

DAILY PREPAREDNESS BRIEF

Household Edition -- Thursday, 16 July 2026
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⚠ PREPAREDNESS CONDITION 3 -- BROWN SKY -- INCIDENT PROBABLE ⚠

Thursday, 16 July 2026 | PREP-CON 3 BROWN SKY | WX-CON 3 GUARDED (down from 4) | SWX-CON 2 WATCH (yesterday's solar alert expired, nothing new confirmed) | COMCON 4 INCREASED VIGILANCE | NIFC NPL 4 of 5 (confirmed 16-JUL, 48 large fires uncontained nationwide) | Venezuela EQ Day 23 -- 4,829 dead | Ebola PHEIC Day 60 -- DRC 2,011 confirmed (754 deaths)

THE ONE THING TODAY

US REIMPOSES IRAN SHIPPING BLOCKADE; FIRST CONFIRMED INJURY IN THIS ROUND OF STRIKES

The US military restarted its blockade of Iranian shipping today, and President Trump says the US will keep the Strait of Hormuz open; the proposed cargo fee was dropped in favor of a plan for Gulf countries to make trade and investment deals with the US instead. Two tankers were hit by projectiles in the Strait yesterday and one crew member was killed -- the first confirmed death tied to this round of strikes (not a US citizen). There's no direct safety action for US households, but gas prices may start moving again -- the national average moved to \$3.94/gallon, up from \$3.89 -- gas prices are trending up again. Separately, the Babylon Fire (UT) remains the nation's largest wildfire at just over 106,000 acres and is now 54% contained, up from 50% a couple days ago -- meaningfully better, though evacuation status can still change quickly.

If you're near either Utah wildfire, know your evacuation zone status today -- don't assume yesterday's status still applies, even with containment improving.

WHAT TO WATCH -- THIS 24 HOURS



VENEZUELA EARTHQUAKE -- Day 23 Recovery/Reconstruction

Day 23: the confirmed toll has risen further to 4,829 dead, up from 4,490 -- backlogged recovery/identification work, not a new event. The injured count (16,740) still hasn't been updated by Venezuelan officials in nearly two weeks now, which is itself a concerning sign about the pace of their own reporting. Phone and internet remain disrupted in some areas -- use Signal/WhatsApp/Zello if available, or satellite. Red Cross Disaster Welfare Inquiry: redcross.org. Do not travel to Venezuela.



WILDFIRE -- BABYLON FIRE NOW 54% CONTAINED

See today's lead story above -- Babylon Fire (UT) remains the nation's largest at roughly 106,600 acres, now 54% contained (up from 50%). Cottonwood (UT) is holding at 97,458 acres/77% contained -- confirmed fresh this cycle via InciWeb. Evacuation status is improving but can still change quickly -- if you're in an affected area, don't wait for a further order if conditions worsen. If you're anywhere in fire country this summer, know your evacuation route before you need it.



SEVERE WEATHER -- MARGINAL RISK SOUTHEAST/MONTANA TODAY, ENHANCED RISK NEW ENGLAND TOMORROW

The Storm Prediction Center has a Marginal risk out today for the Southeast (Florida into eastern Georgia/South Carolina) and Montana -- mainly isolated damaging wind gusts, nothing widespread. Tomorrow is a bigger concern: an Enhanced risk is forecast for northern New England, with strong-to-severe storms and a real tornado threat, including the possibility of a strong tornado, as a sharp weather system moves through. If you're in New England, keep an eye on the forecast tonight and tomorrow and know where you'd shelter.



EBOLA PHEIC -- DAY 59 / US CASE MOVED TO GERMANY FOR TREATMENT

DRC now has 2,011 confirmed cases (754 deaths) -- the fatality rate is holding around 36%, and case counts jumped noticeably since the last update. New this cycle: we now know where the American aid worker who tested positive is being treated -- a

hospital in Frankfurt, Germany, not the US. That's good news for anyone worried about domestic spread; it was never a US-based exposure risk. The Bundibugyo strain still has no approved vaccine or treatment. US risk for the general public remains very low. No action required for most US households. If you recently returned from DRC or Uganda and develop fever, muscle pain, or bleeding, contact a doctor immediately and mention your travel.



CYBER -- NEW CRITICAL VULNERABILITY / HOME NETWORK CHECK

For home users: SimpleHelp and Microsoft SharePoint Server are now overdue for a fourth cycle in a row, with confirmed ransomware and infostealer exploitation already underway. The two smaller tools added last week -- iCagenda and Balbooa Forms, both used on some websites -- are now overdue too. We checked for new critical vulnerabilities this cycle and found another one -- affecting SonicWall and Microsoft ADFS products this time. If you or your employer use any of the tools above, patch now. No mass-exploitation events targeting individual home users were reported this cycle.



