



Smoke, Rip Currents, Strong Storms Today with Heat and Potential Fire Weather Again

July 16, 2026
5:04 AM CDT

Key Messages

- **Air Quality Alerts** for wildfire smoke in NE MN and NW WI through the next couple of days.
- High rip current risk today for beaches in the Twin Ports
- Two rounds of Strong to Severe Thunderstorms possible Late Thursday Night into Friday
- Dangerous heat may return Friday for Brainerd Lakes to inland northwest Wisconsin
- **Near-critical Fire Weather Conditions** possible Sunday into Monday.

NEW

Important Updates

- Marginal Risk (1 out of 5) for Late Thursday night, with main threats of damaging winds and large hail.

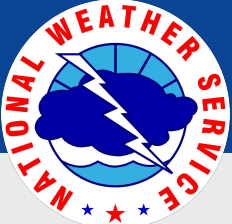
Next Scheduled Briefing

- Thursday afternoon



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Duluth, MN



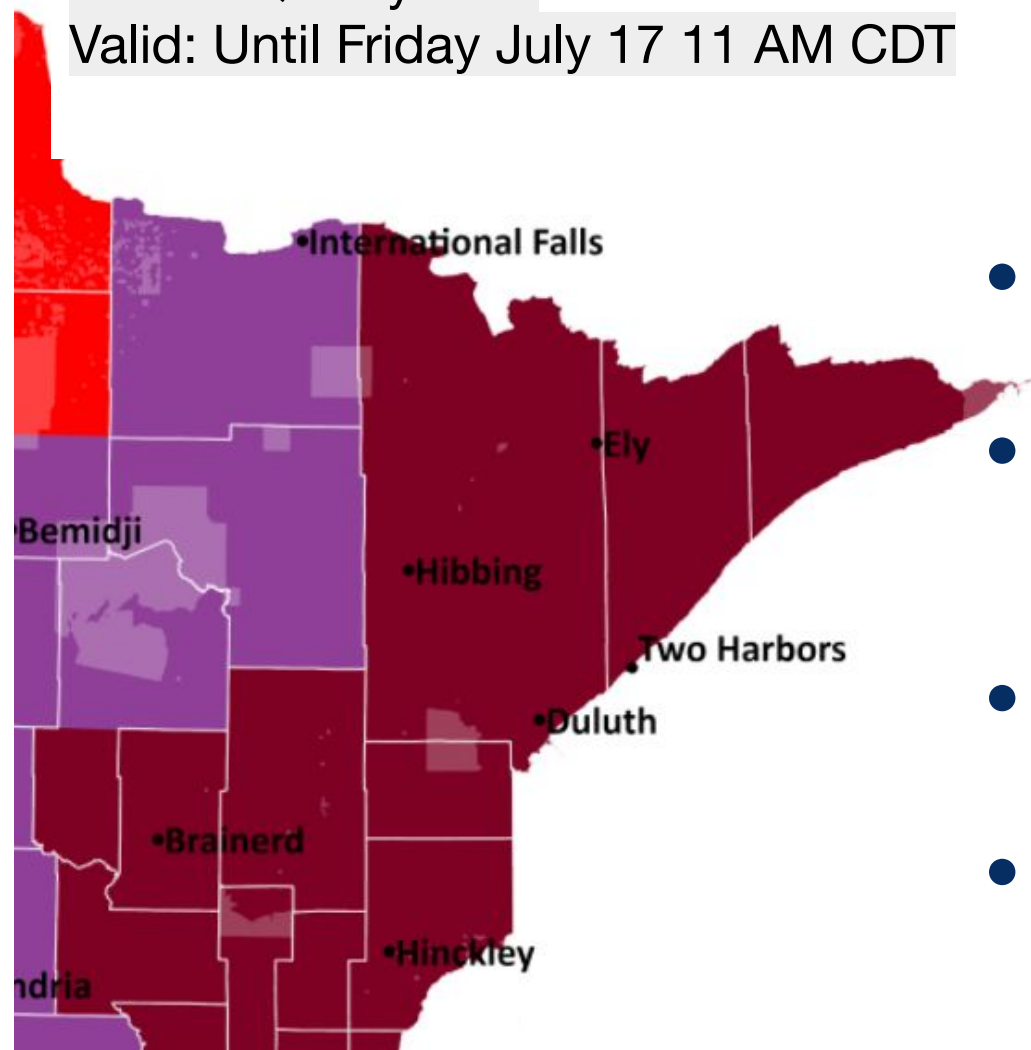
Air Quality Alerts In Effect

July 16, 2026
5:04 AM

Worse Air Quality conditions on Thursday. Heat Advisories may be needed end of the week

MN Air Quality Alert

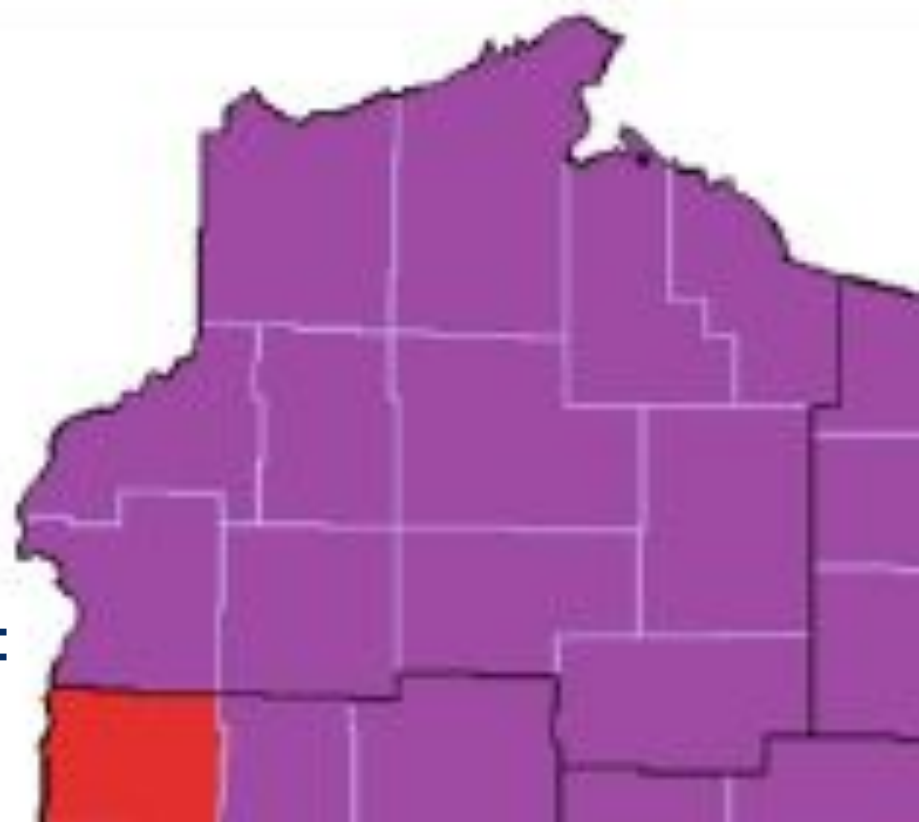
Valid: Until Friday July 17 11 AM CDT



- Wildfire smoke from fires in northeast MN and Ontario is causing or will cause **Hazardous to Very Unhealthy** conditions for much of the Northland.
- Avoid physical activity outdoors. Sensitive groups should stay indoors.
- Smoke is expected to linger over the area through the rest of the work week.
- More Details for Minnesota (MN PCA): <https://www.pca.state.mn.us>
- More Details for Wisconsin (WI DNR): airquality.wi.gov

