strong-to-intense tornadoes and very large (2-4+ inch) hail possible. Enhanced/Slight risk surrounds in Iowa, NW Missouri, southern Plains. Tuesday: stronger storms shift Plains → lower Mississippi Valley with localized 3-5 inch rainfall. Wednesday-Thursday: multiple storm complexes converge on central Texas, with potential heavier rain stretching eastward into Arkansas and the Tennessee Valley. Friday: residual severe risk fades but flash-flood risk remains in areas already saturated.

Extreme fire-weather posture 18-19 May

Texas Panhandle, Oklahoma Panhandle, New Mexico, and southern Kansas face Extreme fire-weather conditions today and Monday. Humidity below 15 percent, sustained winds 30-40 mph, and very dry vegetation create high probability of rapid fire spread. Red Flag Warnings are likely. If you live in this area, treat today as an evacuation-readiness day.

[NOAA Weather Radio \(NWR\) transmitter status](#) — 18 May snapshot

33 transmitters across 14 states are affected this cycle (14 OUT OF SERVICE plus 19 DEGRADED). The Alaska cluster (17 sites; 1 OOS at Sand Point plus 16 DEG across Juneau, Kodiak, Fairbanks, and

Anchorage forecast offices) dominates the count but sits outside the CONUS severe-weather corridor. Seven CONUS gaps overlap the threat zone:

- **KS Ulysses WXN-81 (OOS):** Dodge City CWA, inside SW Kansas dry-microburst zone for the Day 1 threat.
- **NM Roswell WWG-36 (OOS):** Albuquerque CWA, inside Extreme fire-weather zone.
- **NM Carlsbad WWF-37 (OOS):** Midland/Odessa CWA, inside Extreme fire-weather zone.
- **NM Artesia WXN-24 (OOS):** Midland/Odessa CWA, inside Extreme fire-weather zone.
- **IL Hillsboro KXI-79 (OOS):** St. Louis CWA, on the eastern flank of the Day 2 storm threat.
- **MN Gunflint Lake KXI-45 (OOS):** Duluth CWA, inside the Day 2 Upper Midwest threat.
- **TX Rio Grande City WNG-601 (OOS):** Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley CWA, on the southern edge of the Day 4-5 heavy-rain corridor.

What to do if you are in a coverage-gap area

Use TWO of these THREE backup alert paths through the threat window: (1) Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) on your cellphone (check Settings to confirm this is on), (2) [NWS](#) mobile app push notifications, (3) Commercial broadcast TV or radio. The full DTR Section 7 Weather has the complete [NWR](#) outage table including all 33 sites.

SPACE WEATHER

G1 (Minor) geomagnetic storm watch 18-19 May

A glancing-blow coronal mass ejection from a 16-May M-class solar event arrives 18-19 May. The G1 watch is the lowest level on the 5-step scale. Greatest expected impact is in the 03-06 UTC 19-May window (overnight US Eastern). HF radio (used by ham operators and some emergency services) is mostly favorable; brief fades possible at higher latitudes during peak. No expected impact to GPS at normal household precision. No expected impact to electric grid at this level.

Aurora visibility

Aurora visible at higher latitudes overnight 19 May. Possible visibility into the northern-tier US states (MT, ND, MN, WI, MI, NY, VT, NH, ME) if local skies are clear. The G1 watch was stepped down from a G2 watch issued 15 May that closed without verification.

What this means for households

Nothing operationally significant for most people. If you are a ham radio operator running emergency-comms drills overnight 19 May UTC, expect possible brief HF fades and have an alternate-band plan.

SUPPLY CHAIN

Foxconn North America cyberattack

Foxconn (the world's largest contract electronics manufacturer; makes products for Apple, Dell, HP, others) confirmed a major cyberattack on its North American operations. Scope is not yet public. Standard post-confirmation timeline: 96-hour internal containment, supplier notifications 5-7 days, SEC disclosure within 4 business days if material. Watch for supplier and customer impact notices this week (Wed-Thu).

Pump prices and energy

[AAA](#) national average tracking weekend levels. Brent and WTI crude trading near recent ranges entering Monday open. Trump-Xi summit absorbed as neutral by markets. Primary risk to pump prices remains any Lebanon ceasefire collapse or Hormuz escalation. Households should budget for elevated fuel prices through Q2 2026 and consider topping off this week.

