

February 2009

Temperature: Above normal temperatures were prevalent across the Washington/Baltimore area. Positive departures were +1.7°F at DCA, +1.9°F at BWI and +3.1°F at IAD. There were three distinct periods with above normal readings, 1st-2nd, 7th-13th and 25th-28th. During this time frame, DCA reported 3 days with highs at or above 60°F, while BWI and IAD observed 4 such days including a record high of 65°F at IAD on the 7th. The months' warmest readings were observed on the 7th as highs soared to 70°F or greater across many locations including the three major airports. DCA reached 72°F, IAD 71°F (another record high) and BWI 70°F. In contrast, while not as severe or as lengthy as January's intense cold, the area experienced arctic air at times. The coldest day occurred on the 5th when maximum readings remained in the 20s with wind chill values in the teens. IAD recorded 5 days with minimums below 20°F including 10°F on the 6th; BWI observed 3 such days and DCA, 2. Minimum temperatures on the 8th held above freezing across the area, the first such occurrence since January 7th at DCA and BWI (31 days) and since January 5th at IAD (33 days).

Precipitation: February was the driest ever recorded at DCA and BWI and second driest ever at IAD (1978 measured .25"). Monthly totals were 0.35" at DCA (-2.28"); 0.26" at BWI (-2.76") and 0.36" (-2.41") at IAD. The months' only event that brought greater than a tenth of an inch of precipitation occurred on the 18th when a period of light snow and sleet changed to light rain across the area. While the immediate metro area observed less than an inch of snow for the month, some areas measured greater totals on the 3rd and 4th. In Virginia, Bluemont (Loudoun County) reported 3.8" and Marshall (Fauquier County) 3.0" on the 3rd, while in Maryland, Columbia (Howard County) and Millers (Carroll County) accumulated 2.0" on the 4th. The region was also impacted by very strong winds on the 12th, resulting in downed trees and scattered power outages, according to press reports. Peak wind gusts included 65 mph in Rockville, MD (Montgomery County), 60 mph in Leesburg, VA (Loudoun County), 54 mph at BWI and 51 mph at DCA. It was also the driest month since March 2006 at DCA, BWI and IAD.

FEBRUARY 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	Snow	Year to Date
National (DCA)	49.5	30.1	39.8	38.1	+1.7	72/11	15/5	0.35	2.63	-2.28	0.1	3.03
Baltimore (BWI)	48.4	26.5	37.4	35.5	+1.9	70/11	12/6	0.26	3.02	-2.76	0.6	2.99
Dulles (IAD)	48.8	27.1	37.9	34.8	+3.1	71/11	10/6	0.35	2.77	-2.41	T	2.99

Winter (December-February) Temperatures: The Washington-Baltimore area recorded near normal temperatures this winter, in sharp contrast to the Winter of 2007-08 when the three airports recorded positive departures of +3.4°F at DCA, +1.9°F at BWI and +3.0°F at IAD. December started the season with above normal temperatures at the three major airports. DCA recorded 12 days with highs at or above 50°F. Highs soared to 70°F at DCA on December 28th. The first month of meteorological winter also included some chilly days. An arctic cold air mass arriving on December 22nd held temperatures well below freezing. Maximum readings reached only 28°F at the three major airports. January brought below normal temperature for the first occurrence since 2004. This blustery weather was in sharp contrast to last January when readings in Washington averaged 8.4°F warmer. Temperatures during the second half of the month averaged 5.8°F below normal at DCA. The months' most intense cold occurred from the 15th-17th when maximum readings were subfreezing with highs on the 16th reaching only 18°F at DCA and BWI, and 17°F at IAD; wind chill values were in the single digits during that period. The 16th marked the coldest maximum reading in Washington since 1994. The cold lingered throughout the month. February brought numerous temperature fluctuations but ended above normal (see monthly summary above).

Winter Precipitation: Echoing the winter of 2007, subnormal precipitation and snowfall was recorded across the Washington/Baltimore area for all three months with negative precipitation departures of -2.81" at DCA, -2.96" at BWI and -3.26" at IAD. It was the driest winter season at DCA since 2002. Snowfall was also subnormal for the season: DCA, -13.2" ; BWI, -15.9"; and IAD, -19.2". This winter marked the third lowest snowfall total at DCA since 1871. This was the driest winter at DCA since 1872. December started this drier than normal winter with near normal precipitation but almost no snowfall. On December 6, a few areas in Maryland reported a small amount of snow. The biggest precipitation event of the month, on December 10-11, brought more than 2" of rain to some areas. On December 22nd, strong wind gusts up to 53 mph in Clarksburg, MD (Montgomery County) and 50 mph in Reston, VA (Fairfax County) were reported. On December 31st, dangerously strong winds caused one fatality from a fallen tree in Loudoun County, VA, and one serious injury in Montgomery County, MD, with more than 90,000 customers without power, according to press reports. Peak wind gusts included 68 mph in Frederick, MD, and 60 mph in Vienna, (Fairfax County) VA. January precipitation was slightly below normal with little snow. The months' greatest precipitation event occurred on the 6th-7th when more than an inch of water equivalent fell at the three major airports and up to 2" in some locations. Freezing rain was reported in a few areas with 0.25" ice on some exposed surfaces. The precipitation event left isolated patches of ice on roadways on the morning of the 8th and resulted in a 10-car pileup on I-270 in Montgomery County, injuring 12, according to press reports. Brief but intense snow showers on the 19th across the northern and western suburbs lead to 42-car pileup on I-70 in Frederick County, MD, with 2 fatalities reported by media. The seasons' first measurable snowfall across much of the area occurred on the 27th, bring 1"-3" across the area plus up to .4" of ice in some localities. February was very dry (see monthly summary above).

WINTER 2008-2009 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	Snow
National (DCA)	45.2	29.2	37.2	37.5	-0.3	72/2-11	8/1-17	6.08	8.89	-2.81	2.0
Baltimore (BWI)	44.3	25.9	35.1	34.8	-0.3	70/2-11	2/1-17	6.34	9.30	-2.96	3.3
Dulles (IAD)	44.6	25.9	35.4	34.1	-1.3	71-2-11	0-1-17	5.63	9.89	-3.26	2.0

Looking Ahead to March—a month of extremes. Below is a list of some notable March climatological statistics for Washington since records began in 1871 (snowfall records began in 1988).

Temperature Extremes			Precipitation Extremes		
Coldest: 1885	Avg. Temp.: 34°F	Dep. Nml.: -12°F	Wettest: 1891	Tot. Prec.: 8.84"	Dep. Nml.: +5.24"
Warmest: 1921, 1945	Avg. Temp.: 55.°F	Dep. Nml.: +9°F	Driest: 1910	Tot. Prec.: 0.57"	Dep. Nml.: -3.03"
Extreme Minimum: 4°F (March 4, 1873)			Snowiest: 1914	Tot. Snowfall: 19.3"	Dep. Nml.: +17.7"
Extreme Maximum: 93°F (March 23, 1907)			Most precipitation in one day (liquid): 2.79" (March 9, 1881)		
Most days with: lows < 32°F: 24 (1960); highs > 90°F: 3 (1907)			Most snowfall in one day: 11.3" (March 29, 1942)		