

DECEMBER 1991: December continued the temperature pattern that has been so prevalent for the majority of 1990 and 1991: significantly milder than normal weather, with DCA, BWI and IAD averaging 2–3°F above normal, providing the finish to the warmest year ever recorded in Washington and the second warmest (behind 1990) at both BWI and IAD. The Arctic jet stream remained well to the north of Washington for most of the month, preventing any prolonged periods of cold weather. It was the first December since 1972 without at least a trace of snow in Washington; however, freezing rain on the morning of the 23rd in the northern and western suburbs created hazardous driving conditions for motorists. Similar to December's temperatures, the monthly precipitation was also above normal as the subtropical jet was very active, providing three significant rain events. Two to three inches fell from late November through the first few days of December, and above an inch occurred on the 9th and again on 28th–29th, making this December the wettest since 1983 at DCA and somewhat easing long-term dryness that afflicted the area throughout most of the year.

DECEMBER 1991 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)		
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNm	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNm
National (DCA)	50.4	34.2	42.3	38.9	+3.4	71/19	19/19	5.07	3.18	+1.89
Baltimore (BWI)	47.7	29.6	38.7	36.5	+2.2	67/9	14/20	4.08	3.40	+0.68
Dulles (IAD)	48.7	28.3	38.5	35.1	+3.4	67/8	8/20	4.54	3.29	+1.25
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	49.3	28.9	39.1	37	+2	73/9	11/20	4.88	3.3	+1.6
Andrews AFB (ADW)	49.1	30.4	39.7	38	+2	71/9	16/19*	4.50	3.4	+1.1

Other dates of occurrence: * December 20th.

ANNUAL 1991: The 1991 average temperature of 60.2°F (+2.7°F above normal) surpassed last year's average of 60.0°F (2.5°F above normal) as the warmest year on record. The year will be remembered for prolonged warmth from January through December, with only one of twelve months averaging below normal (September at DCA, November at BWI). Meanwhile, IAD continued a string of 15 consecutive months with above normal temperatures dating back to October 1990. There were 59 days with temperatures at or above 90°F, the most (tied with 1966 and 1988) since a record 67 days in 1980. The low for the year at DCA only managed to drop to 17°F, the highest extreme minimum temperature since 1975. In addition, only a scant 5.1 inches of snow fell during the year, 4.8" of that falling in January.

Yearly precipitation totals measured less than 30 inches at DCA for the first time since 1980. The below normal precipitation produced drought conditions, damaged crops, contributed to the spread of forest fires in the Shenandoahs during the Fall, and generated very low river flow on the Potomac River. Only March and December were significantly wetter than normal at DCA. Less than two inches of precipitation occurred during five of the twelve months at DCA. BWI recorded 6 consecutive drier than normal months (Apr–Sep), including 4 consecutive months (Apr–Jul) with precipitation totals under 2 inches.

From a seasonal perspective, DCA finished the year with all 4 seasons recording higher than normal temperatures. The Winter season (Dec 1990 – February 1991) was 4.8°F above normal, with both December and February more than 5°F warmer than normal. Winter snowfall (Total: 8.1" ; Normal: 14.3") was only slightly more than 50% of normal at DCA, with overall precipitation slightly below normal. Above normal temperatures carried into the Spring at DCA with the seasonal departure equaling +3.8°F. May boasted numerous monthly temperature records as hot weather dominated most of the month. May records included: warmest (Avg Temp: 73.0°F); highest temperature (99°F on the 31st); 11 days with highs at or above 90°F; and the most consecutive number days (7) of 90°F or higher temperatures. Abnormal warmth prevailed again during the Summer with a seasonal temperature departure of +2.4°F at DCA, yielding the second hottest summer on record. Meanwhile, rainfall was well below normal at DCA (Total: 7.06" ; Dep Nml: -4.57"). Fall temperatures averaged close to normal, and the seasonal precipitation followed the yearly trend with a subnormal total (DCA measured 6.38" versus a normal of 8.94").

1991 ANNUAL WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extremes-1991		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNm	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNm	Snow
National (DCA)	69.3	51.1	60.2	57.5	+2.7	101/7–21*	17/2–22	29.62	39.00	-9.38	5.1
Baltimore (BWI)	68.2	47.2	57.7	55.1	+2.6	102/7–23	12/1–23	30.16	41.84	-11.68	4.5
Dulles (IAD)	68.4	45.0	56.7	53.9	+2.8	101/7–21	8/12–22	34.02	40.35	-6.33	9.9
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	69.7	47.0	58.4	55	+3	103/7–21	11/12–20	29.62	41.7	-12.1	2.1
Andrews AFB (ADW)	67.4	46.6	57.0	56	+1	100/7–21*	12/1–22#	30.39	42.5	-12.1	4.6

Other dates of occurrence: * July 23rd; # January 26th.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 1992: With 1991 being the sixth driest year on record at Washington with less than 30 inches of precipitation, how will 1992 fare? Here is a look at the five driest years and total precipitation and their corresponding successive year and precipitation total. (Normal Annual Precipitation: 39.00")

Year	Precipitation Total	Year	Precipitation Total
1930	21.66"	1931	33.51"
1965	26.94"	1966	36.02"
1954	28.28"	1955	41.44"
1980	29.32"	1981	30.67"
1964	29.48"	1965	26.94"
1991	29.62"	1992	?