WI Air Quality Alert

Valid: Until Thu July 16 12 PM CDT



Alert Severity

- Hazardous
- Very unhealthy
- Unhealthy



Understanding the **AIR QUALITY INDEX (AQI)**

Good

No health impacts expected.
AQI 0-50

Moderate

Very sensitive people may wish to limit outdoor exertion.
AQI 51-100

Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups

Sensitive people should limit outdoor exertion.
AQI 101-150

Unhealthy

Everyone should limit exertion outdoors.
AQI 151-200

Very Unhealthy

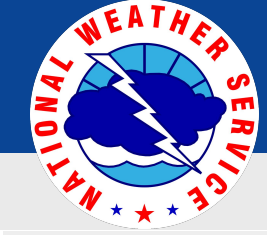
Sensitive people should avoid all outdoor activity.
AQI 201-300

Hazardous

Everyone should avoid all outdoor activity.
AQI 301-500

weather.gov



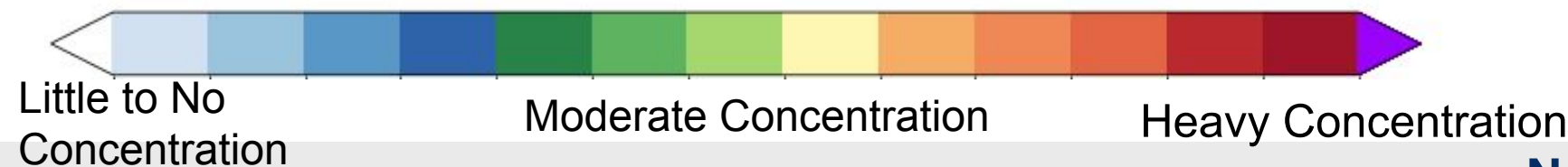
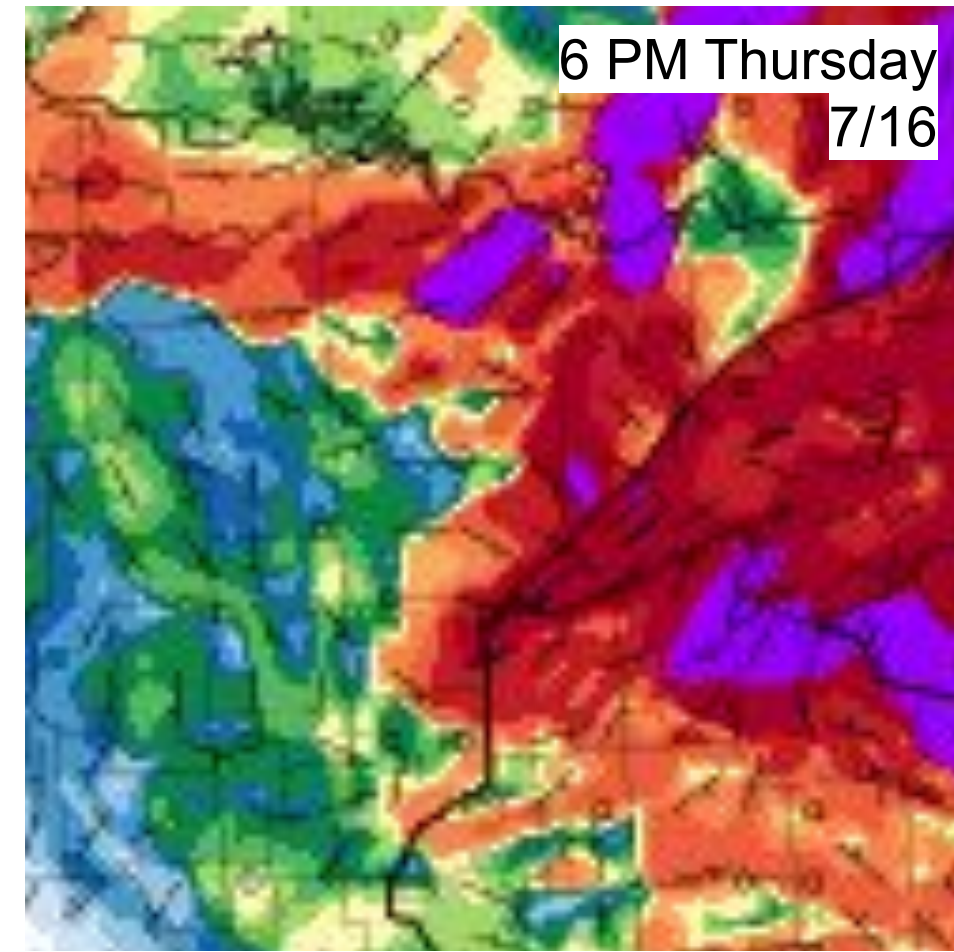
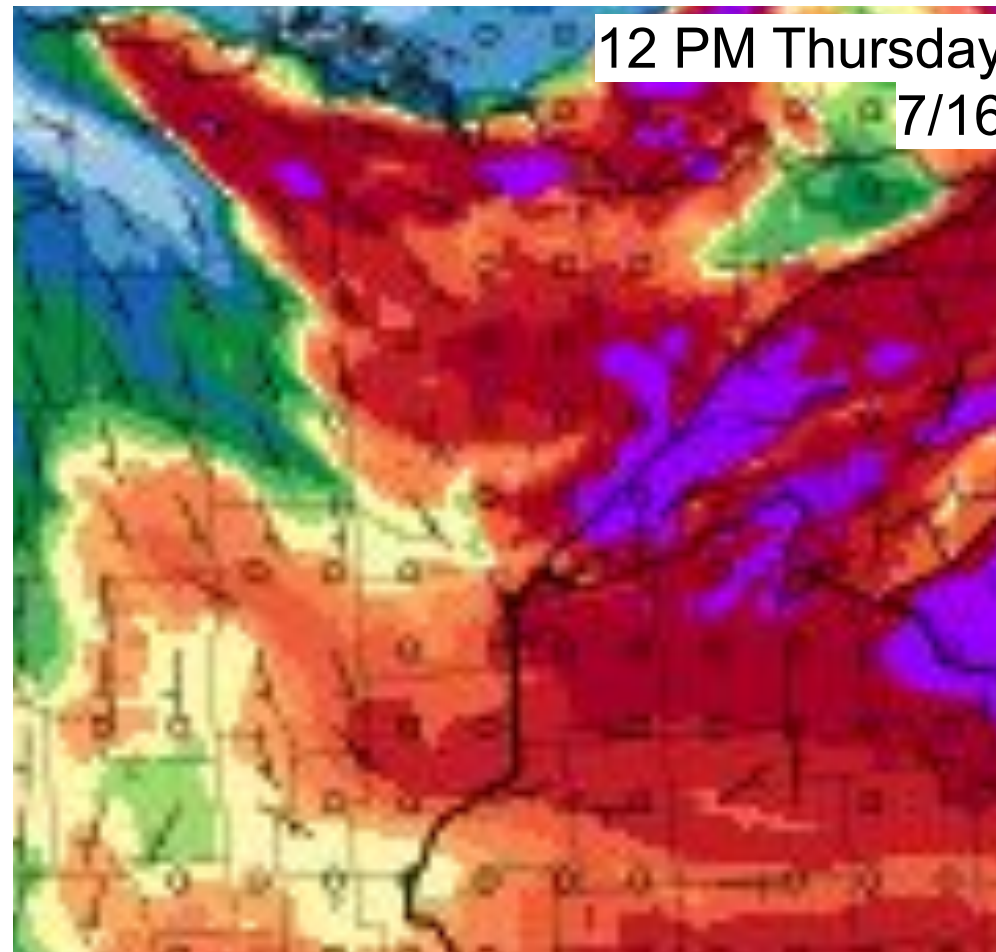
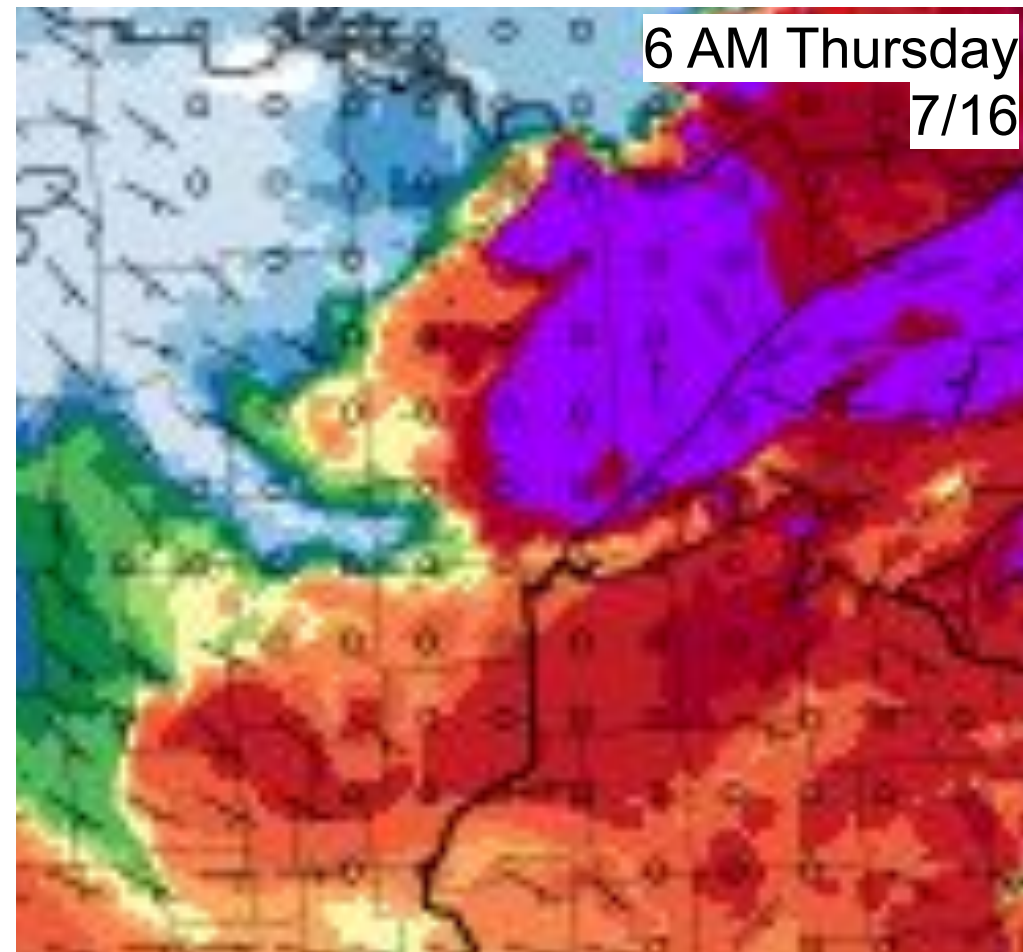


