



Update: Rain this weekend; heavy in some areas.

Rainfall prospects are set to improve significantly over the eastern and northern parts of the country this weekend. The combination of on-shore flow along our eastern and north-eastern parts, together with a well-defined upper air system is expected to deliver significant rainfall leading to flooding in places over parts of the KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces on Sunday.

The cold front associated with an upper air trough is expected to move across the southern parts of the country by tomorrow Saturday, 24 February, with an Atlantic high pressure system expected to ridge along the southern coastal regions. The upper air trough will move into the western parts of South Africa tomorrow, enhancing the chances of convective development over the eastern half of the Eastern Cape Province where severe thunderstorms are possible.

As a result of a surface high expected to ridge behind the cold front during tomorrow, cold to cooler, rainy and overcast conditions are expected to set in over the western parts of Northern Cape and Western Cape as well as the Eastern Cape, clearing partially from the west by **Sunday**, while KwaZulu-Natal will remain overcast until Monday.

During the coming weekend, the upper air trough will move progressively eastwards over the central interior whilst a strong surface high pressure system will ridge over the eastern parts of the country, introducing cool, moist air to KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo. Tropically-sourced moisture is already in circulation over the northern provinces, therefore the introduction of further moist air will inevitably lead to scattered to widespread showers and thundershowers over the eastern parts of Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, eastern Free State, North-West province, Gauteng, Mpumalanga as well as the Limpopo province. Heavy rain leading to flooding is expected on Sunday (25 February) in places over KwaZulu-Natal, the eastern parts of Mpumalanga and the Limpopo Province.

Bolepi House, 442 Rigel Avenue South, Erasmusrand, 0181 Private Bag X097, Pretoria, 0001

Tel: + 27 (0) 12 367 6000 USSD: *120*7297#

Board Members

Ms Ntsoaki Mngomezulu (Chairperson)
Vacant (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Rowan Nicholls

Prof Elizabeth Mokotong
Mr David Lefutso
Ms Sally Mudly-Padayachie

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At this stage, when considering the potential impacts of fairly widespread rain, it is critical to note that the occurrence of heavy rain is by no means the only rain-related hazardous weather issue. It can reasonably be expected that sustained rainfall over a large spatial area will inevitably surpass the infiltration capacity of the ground, thus leading to overland runoff. Such runoff feeds into stream and river systems and often leads to river-flooding scenarios. The public should therefore remain vigilant and aware of the danger of localized urban flooding, particularly in low-lying areas and especially where the environment is modified by tarred roads and brick or concrete paving. **Moreover, under such circumstances, the public are strongly discouraged from crossing low-water bridges, either on foot or in vehicles. In both cases there is the very real danger of being swept off the bridge, due to the extreme lateral force of floodwaters.**

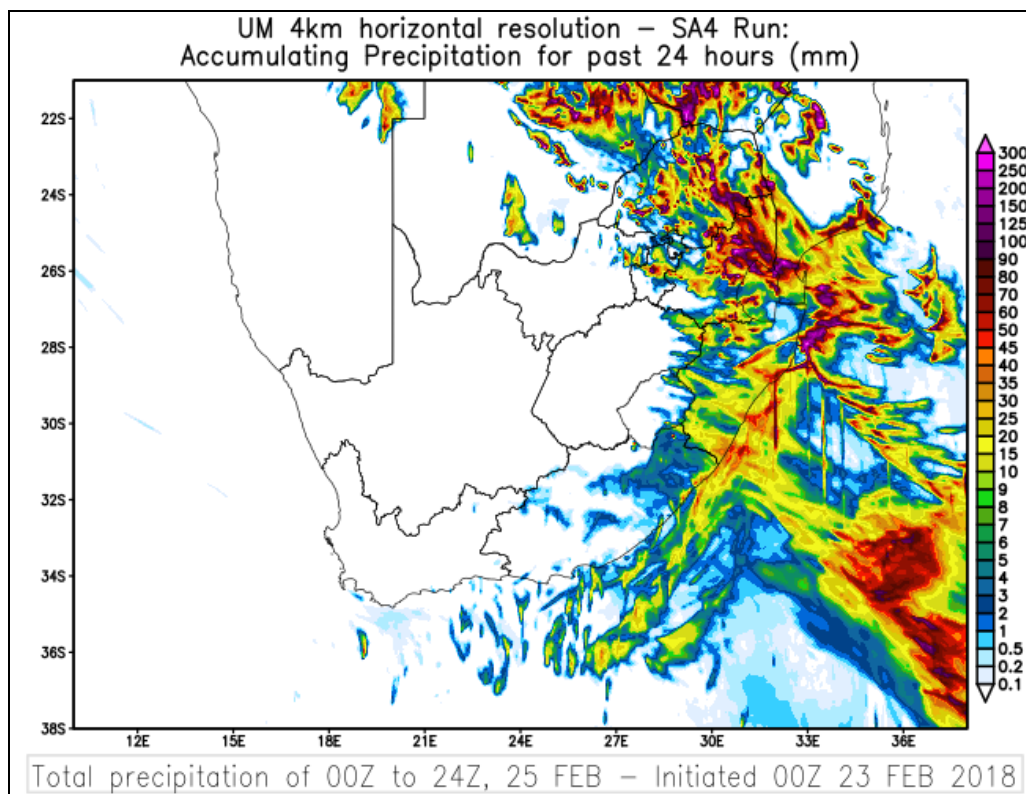


Figure 1: Predicted 24 hour rainfall in mm for Sunday 25 February 2018. Source: Unified Model (UM)

On Monday, 26 February 2018, the upper air trough will exit over the north-eastern parts of the country. A band of tropically-sourced moisture will however still persist over Botswana, Zimbabwe and the extreme north-eastern parts of South Africa. Mpumalanga and Limpopo will therefore remain cloudy and cool on Monday, with scattered to widespread showers. *Further heavy rain is possible in places over the northern parts of Limpopo, which may lead to localised flooding.* Otherwise, clear, dry conditions will prevail over the Cape Provinces as well as western parts of Free State and North-West, with a general recovery (warming) of daily temperatures from Monday onwards over these areas. Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal as well as the eastern parts of the Free State and North-West are likely to experience only isolated showers and thundershowers on Monday.

For the remainder of the week from Tuesday onwards, the weather conditions are expected to return to normal. Isolated afternoon thundershowers can be expected here and there, although conditions will remain mostly stable and dry over many parts of the country.

The South African Weather Service has issued the following weather alerts:

Watches:

*Severe thunderstorms are expected on **Saturday (24 February)** over the south-western parts of KwaZulu-Natal and north-eastern parts of Free State Province.*

Special weather Advisories

*Heavy rain leading to flooding is expected on **Sunday (25 February)** in places over KwaZulu-Natal, the eastern parts of Mpumalanga and the Limpopo Province.*

The South African Weather Service will continue to monitor any further developments relating to this weather system and will issue subsequent updates as required. Furthermore, the public are urged to regularly follow weather forecasts on television and radio.

Updated information can also be found at www.weathersa.co.za as well as via the SA Weather Service Twitter account **@SAWeatherServic**

Compiled by: Mkhushulwa William Msimanga

Edited by: Kevin Rae

For technical and weather enquiries:

National Forecasting Centre; Tel: 012 367 6041

Media enquiries: Ms Hannelee Doubell: Manager, External Communications; Tel: (012) 367 6104; Cell: 072 222 6305; E-mail: hannelee.doubell@weathersa.co.za