



SITUATION REPORT

JEFFERSON COUNTY EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT

3/16/26

CONDITIONS SUMMARY

National Weather Service Outlooks/Advisories/Watches/Warnings

Current Hazard(s)	Area	Duration
None		

There are four weather hazard forecast categories:

- Outlook: Risk of weather hazard in the next 7 days. Could pose a threat to life/property.
- Advisory: Weather hazard is occurring, imminent or likely. Could cause significant inconvenience.
- Watch: Risk of weather hazard soon. Could pose a threat to life/property.
- Warning: Weather Hazard is occurring, imminent or likely. Poses a threat to life/property.

6-10 Day Climate Outlook from the National Weather Service

Temperature	Above normal predicted
Precipitation	Near normal predicted

Weekly weather hazard key points from the National Weather Service

Windy conditions are expected throughout the week, with unseasonably warm temperatures also likely. Rapid snowmelt will result in potential rises in streams and creeks.

Drought Status from NOAA

Area	Current Drought Condition	Previous Report Drought Condition
North JeffCo.	D1	D1
South JeffCo.	D1	D1
West JeffCo.	D1	D1

The six drought conditions are: None; D0: Abnormally Dry; D1: Moderate; D2: Severe; D3: Extreme; D4: Exceptional.

Air Quality from Montana DEQ

Location	Current Condition	Previous Report
Helena	Good	Good
Butte	Good	Good

The six air quality conditions and descriptions are:

Good: Air quality is satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.

Moderate: Air quality is acceptable, however there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.

Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (SG): Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The public is less likely to be affected.

Unhealthy: Some members of the public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.

Very Unhealthy: Health alert: the risk of health effects is increased for everyone.

Hazardous: Health warning of emergency conditions: everyone is more likely to be affected

Fire Restrictions						
Current Status	Interagency campfire & forest activity restrictions. Applicable to recreational fires under 48" in diameter.					
X	No restrictions on campfires or forest activities					
	Stage 1 Restrictions: Campfires limited to improved rings < 3 feet; smoking limited to areas cleared of vegetation.					
	Stage 2 Restrictions: Stage 1 restrictions plus total campfire ban, 1pm-1am forest activity limits with patrol requirement.					
	Area closures: None					
Current Status	County debris burning (slash pile burning) restrictions. Applicable to ALL fires over 48" in diameter. BBQ pits and burn barrels are considered open fires on DNRC Forest Classified lands and therefore require a burning permit in those locations even if under 48" in size. (36.10.132(10), ARM)					
X	No debris burning restrictions county-wide. County burn permit & permit activation required.					
	Some fire districts/fire service areas with debris burning closures:					
	Debris burning closed county-wide.					
Current Period	Montana DEQ air quality burn restriction period.					
X	Spring/Summer burning period (March 1 – August 31): County burn permit & permit activation required.					
	Fall burning period (Sept.1 – Nov 30): County burn permit & permit activation required. The burner also must check DEQ ventilation hotline (800-225-6779 or www.burnclosures.mt.gov) for current air quality conditions.					
	Winter burning period (Dec 1 – Feb 28): DEQ application & approval required for burning*. County burn permit & county permit activation is still required in addition to DEQ permit. Call MT DEQ at 406-444-3490					
Fire Restrictions Narrative Summary						
With the arrival of March, DEQ restrictions are no longer in place for debris burning.						
Fire Danger Indices						
HIDC Data Point Summaries*	Current	Current Percentile	Current Adj. Rating	Previous Report	Pvs Report Percentile	Pvs Report Adj. Rating
FDRA #1 (South Prairie) ERC	n/a			n/a		
FDRA #2 (Forested) ERC	n/a			n/a		
*HIDC (Helena Interagency Dispatch Center) FDRA (Fire Danger Rating Area) ERC. The Helena Ranger District of the USFS and the Helena Unit of the DNRC Central Land Office utilize these data points for fire danger analysis. FDRA #1 RAWS sites include Elkhorn (243303) and Helena (241907), and FDRA #2 RAWS sites include Gleason (241802), Benchmark (241901), and S. Fork Judith (242102).						
Definitions:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERC: Energy Release Component. The available BTUs per square foot within the flaming front at the head of a fire. 						
NRCG Preparedness Levels (PL)						
Geographic Area	PL	Previous Report PL				
Northern Rockies	1	1				
National	1	1				
Preparedness Level general descriptions:						
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fire personnel can suppress wildfires without requesting additional resources from other areas. Fire activity is at or below normal. 2. Fire personnel can manage fire activity without requesting many resources from other areas. Fire activity is increasing. 3. Fire personnel require some significant resources from other areas. Large incidents are burning for more than two operational periods. 4. Fire personnel are starting to compete for resources from other incidents. Large, complex fire activity is increasing. 5. Fire resource needs are not being met with significant competition from other incidents. New incident Initial Attack capability is compromised due to large fire activity. At any point along the scale, the index number indicates the amount of net rainfall that is required to reduce the index to zero, or saturation. 						

