

SEPTEMBER 2002: The trend of above-normal temperatures and subnormal rainfall continued across most of the Washington/Baltimore area, resulting in the worsening of long term drought conditions. Temperatures averaged more than 2°F above-normal at both DCA and BWI and just under 2°F above-normal at IAD. It was the eighth month of 2002 with above-normal temperatures at DCA and the second warmest January-September ever recorded in Washington (see cover graph). There were 24 days with at or above-normal temperatures at DCA, including three days with highs at or above 90°F. There were no significant intrusions of cool Canadian air as minimum temperatures averaged 2.5°F above-normal at DCA. In fact, DCA's minimum temperature remained above 70°F on the 15th, 16th, and 22nd. There were only two days with highs below 70°F (1st and 26th), due in large part to clouds and rain.

Subnormal rainfall was observed across most of the Washington/Baltimore area with monthly totals between 2" and 3.25" reported at the three major airports. It was the seventh month with subnormal precipitation at DCA, resulting in the fourth driest January through September period (20.54"; Dep. Nml: -9.89") on record and the driest such period since 1986 in Washington. In addition, only 23.31" of precipitation (Dep. Nml: -16.04") has been recorded at DCA since October 1, 2001, marking the driest October-September period ever recorded in Washington. The local area did receive beneficial rains on the 1st and 26th. Both storm systems provided a steady, soaking rain although amounts varied considerably across the local area. On the 1st, IAD (on the western edge of the rainfall) recorded only 0.39" while just to the northeast, portions of Montgomery County, MD received over two inches of rain. Farther east, more than 8 inches of rain soaked portions of Maryland's Eastern Shore, generating localized flooding. On the 26th, up to 1.62" of rain was observed at IAD. Showers associated with the remnants of Tropical Storm Isadore the next day, yielded nearly another 0.50" of precipitation at IAD while to the east a two-day (26th & 27th) combined total of less than an inch was recorded at DCA. Although monthly precipitation totals were below normal at most locations, a few locations east of Washington recorded above-normal rainfall. Much of the month was rain-free and hydrologic drought (decreasing levels of well and reservoir water) prompted water conservation and restrictions in some areas. January-September 2002 precipitation deficits exceeded nine inches at DCA and were nearly eight inches at BWI, and seven inches at IAD.

SEPTEMBER 2002 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr to date
National (DCA)	81.7	64.3	73.0	70.5	+2.5	92/4	55/24	2.10	3.79	-1.69	20.54
Baltimore (BWI)	80.3	58.7	69.5	67.4	+2.1	90/10	48/24	3.17	3.98	-0.81	24.55
Dulles (IAD)	80.7	57.5	69.1	67.3	+1.8	91/10	45/24	2.84	3.82	-0.98	25.39
Andrews AFB (ADW)	80.2	60.0	70.1	N/A	N/A	90/4	50/24	2.47	3.6	-1.1	23.36

Other Occurrences:

LOOKING AHEAD TO OCTOBER: *The first freeze?*

October is usually the month when we think about the first frost or freeze in the Washington/Baltimore area, especially away from the cities. Below is a list of the dates of the first 32°F or lower reading during the last ten years at DCA and IAD, along with the earliest and latest freezes on record in Washington.

Year	First 32°F (or lower) reading		Year	First 32°F (or lower) reading	
	DCA	IAD		DCA	IAD
2001	December 22*	October 9	1996	November 12	October 12
2000	November 16	October 8	1995	November 5	October 17
1999	November 18	October 28	1994	November 24	October 11
1998	November 5	October 2	1993	November 2	October 1
1997	November 16	October 2	1992	October 20	October 7

Washington earliest freeze: October 10, 1895

* Washington latest freeze: December 22, 2001