

DECEMBER 1992: December was highlighted by above normal precipitation but subnormal snowfall across much of the area, with three of the five airports recording totals of more than 4 inches while portions of Fairfax County, VA and Montgomery County, MD measured over 5 inches. The majority of the precipitation fell in association with an intense Nor'easter that battered much of the mid-Atlantic from the 10th-12th. The precipitation began as snow, accumulating up to one inch around the Washington/Baltimore area while heavier amounts fell north and west of Washington, producing hazardous driving conditions during the morning rush hour. By mid-morning, the snow changed over to locally heavy rain, accompanied by wind gusts up to 50 mph, but continued as snow in the mountains. The storm produced over 3 inches of precipitation at some locations while more than 3 feet of snow buried portions of the Allegheny Plateau, including a state (single-storm) record 42" at Big Piney, MD. Along the Atlantic Coast, inundating rains, wind gusts up to 90 mph, and near-record high tides generated flooding, beach erosion, and property damage along portions of the Delmarva Peninsula. On the 28th, freezing rain coated much of the Washington/Baltimore area, creating dangerous driving conditions and contributing to numerous traffic accidents.

Warmer than normal conditions were reported at four of the five airports for the third consecutive December. The month began with subnormal daily average temperatures across the region; however, by the end of the month, unusually warm conditions prevailed, producing readings at or above 70°F at four of the five airports, including record daily highs at both BWI (72°F) and IAD (73°F) on Dec 31.

DECEMBER 1992 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNm	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNm	Snow
National (DCA)	46.0	33.2	39.6	38.9	+0.7	67/31	20/25	2.86	3.18	-0.32	1.0
Baltimore (BWI)	46.5	31.3	38.9	36.5	+2.4	72/31	15/25	4.63	3.40	+1.23	1.5
Dulles (IAD)	45.0	28.5	36.8	35.1	+1.7	73/31	11/27	4.73	3.29	+1.44	2.8
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	45.5	29.9	37.7	37	+1	70/31	14/25	4.03	3.3	+0.7	1.0
Andrews AFB (ADW)	45.8	30.3	38.0	38	0	70/31	15/27	3.70	3.4	+0.3	1.0

ANNUAL 1992: 1992 featured cooler than normal conditions, a major departure from the record warm years of 1990 and 1991. Unusually mild weather began the year as 3 of the 5 airports recorded monthly departures of +3°F or higher for both January and February. By March, subnormal monthly temperatures commenced and persisted through June at most locations (the longest such period of successive cold months at DCA since Dec. 1977-March 1978). Only July was significantly warmer than normal, yet the summer months (June-August) produced only 20 days with readings at or above 90°F at DCA and finished as the coolest summer in 20 years with 64% of the days recording subnormal temperatures. Below normal monthly temperatures returned in August and continued until November. The Spring, Summer, and Fall seasons were all cooler than normal at 4 of the 5 airports.

Precipitation was generally below normal at four of the five airports (only IAD recorded above normal annual precipitation); however, some locations in Fairfax County, VA and Montgomery County, MD, measured more than 45 inches of precipitation. DCA, BWI, and portions of Prince Georges and Anne Arundel counties in Maryland received slightly below normal amounts. Measurable rain fell on nearly 50% of the full weekends (6 of 13) during the Spring at DCA. Snowfall was well below normal for the fifth consecutive year at DCA. Severe thunderstorms associated with the remnants of Hurricane Andrew spawned tornadoes in southern Fairfax County, VA and Prince Georges County, MD on August 28th. Tornadoes also occurred in Howard and Carroll Counties on August 4th and a rare Autumn tornado touched down in Suitland, MD on November 23rd. A powerful coastal storm pounded much of the area from December 10-12, generating inundating rains, heavy mountain snows, flooding and coastal beach erosion (see December summary above).

1992 ANNUAL WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extremes-1992		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNm	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNm	Snow
National (DCA)	65.2	48.3	56.7	57.5	-0.8	99/7-14	14/1-19	36.38	39.00	-2.62	7.6
Baltimore (BWI)	64.2	44.8	54.5	55.1	-0.6	98/7-14	9/1-19	38.93	41.84	-2.91	5.6
Dulles (IAD)	64.3	42.9	53.6	53.9	-0.3	96/7-14	7/2-10	44.36	40.35	+4.01	9.5
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	65.8	45.2	55.5	55	0	100/7-14	12/1-19*	40.68	41.7	-1.0	9.5
Andrews AFB (ADW)	63.7	44.7	54.2	56	-2	96/7-14	10/1-16#	40.26	42.5	-2.2	9.0

Other dates of occurrence: # January 19th; * January 20th.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 1993: The 1961-90 Daily Temperature & Precipitation Normals

Beginning on January 1st, the 1961-90 climatological normals for daily temperature, precipitation, and heating and cooling degree days became effective internationally. These normals replace the 1951-1980 benchmark period used for the last ten years. Below is a brief list of the more noteworthy changes, locally.

- Annual average temperatures rise at DCA from 57.5°F to 58.0°F, remain the same at BWI (55.1°F) and fall by 0.1°F at IAD (53.8°F);
- January and April average temperatures fall, February remains the same, and all other months rise at DCA, including July (new monthly normal: 80°F);
- Minimum temperatures at or above 70°F extend from June 29th-August 20th, previously from July 8th-August 10th at DCA;
- Annual precipitation totals fall at all 3 major airports: DCA (from 39.00" to 38.63"), BWI (from 41.84" to 40.76"), and IAD (from 40.35" to 40.24");
- 6 months with increased precipitation and 6 with lower monthly totals at DCA, including August with a decrease of nearly 0.5" from 4.40" to 3.91" (remains the wettest month) at DCA;
- Average seasonal temperatures increase in spring, summer, and autumn (winter unchanged) while precipitation normals decrease 3 of the 4 seasons (winter, spring, and summer) at DCA.