

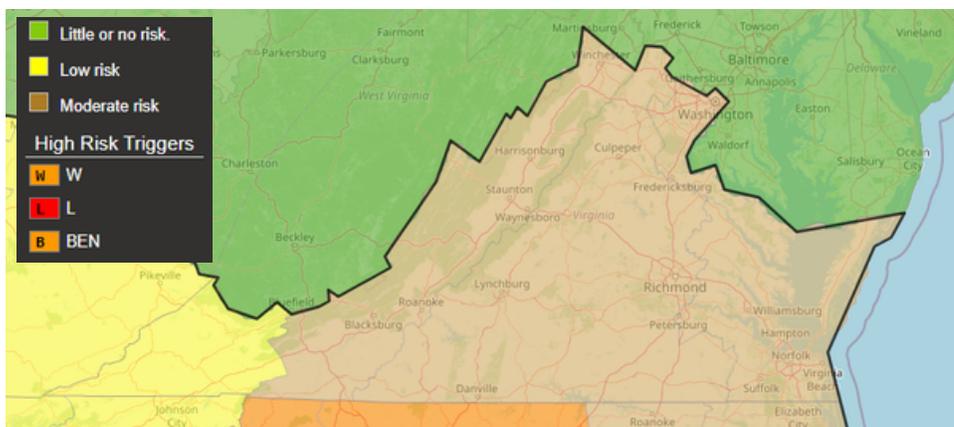
March 20, 2026

Key Takeaways

- VDH lifted its remaining Recreational Water Advisory on the Potomac river.
- Tornado season has had an early start in the US, including an ESF-0 that caused minor damage in Martinsville, VA.
- Crime statistics continue to show a decline, but victimization surveys add caveats to that trend.
- Though there is no evidence of links, bomb threats and drone sightings extend anxieties about domestic impacts of the Mideast conflict.

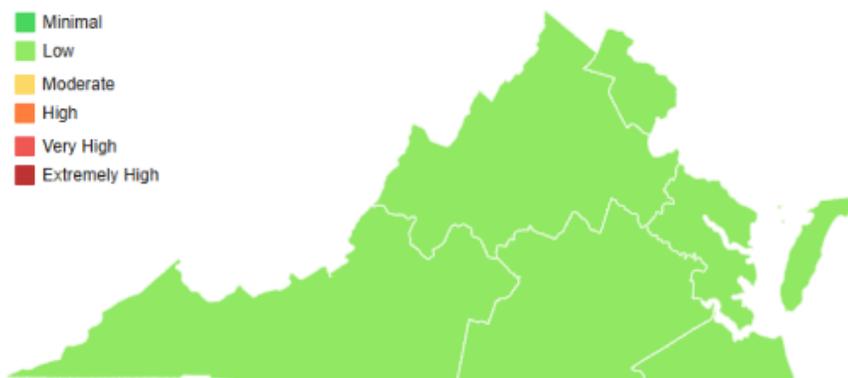
Key Figures

Significant Fire Potential Mon, Mar 23



Forecasts indicate Virginia will have elevated risk of significant fire potential into next week, with much of the state at moderate risk for a few days. Image Source: [NICC](#)

Respiratory Disease Activity Level



Flu activity is low in all Virginia regions. Image source: [VDH](#)

Measles

125

Measles cases confirmed nationally in the week ending Mar 19.

Seasonal Illness

Low

Overall respiratory disease activity in Virginia for the week ending Mar 14.

12.8%

The share of Virginia ED visits for respiratory illness for the week ending Mar 14.

11.0%

The share of Virginia ED visits for Gastrointestinal Illness for the week ending Mar 14.

