

FEBRUARY 1995: After three months of abnormal warmth and relatively tranquil weather, more seasonable conditions returned to the Washington/Baltimore area during February. Monthly temperature departures between -1°F and -4°F were observed at the five local airports. The month also featured the most prolonged period of cold weather this winter. DCA recorded 16 days with below normal temperatures, including 5 consecutive days (5th-9th) with at or below freezing highs, the longest such period (tied with Dec 26-30, 1993) since December 1989. There were 22 February days with lows of 32°F or lower at DCA, the most (tied with 1992 and 1993) since 1978. The lowest readings of the Winter at many locations occurred on the 6th (7th at IAD and DAA) as lows dipped into the single digits (7°F at DCA and 5°F at BWI). IAD recorded the only subzero temperature of the season when the low plunged to -1°F on the 7th. Around mid-month, temperatures moderated to more typical levels for February; however, a high of 62°F was observed on the 20th at DCA.

Monthly precipitation and snowfall were below normal throughout the local area with February precipitation totals generally about 65% of normal. It was the fifth month out of the last six with subnormal precipitation at DCA. Subnormal snowfall occurred for the 8th consecutive February at DCA (5.8"; Normal: 6.3") despite a brief, heavy snow on the 4th. The storm produced 4-8 inches of snow across most of the local area. The monthly snowfall total of 5.8" at DCA, however, was the most in February since 1987 (10.3"). Strong winds followed the storm, generating bitterly cold wind chills and some blowing and drifting snow. There were only 5 days with measurable precipitation at DCA, but numerous cloudy days (16).

FEBRUARY 1995 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	Dep	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	Dep	Snow
National (DCA)	42.4	26.3	34.4	37.5	-3.1	62/20	7/6	1.71	2.71	-1.00	5.8
Baltimore (BWI)	41.9	24.4	33.2	34.8	-1.6	59/20	5/6	1.88	3.12	-1.24	7.5
Dulles (IAD)	41.3	21.3	31.3	33.6	-2.3	62/20	-1/7	1.80	2.81	-1.01	7.8
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	42.3	23.3	32.8	36	-3	64/23	1/7	1.62	3.0	-1.4	7.0
Andrew AFB (ADW)	43.9	26.4	35.1	36	-1	65/20	7/6*	1.94	2.8	-0.9	5.3

Other dates of occurrence: *February 7th.

WINTER (DECEMBER 1994-FEBRUARY 1995): Winter featured above normal temperatures and subnormal precipitation and snowfall at most locations. The first two months of Winter were marked by abnormal warmth and relatively little wintry weather. In fact, the December-January period was the warmest such period on record at BWI (second at IAD and sixth at DCA). During this period, DCA recorded 48 days with at or above normal temperatures, a record high extreme minimum temperature for the month of December (28°F on the 30th and 31st), and the first 70°F reading in January since 1975. Climatologically, January is the coldest month of the year in the Washington/Baltimore area, but the average temperature of 39.6°F this year at DCA, even exceeded the normal December average temperature. Unlike last year, January 1995 featured 15 consecutive days (11th-25th) with above normal readings (the longest such period since January 1990), daily average temperature departures of nearly +30°F on the 14th and 15th, and a monthly temperature departure of +5.0°F (January 1994 Temp. Dep.: -5.8°F) at DCA. A significant shift in the jet stream, to a more typical winter position, occurred during February and brought much colder weather into the Washington/Baltimore area for much of the month. Highs at DCA remained at or below freezing for five consecutive days (5th-9th), the longest such stretch in any month since December 1989. Lows also plunged into the single digits across most of the region. In fact, the minimum temperature of 7°F at DCA on the 6th was the lowest February reading since 1979. Each month of the 1994-95 Winter featured an extreme maximum temperature above 60°F at DCA.

Seasonal precipitation and snowfall were below normal across most of the area. In fact, it was the driest Winter since 1980-81 at BWI (6.73"), and since 1989-90 at both DCA and IAD. The two most significant rain events occurred on January 6th and 20th. The first produced nearly an inch of rain while the second dumped nearly two inches on some locations as showers and rare January thunderstorms moved through the area. The first significant snowfall of the season fell in a narrow band across northern Virginia and Washington D.C on January 28th. The storm dumped nearly 4 inches at DCA (3.9") and up to 6 inches in northern Virginia, but less than a half-inch around Baltimore (0.3"). It was the latest first inch (or greater) snowfall in Washington since 1976 while the monthly total of 0.3" at BWI was the lowest January total since 1973. Subnormal precipitation and snowfall also prevailed during February; however, a storm system on the 4th generated 4-8 inches of snow across most of the area. This turned out to be the last significant snowfall of the Winter, resulting in the eighth consecutive winter with subnormal snowfall.

WINTER 1994-1995 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Mth-Day			Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	Dep	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	Dep	Snow	Dep
National (DCA)	46.7	35.3	39.4	37.2	+2.2	71/12-5	7/2-6	7.28	8.55	-1.27	9.7	-5.9
Baltimore (BWI)	46.5	30.0	38.3	34.5	+3.8	71/1-13	5/2-6	6.73	9.58	-2.85	7.8	-8.1
Dulles (IAD)	45.5	27.0	36.2	33.2	+3.0	72/1-14	-1/2-7	8.40	8.73	-0.33	12.1	-6.6
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	46.2	29.0	37.6	35	-3.0	71/1-13*	1/2-7	7.11	9.1	-2.0	10.9	-8.5
Andrew AFB (ADW)	46.9	33.9	38.8	36	+3.0	70/12-5*	7/2-6#	9.42	9.3	+0.1	7.9	-6.0

Other dates of occurrence: * January 14th; # February 7th.

LOOKING AHEAD TO MARCH: A third consecutive wet and snowy March?

With both a wet and snowy March last year and again in 1993, the question arises whether 1995 will produce a third consecutive March "combination" of above normal precipitation and snowfall. If this were to happen, it would only be the third such occurrence since records began at Washington*. The only two such occurrences-to-date are listed below, along with the respective precipitation and snowfall totals and departures from normal.

Year	Total Prec.	DepNml	Total Snow	DepNml	Year	Total Prec.	DepNml	Total Snow	DepNml
1890	3.65"	+0.48"	5"	+3.4"	1922	4.74"	+1.57"	2.5"	+0.9
1891	8.84"	+5.67"	17"	+15.4"	1923	4.47"	+1.30"	6.5"	+4.9"
1892	5.70"	+2.53"	11.2"	+9.6	1924	6.17"	+3.00"	9.3"	+7.7"

[March Normals: Total Precipitation: 3.17"; Total Snowfall: 1.6"; Normals Period: 1961-1990]

* Washington Precipitation records began in 1871 and Snowfall records began in 1888.