Current Watches and Warnings

A Hurricane Warning is in effect from San Luis Pass, Texas (TX) to Intracoastal City, Louisiana (LA)

A Storm Surge Warning is in effect from Freeport, TX to the Mouth of the Mississippi River

A Tropical Storm Warning is in effect from Sargent, TX to San Luis Pass, TX; east of Intracoastal City, LA to the Mouth of the Mississippi River

A Hurricane Watch is in effect from east of Intracoastal City to west of Morgan City, LA

Current Details from the National Hurricane Center (NHC)

COORDINATES: 27.9° north, 92.8° west
LOCATION: 155 miles (250 kilometers) south of Lake Charles, Louisiana
MOVEMENT: northwest at 15 mph (24 kph)
WINDS: 145 mph (230 kph) with gusts to 170 mph (275 kph)
RADIUS OF TROPICAL STORM-FORCE WINDS: 205 miles (335 kilometers)
RADIUS OF HURRICANE-FORCE WINDS: 60 miles (95 kilometers)
MINIMUM CENTRAL PRESSURE: 947 millibars
SAFFIR-SIMPSON SCALE RANKING*: Category 4

FORECAST LANDFALL LOCATION: United States (near the Louisiana / Texas border)
FORECAST LANDFALL TIMEFRAME: late Wednesday evening or early Thursday morning local time

Latest Satellite Picture

Source: NOAA / NASA / Colorado State University (RAAMB)
Discussion

Major Hurricane Laura, located approximately 155 miles (250 kilometers) south of Lake Charles, Louisiana, is currently tracking northwest at 15 mph (24 kph). Laura has continued to rapidly strengthen today with recent visible satellite imagery revealing a very distinct eye feature. The upper-level cloud outflow pattern has also become well established in all quadrants. An Air Force Reserve Hurricane Hunter aircraft that is still investigating the hurricane has reported flight-level and surface-adjusted wind speeds that justify the NHC bumping up the initial intensity to 145 mph (230 kph). This makes Laura a very strong Category 4 storm on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. It also marks Laura intensifying by 65 mph (100 kph) in just the past 24 hours. The current minimum central pressure was measured at 947 millibars.

Laura still has about 12 hours remaining over the warm waters of the northwest Gulf of Mexico waters, but increasing southwesterly wind shear around the time of landfall and the possibility of an eyewall replacement could result in some fluctuations in intensity this evening, but Laura is expected to remain an extremely dangerous Category 4 hurricane through landfall tonight. Although rapid weakening is expected on Thursday as Laura moves inland, the hurricane is expected to bring a swath of damaging winds well inland over western Louisiana and extreme eastern Texas. The cyclone or its remnants are forecast to move off Mid-Atlantic coast during the upcoming weekend and there remains some possibility that Laura will re-intensify as a tropical cyclone offshore of the U.S. East Coast before it merges with a frontal boundary later in the forecast period.

Recent satellite and aircraft fixes show that Laura is moving northwestward as it nears the western extent of a mid-level ridge of high pressure that is located over the southeastern United States. The hurricane should turn north-northwestward this evening and northward on Thursday between the ridge and a weak trough over the south-central United States. By Friday the cyclone should turn northeastward and then east-northeastward as it becomes embedded in the mid-latitude westerlies. The forecast track model guidance continues to be in good agreement through 72 hours, but there are some forward speed differences thereafter. The new NHC track is very close to the previous advisory and is near the middle of the guidance envelope.

Laura is a large hurricane and users are reminded to not focus on the precise track forecast since wind, storm surge, and rainfall hazards extend far from the center.
Key Messages from the National Hurricane Center

1. Unsurvivable storm surge with large and destructive waves will cause catastrophic damage from Sea Rim State Park, Texas, to Intracoastal City, Louisiana, including Calcasieu and Sabine Lakes. This surge could penetrate up to 40 miles inland from the immediate coastline, and flood waters will not fully recede for several days after the storm.

2. Hurricane-force winds are expected tonight in portions of the Hurricane Warning area, with catastrophic wind damage expected where Laura's eyewall moves onshore. Hurricane-force winds and widespread damaging wind gusts will spread well inland into portions of extreme eastern Texas and western Louisiana early Thursday.

3. Widespread flash flooding along small streams, urban areas, and roadways is expected to begin this afternoon into Thursday from far eastern Texas into Louisiana and Arkansas. This will also lead to minor to moderate freshwater river flooding. The heavy rainfall threat and flash and urban flooding potential will spread northeastward into the middle-Mississippi, lower Ohio, and Tennessee Valleys Friday night and Saturday.

Additional Information

Storm surge and tropical-storm-force winds will arrive within the warning areas well in advance of Laura's center later today. All preparations to protect life and property should be rushed to completion in the next few hours.