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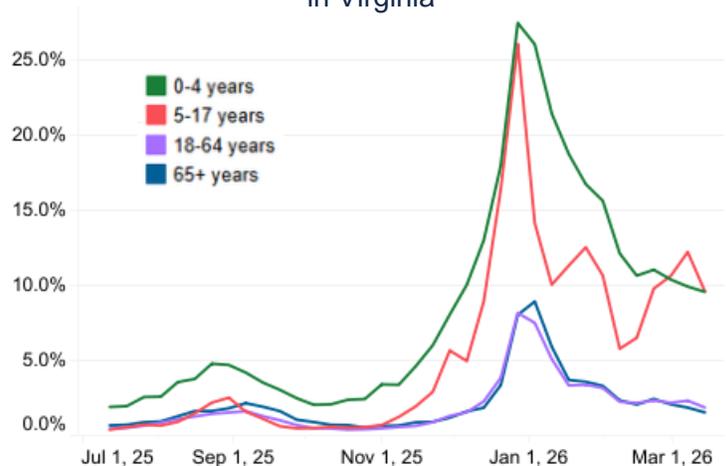
Ongoing Monitored Situations

Measles

- The CDC reported **125 new measles cases** in the US over the past week, bringing the 2026 total to 1,487 cases across 31 US states. Canada reported 96 new cases last week. Mexico reported 940 last week and 1,079 the week before. Mexico has reported 5,437 cases so far in 2026, compared to 6,542 in all of 2025.
- **Utah added 44 new cases last week**, bringing the state total to 506 since mid-2025. Texas announced 54 new cases.
- **3 Texas immigration detention facilities have reported measles cases this year.** The West Texas detention facility reported 99 cases. Camp East Montana (14) and the South Texas Family Residential Center (2) also reported cases. 1 occurred in a local correctional facility. Camp East Montana also reported 2 tuberculosis cases earlier this year.

Seasonal Illness

ED Visits for Diagnosed Influenza
 in Virginia

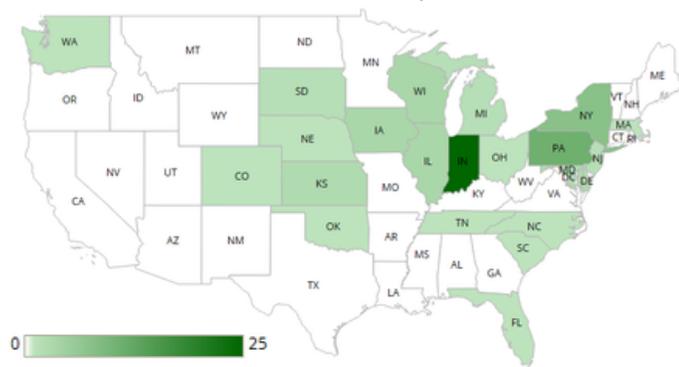


Flu activity declined among 5-17 year-olds last week. Activity in this age group had been rising for the past few weeks. Image Source: [VDH](#)

Other Monitored Situations

- **Clade I mpox was detected in New York City.** The patient had recently traveled to Europe and there is no known local transmission. It is the 12th Clade I mpox detection in the US, though local transmission has only been confirmed in California.

H5N1 Poultry Detections
 Past 30 Days



Several states in the Atlantic Flyway have reported HPAI A(H5N1) detections in poultry flocks in the past 30 days. In Virginia, there have been three reports in wild birds, but none in poultry over the same time period. Image Source: [USDA](#)

- In Virginia, overall respiratory activity is low and trending down. Flu activity declined to 2.0% of ED visits from 2.6% a week ago. Influenza B accounts for 84% of lab reports. COVID-19 and RSV activity is low and stable.
- Nationally, flu, COVID-19 and RSV activity is declining or likely declining in all but a few states. RSV activity is still growing or likely growing in 4 northern US states, while flu activity is increasing in just 3.
- Gastrointestinal illness is above threshold in Virginia, accounting for 11.6% of ED visits, slightly up from 11.5% last week. GI illness remains above threshold in all Virginia regions except Southwest Virginia.
- The 2025-26 season flu vaccine was just 30% effective against hospitalization in adults and 41% in children. Lower effectiveness was likely related to the dominance of A(H3N2) subclade k, which was not included in this season's vaccine. Although lower than usual, the vaccine still demonstrated significant effectiveness at reducing disease burden and hospitalization.

