

JANUARY 1994: Very cold conditions gripped the Washington/Baltimore area during the first month of 1994, producing the coldest January since 1982 at both DCA and BWI (since 1984 at IAD) and the first January since 1988 with subnormal temperatures at the three major airports. The cold was accentuated by a strong blast of Arctic air during the third week which resulted in the first subzero reading at DCA since 1985. On the 19th, below zero readings enveloped the entire Washington/ Baltimore area, including DCA where the mercury plunged to -4°F . In extreme northern Maryland, lows plunged below -20°F . Highs on the 19th remained in the single digits and the 8°F reading at DCA equalled the lowest maximum temperature recorded in Washington this century. Highs of 5°F and 6°F at BWI and IAD, respectively, were the lowest maximum temperatures ever recorded at those locations and it was also the first time BWI ever recorded a single-digit maximum reading. Strong winds accompanied the cold air outbreak, producing wind chills of -40°F across the local area. Cold conditions continued into the 21st as lows again dipped below zero at 4 of the 5 airports (BWI, IAD, DAA, and ADW). The extreme cold came on the heels of an initial intrusion of Arctic air on the 15th and 16th which sent temperatures plummeting into the single digits and was accompanied by strong wind gusts that generated dangerous wind chills. The period of bitterly cold weather resulted in a severe drain on power supplies, leading to the first ever weather-related "state of emergency" declaration in the District of Columbia on the 20th, forcing the closure of schools, businesses, and local government. There were 25 January days when temperatures were at or below normal at DCA, including 7 days when the mercury failed to top 32°F . In addition, there were 3 days with record daily low maximum temperatures (15th, 19th, and 20th), one record daily low (19th), and a daily temperature departure of -32°F (19th) at DCA. The surface of both the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River froze for the first time since the winter of 1976-1977. There were 27 days with lows of 32°F or lower at DCA (tying 1978, 1984, and 1985) the most since 1977 (31 days). A very brief "January thaw" occurred on the 24th when a balmy reading of 61°F was observed at DCA.

Although wetter and colder than normal conditions were observed across the local area, most locations recorded subnormal snowfall. DCA, BWI, and IAD all recorded more than four inches of precipitation making 1994 the wettest January since 1987 at these three locations. Instead of snowy weather, the Washington/Baltimore area was plagued by a wintry mixture of snow, sleet and freezing rain. Two major ice storms on the 17th and again on the 27th-28th each deposited up to $3/4$ " of ice on exposed surfaces at some locations. Bitter cold conditions after the first storm prevented any significant melting and made for treacherous driving for several days. The second ice event included a mixture of sleet and freezing rain, producing hazardous driving conditions on the the 27th and 28th. This month's largest snowfall occurred on the 20th when 2-3 inches blanketed the area. Although mixed precipitation occurred on the 4th and the 7th the majority fell as rain in the immediate Washington/Baltimore area.

JANUARY 1994 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures ($^{\circ}\text{F}$)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgI	NmIT	DepNm	MaxI	MinI	Total	Norm	DepNm	Snow
National (DCA)	36.3	21.2	28.8	34.6	-5.8	61/24	-4/19	4.28	2.72	+1.56	3.5
Baltimore (BWI)	34.8	19.3	27.1	31.8	-4.7	55/24	-5/19	4.59	3.05	+1.54	4.9
Dulles (IAD)	34.5	17.6	26.1	30.6	-4.5	58/24	-7/21	4.07	2.70	+1.37	4.2
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	35.9	18.8	27.4	32	-5	60/24	-5/21	3.99	2.8	+1.2	6.3
Andrew AFB (ADW)	34.3	19.4	26.8	34	-7	58/24	-4/19	4.18	3.1	+1.1	5.2

LOOKING AHEAD TO FEBRUARY: A Cold February?

After one of the ten coldest Januaries ever recorded in Washington, what's in store for the Washington/Baltimore area during February temperaturewise. Below is a list of the ten coldest Januaries ever recorded in Washington and the corresponding February average temperatures. [Normal February Average Temperature at DCA: 37.5°F ; Normals Period: 1961-1990]

Year	Average January Temperature($^{\circ}\text{F}$)	Average February Temperature($^{\circ}\text{F}$)
1918	23.7	36.8
1893	24.6	35.1
1940	24.9	37.1
1912	25.0	31.0
1977	25.4	38.8
1904	27.5	28.4
1881	27.6	32.8
1982	28.1	38.3
1920	28.7	32.7
1948	28.8	36.8
1994	28.8	?