STORM SURGE: The combination of a dangerous storm surge and the tide will cause normally dry areas near the coast to be flooded by rising waters moving inland from the shoreline. The water could reach the following heights above ground somewhere in the indicated areas if the peak surge occurs at the time of high tide:

- Johnson Bayou, LA to Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge, including Calcasieu Lake: 15-20 feet
- Sea Rim State Park, TX to Johnson Bayou, LA, including Sabine Lake: 10-15 feet
- Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge to Intracoastal City, LA: 10-15 feet
- Intracoastal City, LA to Morgan City, including Vermilion Bay: 8-12 feet
- Port Bolivar, TX to Sea Rim State Park: 6-9 feet
- Morgan City, LA to Mouth of the Mississippi River: 4-7 feet
- Freeport, TX to Port Bolivar, including Galveston Bay: 2-4 feet
- Mouth of the Mississippi River to Ocean Springs, MS, including Lake Borgne: 1-3 feet
- Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Maurepas: 1-3 feet

The deepest water will occur along the immediate coast near and to the right of the landfall location, where the surge will be accompanied by large and destructive waves.

Unsurvivable storm surge with large and destructive waves will cause catastrophic damage from Sea Rim State Park, Texas, to Intracoastal City, Louisiana, including Calcasieu and Sabine Lakes. This storm surge could penetrate up to 40 miles (65 kilometers) inland from the immediate coastline in southwestern Louisiana and far southeastern Texas.

Surge-related flooding depends on the relative timing of the surge and the tidal cycle, and can vary greatly over short distances.
WIND: Hurricane conditions are expected in the Hurricane Warning area tonight and Thursday, with catastrophic wind damage expected where Laura's eyewall moves onshore tonight. Tropical storm conditions are moving onshore along the coast of Louisiana within the Tropical Storm Warning area and are expected to spread northwestward within the warning areas this evening.

Hurricane-force winds and damaging wind gusts are also expected to spread well inland into portions of eastern Texas and western Louisiana early Thursday.

RAINFALL: From this afternoon through Friday, Laura is expected to produce the following rainfall totals:

Across the northwestern Gulf Coast from far southwest Louisiana and the Golden Triangle of Southeast Texas: 8 to 12 inches with isolated totals of 18 inches.

Across central and the rest of western Louisiana into far eastern Texas: 5 to 10 inches with isolated totals of 15 inches

Across much of Arkansas: 3 to 7 inches with isolated totals of 10 inches

This rainfall will cause widespread flash and urban flooding, small streams and creeks to overflow their banks, and minor to moderate freshwater river flooding.

By Friday into Saturday, Laura is expected to produce the following rainfall totals:

Across the mid-Mississippi and portions of the Tennessee Valley, Lower Ohio Valley, and central Appalachians: 2 to 4 inches with isolated maximum amounts of 6 inches

This rainfall may lead to flash and urban flooding and rapid rises on small streams.

Across the Mid-Atlantic Region: 1 to 3 inches

TORNADOES: Several tornadoes are expected late this afternoon through tonight over Louisiana, far southeast Texas, and southwestern Mississippi. The risk for a few tornadoes will continue into Thursday across Louisiana, Arkansas, and western Mississippi.

SURF: Swells produced by Laura are affecting the U.S. Gulf Coast from the west coast of Florida to Texas and northeastern Mexico. These swells are likely to cause life-threatening surf and rip current conditions.
Most Likely Arrival Time of Tropical Storm-Force Winds

Hurricane Laura
Wed. Aug. 26, 2020 4 pm CDT
Advisory 28
National Hurricane Center: Wind Speed Probabilities

Tropical Storm-Force Wind Probabilities (≥40 mph (65 kph))
Wind Probabilities (≥60 mph (95 kph))
Hurricane-Force Wind Probabilities (≥75 mph (120 kph))

![Hurricane-Force Wind Probability Map]

- Probability of hurricane-force winds (1-minute average ≥ 74 mph) from Hurricane Laura
- O indicates Hurricane Laura center location at 1 PM CDT WED AUG 26, 2020 (Forecast/Advisory #28)
The combination of a dangerous storm surge and the tide will cause normally dry areas near the coast to be flooded by rising waters moving inland from the shoreline. The water could reach the following heights above ground somewhere within the indicated areas if the peak surge occurs at the time of high tide. The deepest water will occur along the immediate coast near the landfall location, where the surge will be accompanied by large and destructive waves. Surge-related flooding depends on the relative timing of the surge and the tidal cycle, and can vary greatly over short distances.
Weather Prediction Center: Flash Flood Potential
Additional Information and Update Schedule

Wind intensity forecasts and forecast track information can be found via the National Hurricane Center at www.nhc.noaa.gov

NEXT CAT ALERT: Wednesday evening after 10:00 PM Central Time (03:00 UTC Thursday).
*Tropical Cyclone Intensity Classifications for Global Basins*

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Cat Alert: Major Hurricane Laura