Other News

- VDH lifted its **Potomac River Recreational Water Advisory** citing completion of emergency repairs and reduced bacteria levels. Maryland and Washington DC have also lifted advisories for the Potomac, though Montgomery Co, Maryland is maintaining its advisory on land areas in the immediate area of the spill.
- **At least six Virginia colleges received bomb threats last Friday**, leading to evacuations. No credible threats were found, and at least one was determined to be a hoax.
- **Unidentified drones were detected above an army base in Washington DC.** The base, Fort McNair, is home to the US Secretaries of State and Defense. US officials reported 350 drone detections at US military installations in 2024.
- **Several states have issued warnings about cychlorphine**, a powerful synthetic opioid not detectable with fentanyl test strips. Tennessee reported more than 30 cychlorphine-related fatal overdoses since Oct 2025.
- **The FDA issued an Emergency Use Authorization for a topical spray to prevent New World Screwworm** in livestock and other animals. NWS is still not present in the US.

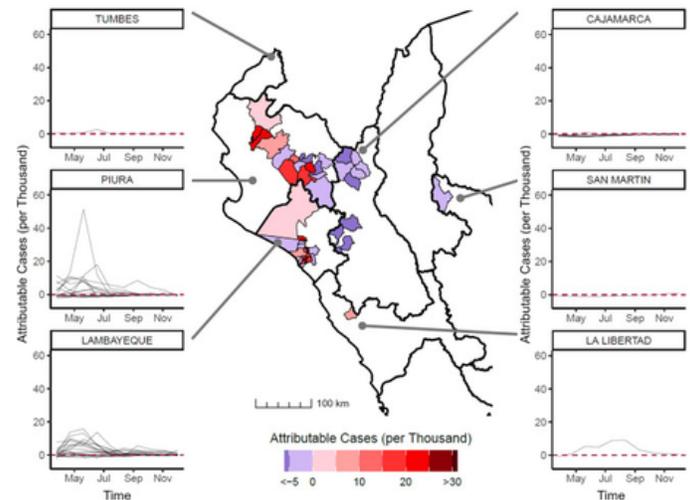
US Homicide Rate
 1900-2025



US homicide rates are projected to hit a 125-year low in 2025. Other crimes including robberies and carjackings are declining as well. However, victimization surveys don't show similar declines, which may indicate some crimes are going unreported.

Image Source: [WSJ](#)

Cyclone-Attributable Dengue Incidence
 Peru 2023



60% of cases in the hardest hit districts of the 2023 dengue outbreak in Peru were attributable to extreme precipitation from Cyclone Yaku. Wetter and warmer areas experienced higher incidence.

Image Source: [One Earth](#)

- **Over 66 tornadoes impacted at least 13 states last week**, as widespread severe weather brought high winds and precipitation to much of the country. In Virginia, an EF-0 tornado touched down in Martinsville causing minor damage, while high winds knocked out power to over 100,000 customers. This week, a major 'heat dome' has settled across the US Southwest.
- **An overheated circuit board at an FAA radar facility in Warrenton, Virginia grounded flights at four regional airports.** Three Virginia airports (IAD, DCA, and RIC) were affected.
- **Major AI companies are hiring chemical weapons, explosives, and radiological experts** to develop guardrails against 'catastrophic misuse' of the technology. Experts note that such efforts are voluntary. Meanwhile, researchers found that 8 in 10 AI chatbots were willing to assist users in planning violent attacks.
- **An invasive meningococcal disease outbreak at five schools in Kent, UK has spawned 27 cases.** Despite the quick growth from 13 to 27 cases in 4 days, the UKHSA rates the risk to the general population there as low.