Agricultural commodities

[USDA](#) WASDE-671 (released 12 May): 2026/27 U.S. wheat production projected at 1.561 billion bushels (-424 mb year-over-year, all-wheat yield 47.5 bu/ac). Corn 16.0 bb (-6%); soybeans 4.435 bb (+173 mb).

Next [WASDE](#) release 11 June. Multi-day severe and flash-flood pattern affects the grain belt 18-22 May. Cattle in the Eastern US face heat-stress through Wednesday. No immediate grocery-price impact expected, but watch for localized commodity reactions if a Texas Panhandle fire activates with stocker-cattle inventory at risk.

CYBER FOR HOUSEHOLDS AND SMALL BUSINESS

What this week's cyber news means for normal users and small business owners.

What is NEW this week

- **NGINX web server is being actively exploited (CVE-2026-42945, CVSS 9.2).** NGINX is the web-server software used behind very many websites worldwide. If you run a website yourself or with a contractor, ask them whether NGINX is patched this week.
- **Microsoft Exchange CVE-2026-42897 added to [CISA KEY](#) 15 May.** Microsoft tagged it "Exploitation Detected." Federal compliance due 29 May. If your organization runs on-premises Exchange (not Microsoft 365 cloud email), ask IT to enable EEMS (Exchange Emergency Mitigation Service) this week.
- **Grafana GitHub token compromise 17 May.** Grafana states no customer data was accessed. Customers using Grafana should monitor advisories closely through Q3 2026; derivative vulnerability disclosures are likely.

What is still IMPORTANT from prior weeks

- **Cisco SD-WAN federal deadline passed 17 May with exploitation continuing.** Organizations using [Cisco](#) SD-WAN Controller or Manager should re-verify patch status and re-baseline detections for XenShell and Godzilla web shells.
- **Linux Copy Fail (CVE-2026-31431) chain-pivot risk is elevated** because unpatched NGINX + unpatched Linux gives attackers a root primitive on the host. Patch the Linux fleet alongside NGINX this week.
- **PAN-OS Captive Portal RCE (CVE-2026-0300) federal deadline 21 May (three days from today).** Organizations using Palo Alto firewalls should confirm patch deployment status this week; Wave 2 patch arrives around 28 May (post-deadline).

What to do this week if you are a small business

1. Ask your IT support: are we patched against NGINX CVE-2026-42945 and Microsoft Exchange CVE-2026-42897?
2. If you use Grafana, monitor advisories closely for the next 6 months.
3. Verify your backup strategy works: pick a non-critical file, restore it from backup to a temporary location, confirm contents are intact.

SIGNALS THAT CONDITIONS ARE GETTING WORSE

Watch for these in the news this week. If you see them, raise your readiness one notch.

- A second strike on a commercial ship in the Persian Gulf or Strait of Hormuz.
- Iran formally rejects the U.S. 14-point framework (currently in stalemate).
- Israel strikes Beirut neighborhoods again (Dahieh district is the bellwether).
- The Storm Prediction Center upgrades Sunday's outlook to MODERATE or HIGH risk.
- A second case of Andes hantavirus emerges outside the federal quarantine facility.
- A second U.S. cyber emergency directive issued in the same week.

RESOURCES

Sources for this brief + tools you can use at home

Weather: [NOAA Storm Prediction Center](#) | [NWS](#) | [NOAA Weather Radio outage status](#)

Emergency alerts: [FEMA App](#) (download to phone) | Wireless Emergency Alerts (turn ON in phone settings).

Space weather: [SWPC 3-Day Forecast](#) | [Geophysical Institute Aurora Forecast](#)

Gas prices: [AAA Daily National Average](#)

Food + Agriculture: [USDA WASDE Report](#)

Public health: [CDC Health Alert Network](#) | [WHO Disease Outbreak News](#)

Cybersecurity: [CISA Known Exploited Vulnerabilities catalog](#)

Preparedness reference: [Fortune Favors the Prepared](#) / [Preparedness Book of Knowledge](#)

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