General Timing of Smoke Today

July 16, 2026

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This is a model depiction of general timing of smoke in the Northland as it moves westward today and with possible brief improvement for Brainerd Lakes this evening. Expect smoke at least through Friday for most of the region though.





High Rip Current Risk Today



- For the beaches of **Duluth** and **Superior**, including **Park Point Beach** and **Wisconsin Point**
- Dangerous waves and rip currents are expected along the shore
- Swimming conditions may be life threatening to anyone entering the water
- Stay out of the high surf today!



RIP CURRENTS/DANGEROUS WAVES

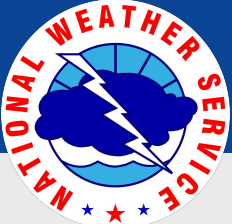
Know Your Action

Swim at a beach with lifeguards

Never swim alone

If caught in rip...relax and call for help and swim along the shoreline

For more beach information, visit parkpointbeach.org



Strong to Severe Thunderstorm Thursday Night to Friday

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Potential severe hazards include damaging winds and large hail

Precip (inches) & Probability of Thunder (%) Forecast

		7/16 Thu			7/17 Fri			7/18 Sat	
		6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am
Brainerd Lakes	Precip	0	.02	.02	.02	.02	.05	0	0
	PoT	1	5	10	6	12	3	6	5
I-35 Corridor	Precip	0	0	.01	0	.02	.09	.17	.02
	PoT	0	1	4	10	11	1	23	11
Iron Range	Precip	0	.02	.03	.05	.06	.12	.03	0
	PoT	3	8	13	14	21	10	14	4
NC Minnesota	Precip	.05	.05	.01	.17	.11	.05	0	0
	PoT	8	10	13	16	29	19	8	5
NE Minnesota	Precip	.01	.02	.01	.13	.25	.16	.07	0
	PoT	4	5	6	12	25	21	35	10
NW Wisconsin	Precip	0	0	.01	.05	.04	.07	.35	.12
	PoT	0	0	3	8	19	9	16	31
North Shore	Precip	0	.01	0	.07	.25	.13	.09	.01
	PoT	2	1	4	8	21	11	36	16
South Shore	Precip	0	0	0	.03	.05	.05	.11	.07
	PoT	2	0	2	10	22	13	33	28
Twin Ports	Precip	0	0	0	0	.04	.06	.04	0
	PoT	1	1	2	11	16	3	29	11

