

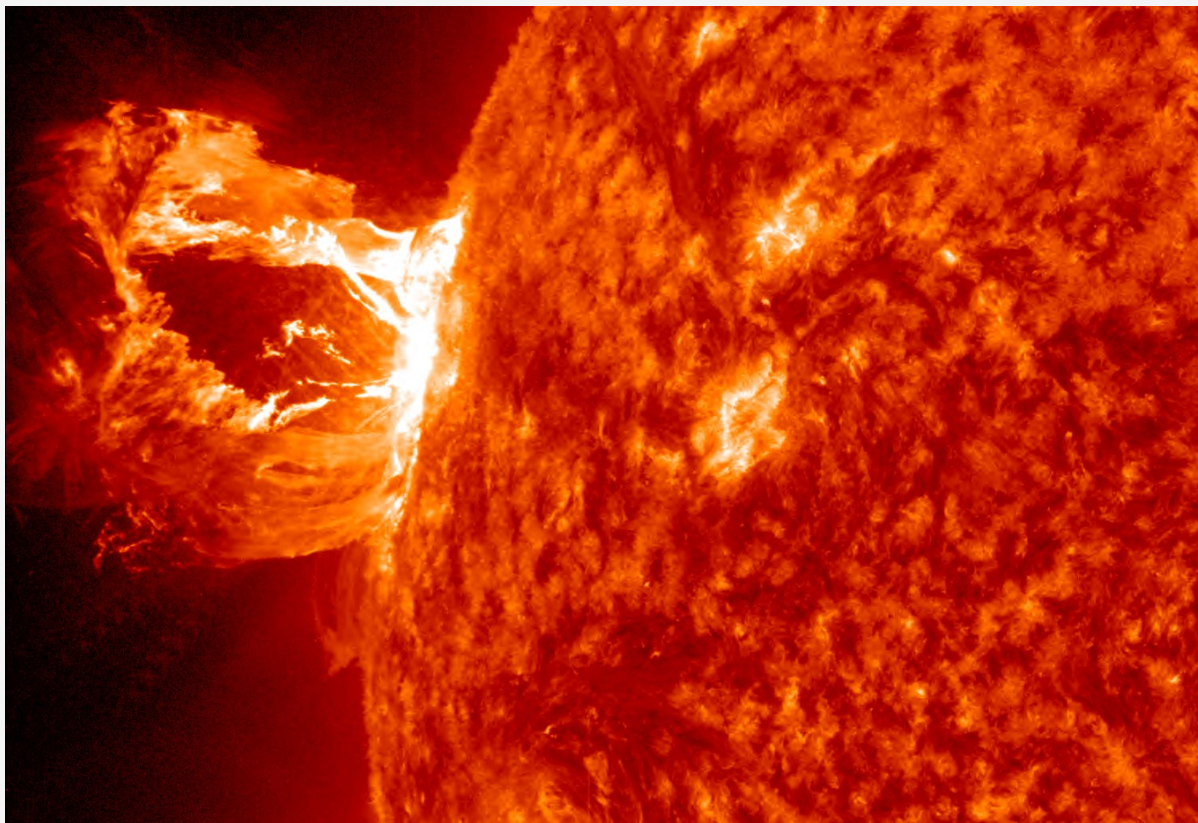


# Preparing the Nation for Space Weather: New Executive Order

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**Summary:** The Administration takes significant step towards preparing critical infrastructure and technology for the risk of space weather.



Solar flare and Coronal Mass Ejection from the NASA Solar Dynamics Observatory. *(Photo Credit: NASA).*

Today, President Obama signed an [Executive Order](#) that seeks to coordinate efforts to prepare the Nation for space weather events. The Executive Order will help reduce economic loss, save lives, and enhance national security by ordering the creation of nationwide response and recovery plans and procedures that incorporate technologies that mitigate the effects of space-weather events. By this action, the Federal Government will lead by example and help motivate state and local

governments, and other nations, to create communities that are more resilient to the hazards of space weather.

The term “space weather” refers to effects on the space environment that arise from emissions from the sun, including solar flares, solar energetic particles, and coronal mass ejections. Space weather is a natural hazard that can significantly affect critical infrastructure essential to the economy, social wellbeing, and national security, such as electrical power, water supply, health care, and transportation.

These emissions can interact with Earth, potentially degrading, disrupting, or damaging the technology that forms the Nation’s backbone of critical infrastructure. Because it poses a significant risk to the Nation’s security, space weather is included in the Department of Homeland Security’s [Strategic National Risk Assessment](#), which outlines threats that pose the greatest risk to the security of the Nation and that, therefore, the Nation must prepare for.

Reducing vulnerability to space weather requires an all-of-nation approach, including collaboration across governments, the emergency-management community, academia, the media, the insurance industry, non-profits, and the private sector. Over the past 6 years, the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and the National Security Council (NSC) have worked together to coordinate interagency efforts to improve understanding, prediction, and preparedness for potentially devastating space-weather events. These efforts combined the national- and homeland-security enterprise with the science and technology enterprise to create the 2015 [National Space Weather Strategy](#) and accompanying [Action Plan](#). Those documents describe how the Federal Government will coordinate the efforts of Federal agencies towards space-weather preparedness, and how the Federal Government will engage academia, the private sector, and State, local, tribal, and foreign governments.

The Executive Order builds on the significant progress of the National Space Weather Strategy and Action Plan by:

- Establishing a national policy for space weather;
- Establishing an enduring interagency coordination body within the National Science and Technology Council to implement the national space-weather policy;
- Articulating department and agency roles and responsibilities with respect to space- weather research, operations, and planning;
- Ordering the implementation of necessary, high-level activities that were not included in the Action Plan; and

- Reinforcing the need to work with non-Federal entities, including international partners, to achieve national preparedness for space weather.

We cannot ignore the potential impact space weather may have on key infrastructures and technologies. This new Executive Order will strengthen America's resilience to space weather and help to build a more secure and resilient Nation.



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