

DAILY PREPAREDNESS BRIEF

Household Edition -- Monday, 31 August 2026
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⚠ PREPAREDNESS CONDITION 3 -- BROWN SKY -- INCIDENT PROBABLE ⚠

Monday, 31 August 2026 | PREP-CON 3 BROWN SKY, HELD | WX-CON 3 GUARDED | SWX-CON: a three-day space weather disturbance held below storm level throughout and has now eased, effects were confined to far northern latitudes the whole time

THE ONE THING TODAY

A NEW GULF STORM SYSTEM IS HEADED FOR A BONE-DRY TEXAS -- AND THE FIRE WARNINGS HAVE SHIFTED NORTH

A new storm system is developing in the Gulf of Mexico and heading toward the Texas coast, with a real chance it becomes a tropical depression or storm in the next couple of days. That would ordinarily be unremarkable, but it is arriving into a state that has gone 46 days without measurable rain around Dallas-Fort Worth, so the ground cannot absorb a sudden downpour the way it normally would - meaning a heavier-than-usual flash-flood risk for the Houston and Galveston area from Tuesday. Separately, heat is EXPANDING again rather than fading: it is spreading into the central US, the Ohio Valley and the Mid-Atlantic behind the heat wave that has been sitting over the Southwest.

TODAY'S RAIN RISK IS THE DESERT SOUTHWEST AND, LATER THIS WEEK, TEXAS. *The Weather Prediction Center has a MODERATE risk of excessive rainfall over Utah and the Great Basin today - the higher of the two rain-risk categories - with a SLIGHT risk building over the western Gulf Coast Tuesday and Wednesday as that new Gulf system approaches. Severe storms are expected to shift toward the eastern Great Lakes, southern New England and the Mid-Atlantic through Tuesday. The Carolina coast heavy-rain risk we told you about Friday has passed; that forecast's own valid window ended Saturday morning, so do not treat it as still in force.*

AIR QUALITY: Houston carries an ozone advisory through this evening -- move outdoor activity to the morning if you're there. The broader thirteen-alert national picture from Friday (ozone in Denver, Dallas-Fort Worth, Oklahoma City, Memphis, Phoenix; wildfire smoke in Kittitas County WA, Crook/Jefferson/Wasco Counties OR, and southwest Elko County NV) is CARRIED, not re-checked today - the same advice applies if any of those are still in force where you live: ozone is worst in the afternoon, so move exercise and outdoor work to early morning; wildfire smoke can sit all day, so close the house up, run a filter in one room, and check airnow.gov before going out.



WILDFIRE -- FIRE ACTIVITY HAS SHIFTED NORTH TO IDAHO, WASHINGTON AND OREGON

The national wildfire preparedness level is carried at 5 out of 5, the highest there is, and has been since 18 July - though we have not independently re-confirmed that today. Good news on the count itself: the fire center's numbers are clean again. Its Sunday update, checked twice to make sure it wasn't still shifting, shows 98 large fires burning, up from 92 three days ago, with only 2 newly brought under control against 8 new large fires that day. Idaho now has the most active fires of any state (15), followed by Washington (14), Oregon (11) and Montana (11). That is a real shift from Friday, when the fire-danger WARNINGS (a different thing from where fires are actually burning) were concentrated in California - we have not been able to re-check today whether those warnings have followed the fires north, so if you are in the California coast ranges, do not assume Friday's warning has lifted, and if you are in Idaho, Washington, Oregon or Montana, do not assume you are in the clear just because we haven't named a warning there specifically.



SEVERE WEATHER -- SEE THE TOP OF THIS BRIEF

Today's rain and storm risk is the main story and is covered above. The Alaska weather details and the Illinois/Indiana/Pennsylvania river flood warnings we gave you Friday are CARRIED, not re-checked today - if you are in any of those areas, treat Friday's guidance as still worth following until we can confirm it either way, rather than assuming it has cleared.



