

April 2009

Temperatures: The Washington/Baltimore area observed above normal temperatures in April with positive departures of +0.9°F at DCA, +1.7°F at BWI and +2.7°F at IAD. The above normal readings were largely the result of the season's first heat wave from the 25th-28th. Highs soared to summer-time levels with the three major airports recording their first 90 degree readings. From the 25th-27th, most areas recorded 3 consecutive days with highs at or above 90°F. IAD's high of 92°F for each of those days set a new record on the 25th and equaled the record the following 2 days. While no daily records were set at BWI or DCA, BWI's high was 90°F on the 25th, and 91°F on the 26th and 27th. DCA observed 92°F on the 26th with slightly lower readings on the other hot days as breezes blew onshore from the relatively cool Potomac River.

In sharp contrast, readings across the region held in the 40s to about 50°F on 3 days (7th, 14th and 15th). Many suburban areas recorded their final freeze of the season on the 13th, including a low of 29°F at BWI and 32°F at IAD. As is common in springtime, large diurnal changes occurred on several days. On the 24th, IAD reached a maximum of 80°F after a morning low of 36°F. The following day, BWI's temperature rose from 51°F to 90°F.

Precipitation: After the 2nd driest February-March ever recorded in Washington, well above normal rainfall was observed across the region during April. Monthly totals were 4.22" at DCA (+1.45"), 5.80" at BWI (+2.80") and 4.12" (+0.90") at IAD. It was the 6th consecutive April with above normal rainfall. The month's largest event occurred on the 20th when more than an inch was recorded at all three major airports and over 2 inches of rain in some locations. This event was the result of a soaking rain overnight followed by a round of showers and thunderstorms in the evening. Totals included 2.20" in White Oak (Montgomery County), MD, 1.63" at IAD, 1.44" at BWI and 1.19" at DCA. Severe thunderstorms were reported south and east of Washington with hail measured at an estimated 2" in Fredericksburg, 1" in King George, VA, and 0.88" in Hughesville, MD (Charles County).

A second round of severe weather occurred the following day with 1" hail in Rockville, MD (Montgomery County), and in Fairfax, VA (Fairfax County), while 0.75" hail pelted portions of Anne Arundel and Calvert Counties in MD. The same event resulted in a plane being struck by lightning after takeoff from BWI. The plane landed safely at IAD. The thunderstorm resulted in about 6,000 customers losing power across the area, according to press reports.

Heavy rainfall on the 11th totaled about 0.75" to about 1" to many locations. IAD established a daily rainfall record with 0.74". BWI observed its wettest April since 1983 (see cover), including measurements of 1.55" on the 3rd and 1.14" of rainfall on the 15th.

Strong winds occurred across the area on the 4th. Gusts to 52 mph were reported in Glen Burnie (Ann Arundel County) and in Gaithersburg, MD (Montgomery County), and 50 mph in Washington, D.C., and in Arlington, VA.

APRIL 2009 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (Inches)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNml	Max	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr. to Date
National (DCA)	66.8	47.2	57.0	56.1	+0.9	92/26	36/8	4.22	2.77	+1.45	9.22
Baltimore (BWI)	65.9	43.9	54.9	53.2	+1.7	91/27, 26	29/13	5.80	3.00	+2.80	10.86
Dulles (IAD)	67.5	44.2	55.8	53.1	+2.7	92/27, 26	31/9	4.12	3.42	+0.90	9.51

Looking Ahead to May: After another wet April, will May bring more showers? Listed below is the total rainfall at DCA for the most recent 10 Aprils with above normal precipitation and the subsequent May total. Normal April rainfall at DCA is 2.77".

Most Recent 10 Aprils at DCA with Above Normal Rainfall

Year	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2002	2000	1998	1996
April	4.22	6.22	3.38	4.86	4.34	5.04	3.45	4.36	2.92	3.69
May	?	9.38	0.34	1.80	4.86	3.06	4.73	2.57	4.52	7.07