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Midwest Storms Trigger Widespread Flight Delays and Severe Flooding

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Damaging storms sweeping across the Midwest have disrupted air travel and prompted flood alerts for nearly 14 million Americans, with forecasters warning of more heavy rain and dangerous conditions into Monday.

On Sunday, Denver International Airport reported over 900 delayed flights and 21 cancellations, according to aviation tracking service FlightAware. Southwest Airlines accounted for 339 delays, United Airlines for 244, and regional carrier SkyWest for 157. The

National Weather Service (NWS) cautioned that residents from Kansas to Wisconsin could face repeated rounds of heavy rainfall, hail, strong winds, and isolated tornadoes overnight.

The severe weather followed a day of intense storms on Saturday, which brought wind gusts reaching 80–90 miles per hour in Omaha, Nebraska, and rainfall totals of up to 12 inches in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In Wauwatosa, floodwaters overtook a bridge across the Menomonee River, carrying debris onto roadways. Fast-moving streams flooded residential streets, leaving some residents stranded, including one man perched on the hood of his vehicle. Homes near the river were inundated, trapping occupants inside during the early hours of Sunday.

Milwaukee firefighters responded to more than 600 calls related to gas leaks, flooded basements, power outages, and water rescues. “We’re still in the middle of it. We’re still catching up right now,” Milwaukee Fire Chief Aaron Lipski told reporters. By 6:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST), power remained out for approximately 31,700 customers across Wisconsin, according to outage tracking service PowerOutage.us.

The flooding forced the Wisconsin State Fair to cancel its final day, following the cancellation of Saturday night’s main stage performance by Lynyrd Skynyrd. “The safety of our fairgoers, team, partners, and vendors will always be our top priority,” organizers stated. Ticket holders for Sunday’s events will be able to exchange them for next year’s fair or receive refunds for specific canceled shows.

USA Triathlon also canceled its Sprint and Paratriathlon National Championships scheduled in Milwaukee, where thousands of athletes were expected to compete. However, the Milwaukee Brewers’ home game against the New York Mets at American Family Field went ahead as planned, though team officials warned that parking access was limited due to flooding.

Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley declared a state of emergency, prioritizing public safety and signaling the potential need for federal assistance. Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers is also expected to declare a state of emergency to facilitate access to federal aid. Authorities urged residents to avoid walking or driving through floodwaters, with the NWS reiterating its warning: “Turn around, don’t drown when encountering flooded roads. Most flood deaths occur in vehicles.”

Flood warnings remain active through Monday for regions stretching from Kansas to Wisconsin, with an additional one to six inches of rain possible overnight.