PoT >= 20

0.01

0.10

0.25

0.50

10

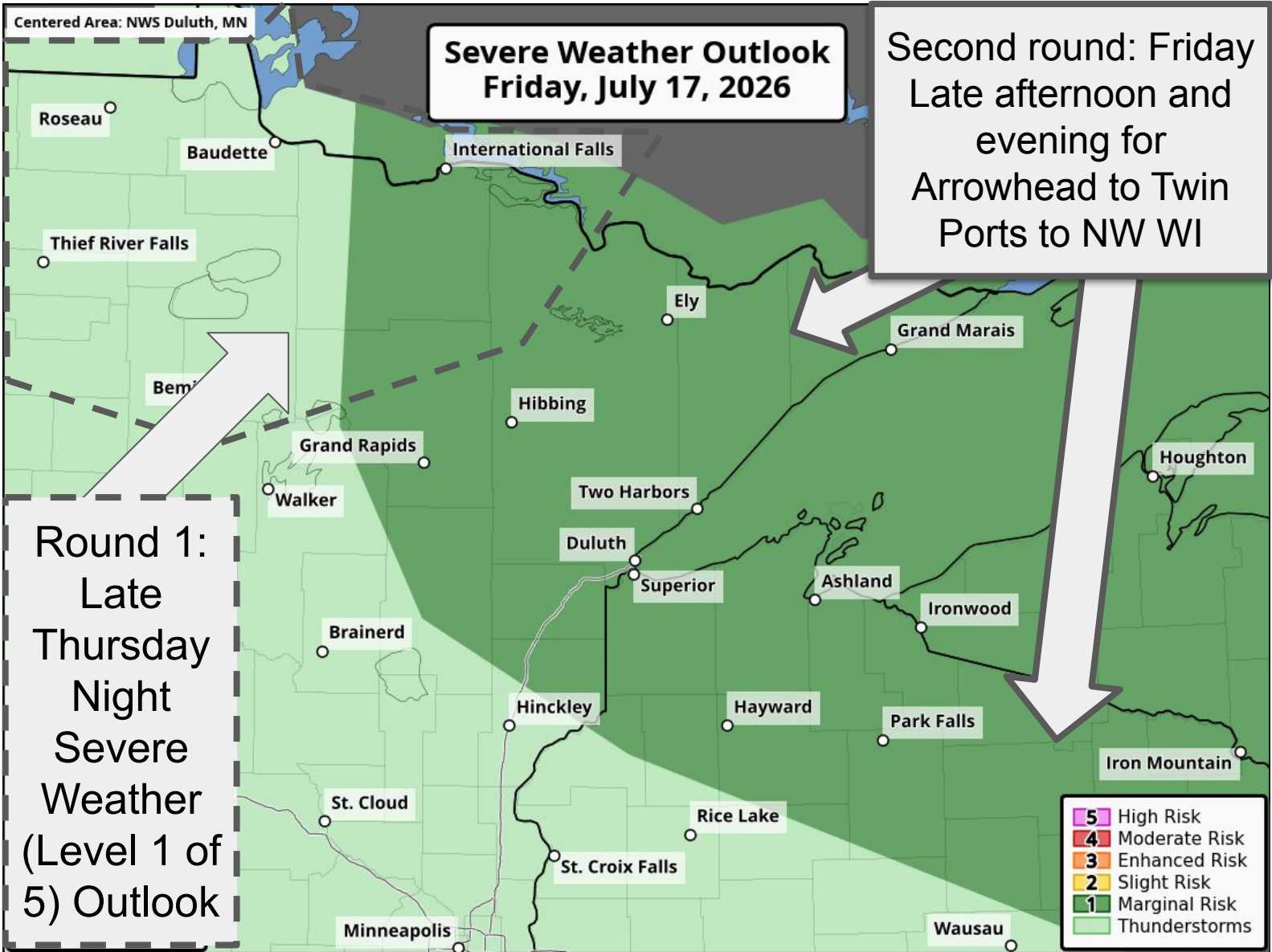
20

30

40

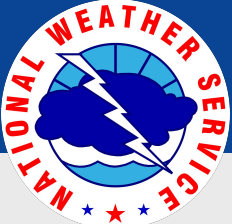
Precip Forecast (inches)

Probability of Thunder Forecast (%)



There is uncertainty in the location of the band of heaviest precipitation on Friday due to variations between model runs. Monitor the forecast for the latest updates.





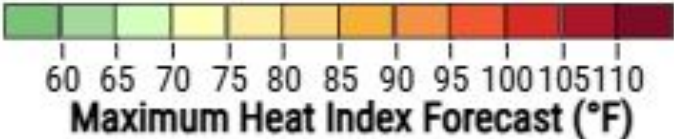
Heat Returns Friday

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Extreme Heat Warnings may be needed Friday for Brainerd Lakes to I-35 corridor into inland northwest Wisconsin, other areas may also need Heat Advisories.

Maximum Heat Index (°F) & Maximum HeatRisk Forecast

		7/16 Thu		7/17 Fri		7/18 Sat	
		12pm	12am	12pm	12am	12pm	
NC Minnesota	Max HeatIndex	82	83	90	79	85	
	HeatRisk	1	2	2	2	2	
NE Minnesota	Max HeatIndex	80	74	82	76	83	
	HeatRisk	1	1	1	2	2	
Iron Range	Max HeatIndex	86	86	94	77	85	
	HeatRisk	2	2	2	2	1	
North Shore	Max HeatIndex	77	69	75	78	85	
	HeatRisk	1	1	1	2	2	
Twin Ports	Max HeatIndex	82	78	85	78	82	
	HeatRisk	1	1	1	1	1	

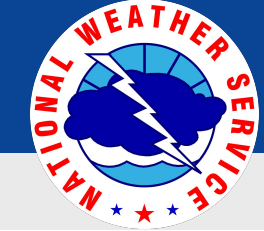


		7/16 Thu		7/17 Fri		7/18 Sat	
		12pm	12am	12pm	12am	12pm	
I-35 Corridor	Max HeatIndex	90	91	99	79	86	
	HeatRisk	2	3	3	3	2	
Brainerd Lakes	Max HeatIndex	92	92	99	79	86	
	HeatRisk	2	3	3	3	2	
South Shore	Max HeatIndex	83	83	89	75	85	
	HeatRisk	2	2	2	2	1	
NW Wisconsin	Max HeatIndex	93	94	99	82	87	
	HeatRisk	2	3	3	3	2	