WORLD CUP -- SEMIFINALS THIS WEEK

Spain beat France 2-0 yesterday in Dallas to reach Sunday's final. Argentina beat England 2-1 (15-JUL, Atlanta) to reach the final -- Spain vs. Argentina is now set for Sunday (19-JUL, MetLife Stadium, NJ); France plays England for third place Saturday (18-JUL, Miami) -- check for road/transit impacts before you head out or make plans. There were fan-zone security incidents at San Pedro Square earlier in the tournament (a homicide and separate stabbings), though still no incidents at any stadium venue. Confirm match times before heading out. Stay hydrated and know where shade and medical stations are, regardless of the weather.

WHAT TODAY'S IRAN NEWS MEANS FOR YOU

The US military restarted its blockade of Iranian shipping today. President Trump says the US will keep the Strait of Hormuz open; the proposed cargo fee was dropped in favor of a Gulf trade-and-investment-deal plan instead. A tanker strike yesterday killed one crew member -- the first confirmed death in this round of the conflict. For most US households, there is nothing to do differently today -- but here is what to expect:

Gas prices: the national average moved to \$3.89/gallon this morning, a modest increase. Oil prices pulled back slightly overnight after the prior day's jump, though they remain near a 3-week high -- another pump-price move is possible if things don't calm down -- consider filling up soon rather than waiting.

Shipping/delivery delays: shipping through the Strait of Hormuz remains well below normal levels. If you rely on imported goods for a business, or are expecting an overseas shipment, build in extra time.

No safety action needed in the US: there is no credible threat to US soil tied to this at this time. This is a wallet/planning item, not a safety item, for the vast majority of households.

PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST -- TODAY'S PRIORITIES

WILDFIRE (if you're in fire country)

- ☐ Check local fire status -- has containment improved or has the fire grown overnight?
- ☐ If Level 3 Go order is in your area: leave now, not later
- ☐ Go bag status: medications, documents, charger, water in the vehicle
- ☐ Livestock and pets: have a transport plan before the order arrives
- ☐ Monitor: NIFC.gov, local county emergency management, NWS fire weather alerts
- ☐ Sign up for county emergency alerts at your county EM website if not already done.

HEAT SAFETY (general reminders -- the recent multi-day heat wave has ended)

- ☐ Identify an air-conditioned space near you today (library, mall, cooling center) before you need it
- ☐ Check on elderly neighbors, young children, and anyone without reliable AC
- ☐ Never leave kids or pets in a parked car, even briefly -- vehicle interiors can exceed 120F in minutes
- ☐ Reschedule strenuous outdoor activity to early morning or evening; watch for signs of heat exhaustion

GENERAL MONDAY MORNING PREPAREDNESS

- ☐ Check NWR (weather radio) -- 21 transmitters still OOS/DEGRADED nationwide, down from 23 (list has changed since yesterday) -- know your backup alert method
- ☐ SimpleHelp/SharePoint/iCagenda/Balboa Forms users: federal security deadlines have all now passed -- patch now if you or your employer run any of these
- ☐ If you have family or colleagues in Venezuela: internet and phone service remain disrupted -- use satellite apps or the Red Cross Disaster Welfare Inquiry service (redcross.org) if you haven't already
- ☐ Family communications plan: do you have a meeting place and out-of-area contact if phones are down?

CONDITION SUMMARY

PREP-CON 3 BROWN SKY	Incident Probable -- multiple simultaneous active situations (US-Iran shipping blockade and first confirmed strike injury, national wildfire posture, Venezuela EQ recovery, Ebola PHEIC). None of these require action from most US households today, but today is not a normal day. Review your emergency contacts, know your local alerts, and make sure your go bag is accessible.
WX-CON 3 GUARDED -- Severe Weather	WX-CON 3 GUARDED, stepped down from 4. Today's risk is Marginal (a step down from yesterday's verified Enhanced) -- still worth watching in the Mid-Atlantic, northern New England, and parts of Montana/Wyoming/Arizona, but a lower-end threat than yesterday, including possibly a strong tornado. A smaller Slight risk is out for Montana. Wildfire conditions are tracked separately -- see today's lead story for Babylon/Cottonwood status.
SWX-CON 2 WATCH -- Routine Geomagnetic Alert	Today's space-weather feed shows a routine, low-level geomagnetic alert -- confirmed stable across the full overnight period, not just a data gap. Practical household impact remains low for essentially everyone outside the far northern US.
COMCON 4 Increased Vigilance	23 NWR weather radio transmitters are OOS or degraded nationwide -- the specific list has changed since yesterday, so don't assume your area's status is the same. Still have a backup alert method (phone alerts, local TV, or a battery-powered radio). If you manage enterprise networking equipment, several vulnerabilities remain unpatched -- see the cyber item above.

RESOURCES

Emergency preparedness planning: fortunefavorstheprepared.com
Daily Threat Report (practitioner): fortunefavorstheprepared.com/dtr
NIFC National Fire News: nifc.gov/fire-information/nfn
NOAA Space Weather Center: swpc.noaa.gov
SPC Severe Weather Outlooks: spc.noaa.gov
Venezuela earthquake -- USGS: earthquake.usgs.gov
CDC Ebola updates: cdc.gov/vhf/ebola
American Red Cross disaster welfare: redcross.org

END

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