

July 2008

Temperature: Above normal temperatures were observed across the area. Positive temperature departures were +1.5°F at DCA, +1.0°F at BWI, and +1.1°F at IAD. July marked the 14th out the past 15 months with at or above normal temperatures at BWI and IAD and 13th out of 15 months at DCA (see cover). DCA recorded 14 days with highs at or above 90°F, IAD, 11 such days, BWI, 10. The months' most significant heat wave occurred from the 16th-22nd when many areas recorded highs at or above 90°F along with high levels of humidity on most of those days. DCA's maximum of 96°F on the 21st and 95°F on the 20th marked the 6th day this season with highs at or above 95°F. Many nights were uncomfortably warm as well. DCA observed 23 days with minimum temperatures at or above 70°F including minimums of 78°F on the final 2 days of the month. Some suburban locations enjoyed some relatively cool mornings. BWI's minimum of 59°F on the 25th tied a record low set in 1976.

Precipitation: Rainfall totals were highly variable across the region, primarily due to thunderstorm patterns. At the three major airports, totals ranged from as little as 2.18" (-1.39") at IAD to 5.47" at BWI (+1.62"). DCA's total of 3.60" was nearly normal (-.06"). While severe weather was not as frequent and extensive as in June, several events reached severe criteria during the month. For the 3rd consecutive year, Independence Day featured strong to severe thunderstorms. Unlike the past 2 years, the activity was more scattered with many of the intense storms south of Washington's immediate suburbs. Areas impacted included Stafford, VA, with wind gusts from 65-70 mph and hail to .88"; Culpepper, VA, with wind gusts to 60 mph and Calvert County, MD, with ¾ inch hail reported.

Heavy rainfall was reported in some locations on the 9th (2.62" Dunkirk, Calvert County) and 14th (2.41" at Rixeyville, Culpeper County, VA; 1.66" Columbia, Howard County, MD). On the 20th, thunderstorms brought widespread wind damage impacting the western suburbs, especially Fauquier and Loudoun, VA, and Fairfax and Frederick County, MD. On the 22nd, golf ball size hail was observed in Baltimore County, MD, and DCA reported a wind gust to 51 mph.

The months' most widespread event followed on the 23rd when two EF-0 tornadoes were observed in Northern Virginia. The first tornado struck northern Prince William County and caused some property damage in the Manassas area along a 1½ mile path; wind speeds were estimated at 75 mph. The second tornado touched down in Rappahannock County between Rock Mills and Washington, VA, with estimated wind speeds of 80 mph and a path length of 1.3 miles. The event brought heavy downpours in some areas; more than 20,000 customers lost power in the metro area, according to press reports. The event brought BWI 2.42" of rain and DCA 1.09".

The last significant severe weather event of July occurred on the 27th. Numerous reports of thunderstorm wind damage were reported in Fairfax County, VA, along with penny to quarter size hail at the intersection of I-66 and Route 28; 1" hail pounded Ashburn, VA, (Loudoun County) as well as in an area 5 miles SSW of BWI. Peak gusts reached 43 mph at DCA.

JULY 2008 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (Inches)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Year to Date
National (DCA)	89.5	72.0	80.7	79.2	+1.5	96/21	65/1	3.60	3.66	-0.06	32.32
Baltimore (BWI)	87.7	67.2	77.5	76.5	+1.0	94/20	59/25	5.47	3.85	+1.62	29.20
Dulles (IAD)	87.6	66.0	76.8	75.7	+1.1	95/20	58/1, 25	2.18	3.57	-1.39	28.40

Looking Ahead: Hot August? The first 2 months of meteorological summer featured above normal temperatures. Does a hot June and July equal a hot August? Below is a look at the most recent 10 summers when June-August featured above normal readings.

Years with All Three Summer Months Above Normal Temperatures at DCA	
2008?	1999
2007	1998
2006	1995
2005	1994
2002	1993