

**Governor's Office of Homeland Security
and Emergency Preparedness**
State of Louisiana

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GOHSEP's Crisis Action Team Activated due to Threat of Severe Weather, River Concerns

BATON ROUGE (February 23, 2018) – The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) activated its Crisis Action Team (CAT) due to the ongoing threat of severe weather in some portions of the state and due to growing concerns about river levels caused by heavy rain in the region. Several inches of rain have already fallen this week in some locations. Louisiana is wrapping up the 2018 Severe Weather Awareness Week with our local, state and federal partners. We continue to urge the public to use the resources provided by emergency managers, the National Weather Service (NWS) and your local media to track possible severe weather this weekend. GOHSEP's Crisis Action Team will monitor the conditions, provide situational reports to state and local leaders and help answer any calls for support from our local partners.

Here are NWS updates for each region:

NWS Shreveport:

Short Term:

Moderate to possibly heavy rainfall will be possible along and to the north of a warm front today. Additional rainfall amounts of one to three inches on the already saturated soils will result in rapid water runoff and possible flash flooding. A Flash Flood Watch remains in effect through 6 PM Saturday.

Long Term:

An approaching upper level disturbance and associated cold front will bring additional rainfall for portions of the region on Saturday and Saturday night, and the threat for flash flooding will continue. Aside from the flooding potential, some of these thunderstorms will become strong or severe with damaging winds and tornadoes the primary threats. The severe and heavy rainfall threat will diminish from west to east late Saturday night into early Sunday.

Showers and thunderstorms will return Tuesday and linger through at least mid-week, possibly bringing more flash flooding, river flooding, and severe thunderstorms to our region.

NWS Lake Charles:**Short Term:**

Widely scattered showers and a few thunderstorms can be expected through tonight as the area remains in a very warm and moist air mass. Severe weather is not expected.

Long Term:

A few showers and possibly a thunderstorm will continue across the region into Saturday. A cold front will advance across the region Saturday night with showers and thunderstorms, a few possibly severe. The front will stall just off the coast, maintaining showers and thunderstorms Sunday. Enhanced rain chances return again for mid-week when another front is expected to cross the region.

NWS New Orleans/Baton Rouge:**Short Term:**

A few thunderstorms are expected today. Although severe weather is not anticipated we cannot rule out a strong storm or two. Main concerns will be strong wind gusts, cloud to ground lightning and locally heavy rain.

Long Term:

Thunderstorms are possible each day during the period with the best chances for storms Sunday and Monday. A few storms may be strong or briefly become severe, primarily on Saturday and Sunday.

The American Automobile Association (AAA) reports that nearly 1.2 million car crashes occur each year on wet pavement resulting in 5,700 deaths. AAA officials say if your vehicle shuts down while in standing water, do not try to restart it. That could cause

more water to enter the engine and could cost thousands to repair. Also, if your vehicle stalls in a flooded area make sure that you abandon the vehicle.

Here are additional tips for driving on wet roads from AAA:

Check Tire Pressure: Make sure your tires have enough tread and are properly inflated. Worn tires with little tread are more likely to hydroplane. You can check this by inserting a quarter upside down into a tire groove. If you can see above Washington's head it's time for new tires.

Slow Down: Slowing down can be critical in stopping your car from hydroplaning. Drivers should reduce their speed to correspond to the amount of water on the roadway. Leave plenty of space between you and the car in front of you.

Avoid Cruise Control: The feature is great in dry conditions but when used when roads are wet it can cause you to lose control.

Low Visibility: Turn on your headlights to help you see better and allow motorists to better spot you. Avoid high beams because they may cause more distraction.

Visibility While Driving: If you can't see the edges of the road or other vehicles at a safe distance pull off the road with your hazard lights on.

Avoid Flooded Roads: There is no way to tell how deep standing water is on a flooded road. Roads with too much water may flood your engine, warp brake rotors, cause loss of power steering or shorts in electrical components.

Visit www.511la.org for road updates during an emergency. Keep your phones charged and near you while the threat continues in order to receive potential emergency messaging.

Find more tips on weather and preparedness on GOHSEP's Facebook and Twitter accounts. You can receive emergency alerts on most smartphones and tablets by downloading the new Alert FM App. It is free for basic service. The Get A Game Plan App is another resource available to help you and your family prepare for any type of emergency. You can download the Louisiana Emergency Preparedness Guide and find other information at www.getagameplan.org.

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