Extreme Heat Warnings may be needed Friday from a HeatRisk of Major (Level 3 of 4), Heat Indices approaching 100 F and Wet Bulb Globe Temps in the mid-80s





Brief Improvement in Fire Weather Conditions

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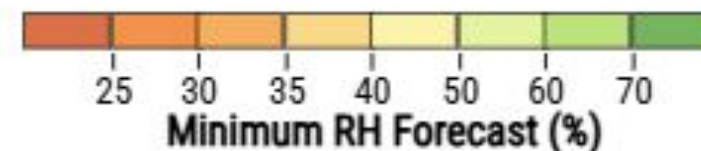
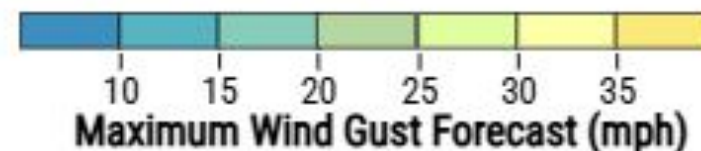
Higher moisture late this week, but increasing winds and drier RH returns this weekend

Maximum Wind Gust (mph) & Minimum RH (%) Forecast

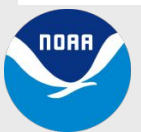
		7/16	7/17	7/18	7/19	7/20	7/21	7/22
		Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
NC Minnesota	Max Gust	16↙	21↘	16↓	18↗	28↘	21↘	16↘
	Min RH	47	55	35	35	43	38	33
NE Minnesota	Max Gust	14↘	21↗	20↓	18↗	26↓	22↓	16↘
	Min RH	44	62	33	32	44	37	33
Iron Range	Max Gust	17↘	22↗	18↓	17↗	28↘	22↓	16↘
	Min RH	43	52	35	35	43	39	35
North Shore	Max Gust	15↙	12↙	13↘	13↗	21↗	20↓	13↗
	Min RH	52	68	43	43	46	47	44
Twin Ports	Max Gust	22↙	16↙	17↘	14↗	26↓	22↓	13↘
	Min RH	40	57	40	39	41	40	40

		7/16	7/17	7/18	7/19	7/20	7/21	7/22
		Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
I-35 Corridor	Max Gust	22↙	20↗	17↓	16↗	26↓	21↙	15↘
	Min RH	38	43	36	35	40	39	36
Brainerd Lakes	Max Gust	17↙	21↗	17↓	17↗	26↓	22↓	15↘
	Min RH	47	44	38	40	40	41	38
South Shore	Max Gust	16↘	16↙	17↘	15↗	26↓	20↘	14↘
	Min RH	43	57	47	41	50	48	43
NW Wisconsin	Max Gust	15↘	21↗	20↓	17↗	26↓	22↙	16↘
	Min RH	37	43	35	34	40	36	35

RH ≤ 35 WindGust ≥ 25



Watch out for two wind shifts from southwest to northwest that occur along a cold front Friday night and again Sunday night into Monday





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Air Quality and Health

Exposure to air pollutants such as particulate matter and ground-level ozone can cause:

- Headaches
- Difficulty breathing
- Irritated eyes, sinuses
- Chest pains, asthma attacks
- Fatigue
- Irritated throat, increased coughing

Poor air quality can be hazardous to anyone, and it can aggravate health problems such as asthma, heart disease, and lung disease.

Seniors, children and those with compromised immune systems are especially at risk.

weather.gov

Additional Resources

[NWS Duluth Website](#)

[Latest Forecast - Hourly Details](#)

[Fire Weather Dashboard](#)

[NWS Storm Prediction Center](#)

[Northland Fire Weather Forecast](#)

[NWS Weather Safety Tips](#)



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