After a wet week for much of the state, rain chances will return to normal levels this weekend.

An upper level disturbance across southern Florida will keep rain chances higher for the next day or so, but will move east over the weekend. Also, a stalled frontal boundary to the north of the state will lift northward over the weekend before a new frontal system moves into the state early next week.

Rain chances for the next 2 days will be above normal across South Florida Thursday and Friday around 50%-70% associated with the disturbance. For northern and central Florida areas, rain chances will be less between 20% and 40%, though some areas could be completely dry.

By Saturday and Sunday, rain chances will return to normal statewide to around 20%-40%, with most of that activity associated with the afternoon and evening sea breezes.

Over the next 5 days, rainfall totals could reach 1”-2” across Central and South Florida. Most of that activity will occur within the next 2 days, but will also continue throughout the weekend. Across North Florida, most of the rainfall will occur later this weekend and early next week as the front approached our region.

Because of the higher rain chances across South Florida, temperatures will be lower in the upper 80s to low 90s, but further north across North and Central Florida, more sunshine will bring temperatures into the mid to upper 90s through Saturday. A few locations could even reach the 100 degree mark.
Also, high humidity will bring our heat index values up once again to between 100 and 105 degrees each afternoon across Central and South Florida, but further north, heat index values could range between 105 and 110 degrees.

Moving into early next week, temperatures will decrease slightly across North Florida and statewide temperatures will range between the upper 80s and mid 90s Sunday and Monday. However, lingering high humidity will again result in heat index values reaching as high as 106 degrees across Central and South Florida and as high as 110 across North Florida.

If you are going to be outside this weekend, keep in mind some heat safety tips:

- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Wear a hat or use an umbrella. Apply sunscreen before exposure to the sun.
- Drink water even if you do not feel thirsty.
- Stay indoors when possible. Avoid strenuous activity in the afternoon.
- Don’t forget your pets. Make sure they have access to water, ventilation and shade.
- Do not leave people or pets in a car, even with the windows open.

If you’re planning on heading to the beach this weekend to enjoy the sunny weather early in the day, be aware that there could be a moderate risk of rip currents along the West Central and Southwest Florida coast this weekend. Swim within sight of a lifeguard if possible and pay attention to rip current warning flags.

Taking a look at the tropics, we’re seeing an increase in activity as we head into the middle of August, when we typically start to see an increase in tropical activity across the Atlantic.

We’re currently watching two tropical waves in the far eastern Atlantic. The National Hurricane Center is forecasting a 20%-30% chance that these waves could become the next tropical depressions or tropical storms within the next 48 hours.
The next two names on the 2011 storm list are Franklin and Gert.

It is too early to tell if these waves will be named or even have an impact on Florida or the U.S., but everyone should monitor the progress of these systems as they move generally west to west-northwest over the next 4-7 days.

Further west towards Florida, an area of storms associated with an upper level disturbance has only a 10% chance of formation and will likely steer away from the U.S.

For the latest updates on the tropics and the weather forecast for your area this weekend, visit www.FloridaDisaster.org and click on the Division’s homepage.