WEATHER RADIO -- 17 DOWN NATIONWIDE, ACROSS 11 STATES

17 NOAA Weather Radio transmitters are out of service or degraded nationwide as of 31 August 01:25 GMT - 14 out of service and 3 degraded, across 11 states. Alaska has three affected and New Mexico three. Your weather radio is the alerting method that keeps working when the power and the mobile network do not, so if you are in one of the areas below, do not rely on it alone today. Make sure Wireless Emergency Alerts are switched on in your phone settings, and keep a second way to hear a warning - a local broadcast station, a scanner, or a neighbour who will call you.

STATION	FREQUENCY	STATUS
Kotzebue, AK	162.550 MHz	Degraded
Mt. Robert Barron, AK	162.450 MHz	Out of service
Saint Paul Island, AK	162.525 MHz	Out of service
Baxley, GA	162.525 MHz	Out of service
Summerville, GA	162.450 MHz	Out of service
Hillsboro, IL	162.425 MHz	Out of service
Angola, IN	162.425 MHz	Degraded
Muncie, IN	162.425 MHz	Out of service
Ulysses, KS	162.450 MHz	Out of service
Petoskey, MI	162.475 MHz	Out of service
Gunflint Lake, MN	162.525 MHz	Out of service
Artesia, NM	162.425 MHz	Out of service
Carlsbad, NM	162.475 MHz	Out of service
Roswell, NM	162.450 MHz	Out of service
Owyhee, NV	162.450 MHz	Degraded
Albany, NY	162.550 MHz	Out of service
Shelbyville, TN	162.475 MHz	Out of service



EXTREME HEAT -- SPREADING BACK OUT INTO THE CENTRAL US AND MID-ATLANTIC

The retreat we told you about Friday has reversed. Heat is expanding again into the central US, the Ohio Valley and the Mid-Atlantic, behind the heat wave that never left the Southwest. If you are in any of those areas, treat it as a multi-day event: check on the same elderly or unwell people every day, drink before you feel thirsty, and never leave a child or a pet in a parked car. We don't have today's exact warning count and county list - our Friday figures are no longer reliable as a "who's affected" list given this reversal, so check your local NWS office directly if you're unsure whether you're covered.



EBOLA -- DAY 107, FIGURES UNCHANGED SINCE FRIDAY

The reversal we told you about Friday is still the latest word: the health tracker we watch hasn't posted an update since. The Congolese count stands at 5,794 confirmed cases and 2,786 deaths on data to 26 August, with 843 people in isolation in hospital -- unchanged since Friday. New cases had climbed back up to 81, from 57 in the report before that, and new deaths to 42, up from 29. The share of identified contacts being followed up had also fallen, to 82.3 percent from 84.6. Cases rising while tracing slips is the combination health workers least want to see, and that remains the picture until we see fresh numbers. Today, Monday, is the next scheduled update and it had not posted as of this morning - we'll flag it as soon as it does. UGANDA REMAINS OFFICIALLY FINISHED: the World Health Organization declared its outbreak over on 26 August after 42 days with no new case. There is still no Ebola risk to US households and no case has been recorded in the United States.



TROPICAL -- DOLLY FIZZLED, BUT WATCH THE GULF THIS WEEK

Tropical Storm Dolly, which we were watching Friday, fell apart into an open patch of disturbed weather over the weekend and never got its act back together - so the Leeward Islands watch we told you was a real possibility never happened, and now the storm itself is gone. A new, better-organized system has taken shape behind it in the Gulf of Mexico, and forecasters give it a good chance of becoming our next tropical depression or storm, tracking toward the Texas coast. That's the one worth watching this week, especially given how dry that part of Texas already is - see THE ONE THING TODAY above. Karina and Lowell, the two storms we told you about in the eastern Pacific, are carried from Friday and have not been re-checked today; as of Friday neither posed any threat to the US mainland. NO WATCH OR WARNING IS IN FORCE FOR ANY PART OF THE UNITED STATES from any storm as of this pull.

