Monday, September 7, 2026

Overnight Storms Impact Billings Area

Overview

Between 2 AM and 3 AM, a storm moved through Billings, intensifying as it passed through town and through the Shepherd vicinity. In Billings, the airport reported gusts up to 53 mph and picked up 1.29” of rain within half an hour. As the storm exited town and moved into the Shepherd, Huntley, and Worden areas, the storm quickly and briefly pulsed up to produce hail up to 3” in diameter.

Timeline

- Throughout Sunday, September 6, 2026, the Storm Prediction Center and Billings Weather Forecast Office communicated Isolated Severe Thunderstorms potential occurring overnight. Strong winds, local heavy rain, and hail were all potential hazards communicated in the Marginal Convective Outlook, Area Forecast Discussion, Weather Story Graphics, and local forecasts.
- A **Special Weather Statement** was issued at 2:11 AM, alerting those in the Billings and Shepherd vicinities to wind gusts up to 55 mph, small hail, and heavy rain.
- A follow-up **Special Weather Statement** was issued at 2:44 AM for the Shepherd and Worden areas. Gusts up to 55 mph and heavy rain were still indicated as expected hazards, and hail potential increased up to nickel size.
- At 2:50 AM, a **Flood Advisory** was issued for Billings Heights, Shepherd, and Acton areas for flooding in low-lying and poor drainage areas. At this time, an estimated 1 to 2.5” of rain had fallen, and another inch of rain was expected.

Radar Loop

Reflectivity | weather.gov/images/byz/events/2026/RadarLoopRefl_7Sept2026.gif

Velocity | weather.gov/images/byz/events/2026/RadarLoopVel_7Sept2026.gif

Damages & Storm Reports

The combination of strong winds and large hail resulted in house and vehicle windows being shattered, power outages via knocked down power lines, and in extreme cases, totaled vehicles and blown over sheds. The highest observed wind gust was 64 mph 3 miles Southwest of Lockwood. Hail up to 3” in diameter was observed in the Shepherd vicinity, and smaller hail occurred elsewhere in and around Billings.

Radar Analysis Summary

At the time of the storm passing over Billings, winds were the main focus, as Base Velocity signatures indicated speeds 60 to 70 knots just east of town at 1000 ft Above Ground Level (AGL). Specific Differential Phase (KDP) were very high, which is an indicator for very high rainfall rates, as well as a lot of small hail. Note that Base Velocity signatures are a rough estimate for winds aloft, and does not always mean those wind speeds will reach the surface. With a gust of 53 mph reported in Billings, it was deduced that winds were staying above the Boundary Layer (a layer that, in part, prevents strong winds aloft from reaching the surface).

As the storm exited the Billings Heights area, radar showed a hail signature forming, hence the increase in hail size in the follow-up Special Weather Statement. However, KDPs were still very high, which again is a sign of the hail within a storm producing a lot of small hail. As the storm entered the Shepherd vicinity, it rapidly intensified, with various hail signatures increasing drastically over the span of a few minutes. This is likely when the 3” hail occurred, then as the storm exited Shepherd, it quickly weakened back to the state it was in as it crossed over Billings, still producing strong winds, heavy rain, and small hail.

Media use of NWS Web News Stories is encouraged.

Please acknowledge the NWS as the source of any news information from this document.