NRCS Snow Water Equivalencies

Location	Current	Previous Report
	% of median	% of median
Helena Valley (N. of Boulder Hill) SNOTEL site #'s: 360, 487, 903, 893	103	86
Jefferson River Basin (S. of Boulder Hill) SNOTEL site #'s: 487, 722	97	94

Snow water equivalent is the depth of water that would result from the melting of the snowpack.

NRCS Precipitation Accumulation Water Year-to-Date (October 1- September 30)

Location	Current	Previous Report
	% of median	% of median
Helena Valley (N. of Boulder Hill) SNOTEL site #'s: 360, 487, 903, 893	132	114
Jefferson River Basin (S. of Boulder Hill) SNOTEL site #'s: 487, 722	139	123

USGS Streamflow in Cubic Feet per Second (CFS)

Stream/Location	Latest Observed CFS	Previous Report CFS	Historical data for today's date		
			Mean	High	Low
Prickly Pear Creek – Clancy	24	16	30	80	11
Boulder River – Boulder	76	31	53	288	21
Jefferson – Three Forks	1560	978	1458	2790	928
Jefferson – Twin Bridges	1610	868	1211	2350	650

ACTIVITY SUMMARY

Burn Permit Data

Data Point	Current YTD	Previous Report YTD	2025 Total
Total Permit Sales	241	144	691
Total Activations	343	194	1652
March Activations	159	10	351

Countywide Calls for Service (CFS)

Type	Last Week	Previous Report	YTD	2025
Wildfires	1	3	8	75
Structure Fires	0	0	0	30
Other Fire Calls*	7	3	47	315
Motor Vehicle Accidents (Injury and Non-Injury)	6	7	110	635
EMS BLS Calls	11	13	109	568
EMS ALS Calls	4	4	52	240
Year-to-Date Total Calls for Service Includes all the above plus law enforcement CFS.	2464	1940		13,641

*Other Fire Calls include Arson, Aircraft Incidents, Downed Wires, Electrical Hazards, Explosions, Fire Alarms, Fire Restriction Violations, Fireworks, Gas Leaks, HAZMAT, Smoke Reports, and Vehicle Fires.

Statewide Montana Wildfire Data

Current Report		Previous Report		2025 Total Quantity	2025 Total Acreage
2026 YTD Quantity	2026 YTD Acreage	2025 YTD Quantity	2025 YTD Acreage		
79	2256	48	733	2423	75,651

Training & Exercise Opportunities

Training/Course	Date/Time	Location	Contact/Registration
HAZMAT Awareness	3/17	Whitehall	ddodge@jeffersoncounty-mt.gov
RT-130 Refresher	3/18	Clancy VFD	Charlie.ewart@mt.gov
ICS-300	3/20-3/22	Helena	Save the Date
Basic Wildland	3/21-3/22	Great Falls	scott.ward@mt.gov
RT-130 Refresher	3/24	Whitehall	scott.ward@mt.gov
ICS/Comms Training	3/25	Whitehall SAR	ddodge@jeffersoncounty-mt.gov
Basic Wildland	3/27-3/29	Tri-Lakes VFD	jeffrey.beaver@mt.gov
Basic & Advanced Disaster Life Support	3/26-3/28	Fairmont Hot Springs	cindee.mckee@mtha.org
L-381 Incident Leadership	3/30-4/3	NRTC – Missoula	dana.carpentier@usda.gov
RT-130 Refresher	3/31	East Valley	scott.ward@mt.gov
Basic Wildland	4/3-4/5	Townsend	scott.ward@mt.gov
L-380 Fireline Leadership	4/6-4/10	Great Falls	justin.randall@usda.gov
L-481 Advanced Leadership for C&G	4/6-4/10	NRTC - Missoula	dana.carpentier@usda.gov
Pack Test	4/15	Helena – CLO	scott.ward@mt.gov
HAZMAT Awareness	4/15	Clancy	ddodge@jeffersoncounty-mt.gov
S-215 Fire Ops in the WUI	4/17-4/19	Bull Mountain VFD	scott.ward@mt.gov
S-290 Intermediate Fire Behavior	4/18-4/19	Bozeman	jason@readygallatin.com
S-203 Intro to Incident Information (NWCG)	4/20-4/24	Missoula	S-203, Introduction to Incident Information, Dates: April 20-24, 2026
Basic Wildland	4/24-4/26	Montana City	Charlie.ewart@mt.gov
S-320 Intro to IMTs	5/4-5/8	NRTC – Missoula	kelly.mckee@usda.gov
DNRC Wildland Academy	5/27-6/5	Dillon	hgerber@mt.gov
DNRC CAT Camp – Engine Academy	6/19-6/21	Miles City	melisa.griffith@mt.gov
MLGPA Annual Meetings	Varies	Varies	Attend Meetings