WHAT TODAY'S IRAN NEWS MEANS FOR YOU

Overnight, the story changed from sanctions to shots fired. US forces struck two Iranian rocket launchers on an island in the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday - the first time US forces have hit an Iranian target in a month - after the military said

Iranian forces were caught preparing to drop sea mines into the strait, just days after American ships finished clearing mines that had been there before. Iran says it took casualties and has vowed to hit back; there are already reports overnight of Iran striking at US allies in the region. This is a real escalation after a quiet few weeks, and it puts the shipping-lane deal we told you about Friday - where Iran and Oman had worked out how a lane through the strait would run - on much shakier ground; that plan required things to calm down, not heat up. On the sanctions side, the US Treasury took a further action Friday, this time going after a person accused of helping Iran's central bank access banks in the UAE - not the direct hit on a Chinese bank some officials had hinted was coming, so that specific question is still open.

Gas prices: the national average is \$4.0807 a gallon this morning, still easing even though crude oil jumped almost 3 percent overnight on the Iran strike - the pump hasn't caught up to that yet, and probably will in the coming days. Diesel is carried at \$5.6105 a gallon from Friday; we haven't been able to re-check it today given how much crude has moved, so treat that figure as out of date. You do not buy diesel, but the trucks that bring your groceries do, so a fresh crude spike is worth watching even before it shows up at your own pump.

Shipping/delivery delays: shipping through the strait remains far below normal, and now less predictable given overnight events. US Central Command says 75 ships have been turned away from Iranian ports since the blockade resumed in mid-July - that figure is carried from Friday and hasn't been updated today. Notably, the military itself now confirms mine-clearing work in the strait was real (it says the main shipping lane was cleared last week) even as it also says Iran was caught trying to lay new mines when Saturday's strike happened - so both things were true at once.

No safety action needed in the US: there is no credible threat to US soil tied to this at this time, even with overnight events overseas. For the vast majority of households this remains a wallet and planning issue rather than a safety one - the exception is if you have direct exposure to Gulf shipping, regional air travel, or fuel-indexed contracts, in which case treat this week as more uncertain than last.

PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST -- TODAY'S PRIORITIES

GULF DISTURBANCE AND EXPANDING HEAT (Texas Gulf Coast especially; heat returning to the central US and Mid-Atlantic)

- ☐ If you are on the Texas Gulf Coast, especially Houston and Galveston, plan for possible heavy rain and flash flooding from Tuesday - move your car off low ground and anything you cannot replace off the floor before it arrives, not during it
- ☐ Never drive into water over a road -- most flood deaths happen in vehicles, and you cannot tell how deep it is or whether the road is still under it
- ☐ If heat is returning to your area after a break, dust off the heat routine: check on elderly or unwell neighbors and relatives, drink before you're thirsty, and never leave a child or pet in a parked car - it catches people off guard the second time around more than the first
- ☐ If anyone in the house depends on powered medical equipment, call your utility now and ask to be flagged as a medical priority -- do not wait to see how it goes
- ☐ Houston has an ozone alert through this evening - do outdoor activity in the MORNING if you're there. Friday's other ozone and smoke alerts (Denver, Dallas-Fort Worth, Oklahoma City, Memphis, Phoenix for ozone; Kittitas WA, central Oregon, southwest Elko NV for smoke) are carried, not re-checked - same rules apply if still in force: ozone worst in the afternoon, smoke can sit all day so close up and filter one room
- ☐ If you live near a recent wildfire burn scar, treat a heavy rain forecast as a flood warning -- burned ground cannot absorb water and sends mud downhill fast

WILDFIRE AND SMOKE (Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Montana now have the most active fires; California warning status unconfirmed today)

- ☐ If you are in Idaho, Washington, Oregon or Montana, those states now have the most active large fires in the country - check your local fire authority's evacuation zone map even if you haven't seen a warning specifically named for your area. If you are in the California coast ranges where Friday's warnings were concentrated, don't assume that's cleared either - we could not re-confirm it either way today
- ☐ Go bag in the vehicle: medications, documents, phone charger, water, pet supplies
- ☐ Smoke plan: know which room you can close up and filter, and check airnow.gov before outdoor exercise -- if you have asthma, COPD or a heart condition keep rescue medication with you

- ❑ If you are in the Boundary Waters, the Gunflint Lake weather radio transmitter is still out -- carry a second way to receive warnings

GENERAL MONDAY PREPAREDNESS

- ❑ Check your NOAA weather radio -- 17 transmitters are out of service or degraded nationwide across 11 states, three of them in Alaska and three in New Mexico. Make sure Wireless Emergency Alerts are switched on in your phone settings as a second path
- ❑ If you or your employer run business software, the five federal patching deadlines we told you about Friday have now all passed - Gitea, Citrix remote-access equipment, Microsoft SQL Server, ownCloud file sharing and the Linux kernel. If you haven't checked, do it today rather than treating "deadline passed" as "no longer relevant." One of those, ownCloud, is a flaw first found in 2023, and four of the last ten additions to the federal list predate this year - meaning old or forgotten software can still be a live problem even if everything else is up to date. Ask whoever handles your IT to check what is running, not just what is patched
- ❑ Turn on automatic updates on your phone, computer and home router if they are not already on -- that covers most home users for this week
- ❑ Family communications plan: do you have a meeting place and an out-of-area contact if phones are down? A flash flood that closes roads is exactly the situation it is for

CONDITION SUMMARY

PREP-CON 3 BROWN SKY	Incident Probable, held. But the picture underneath it has shifted. Overseas, US forces struck Iranian rocket launchers on Saturday - the first US military action in a month - after Iran was caught preparing to lay mines in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran has vowed retaliation and there are already overnight reports of Iranian strikes on US allies in the region. That is a real escalation, though it has not (yet) produced anything that meets our threshold for moving the household condition to level 2 - no confirmed threat to US soil, no credible named threat. At home the picture is a genuine mixed bag: heat is expanding again after briefly breaking, a new storm system threatens flash flooding into an already bone-dry Texas, and the fire danger has shifted north to Idaho, Washington, Oregon and Montana. There remains no credible threat to US soil.
WX-CON 3 GUARDED -- Severe Weather	WX-CON 3 GUARDED, held. Neither of the two things that would raise it happened: no death or mass evacuation was confirmed on a tracked fire or storm. On wildfire, the good news is the fire center's numbers are clean again after Friday's contradiction: 98 large fires as of the weekend, up from 92, with the most active states now Idaho, Washington, Oregon and Montana rather than California. The preparedness level is carried at 5 of 5, though we have not independently reconfirmed that specific figure today.
SWX-CON -- Disturbance Came and Went, Never Reached Storm Level	The space-weather disturbance we told you was starting Friday ran for three days at a low, steady level and never became the moderate storm forecasters had watched for - it's now easing off. At its strongest it only reached level 4 on a scale where storm conditions begin at 5, and effects stayed confined to north of about 65 degrees latitude the whole time - northern Canada and Alaska, not the lower 48. THERE WAS NOTHING FOR A HOUSEHOLD TO DO THIS WEEKEND AND THERE ISN'T NOW. It never affected phones, wifi, cars or the power grid where most people live. If you're in Alaska or northern Canada, the aurora may still have been worth a look these past few nights.
COMCON 4 Increased Vigilance	17 NOAA weather radio transmitters are out of service or degraded nationwide across 11 states - always confirm your own area station is working. Alaska has three affected and New Mexico three. NO group of transmitters covering one area sits under an active fire or severe storm warning that we could confirm today, so there is no coverage gap alert - but this call is provisional, since we could not re-verify the fire-warning geography against the transmitter list today. Owyhee, Nevada remains degraded; if you're there, have a second way to receive a warning.

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
Washington wildfire and evacuation information: wildfireready.dnr.wa.gov
WHO Ebola outbreak updates: who.int

American Red Cross disaster welfare: [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org)

END

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Semper Paratus, Semper Gumby.

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