

OCTOBER 1995: The second month of Autumn was marked by unusually warm and wet weather in the Washington/Baltimore area. One major rain event was observed each week which frequently occurred on Friday and Saturday. Four major episodes of precipitation produced enough rain (8.65" at DCA) to yield the third wettest October on record in Washington as well eliminate the long-term precipitation deficit that accumulated since March. Only the Octobers of 1937 (8.81") and 1885 (8.69") were wetter in Washington; however, it was the month of October precipitation ever recorded since observations have been taken at National Airport. BWI also recorded the third wettest October (6.24"), and the precipitation total at IAD (6.51") ranked fifth, but both locations still have subnormal precipitation for the January–October period. The first rainfall event occurred on the 4th and 5th as the remnants of Hurricane Opal moved through the local area. Over two inches of rain fell at DCA, and this system was accompanied by a tornado outbreak in the southern and eastern suburbs of Maryland. Up to 4 (possibly as many as seven) tornadoes touched down in the Maryland counties of Prince Georges, Charles, and Anne Arundel (St. Marys and Harford). The strongest tornado (F2) set down in the Camp Springs area of Prince Georges County, causing extensive property damage. As many as 15 homes were destroyed and 82 others damaged. A second tornado in Odenton, MD was responsible for damage to as many as 18 homes. The next round of precipitation occurred on the 14th and 15th when a cold front pushed through the area. Strong thunderstorms generated heavy rain, powerful wind gusts and more tornadoes. DCA observed a daily record rainfall total of 3.36" on the 14th (0.34" more than the normal October total). On the 20th and 21st, more showers and thunderstorms doused the Washington/Baltimore area, producing nearly 3 inches of rain in Loudoun County, VA. In addition, two weak tornadoes touched down in northern Frederick County, MD. The third "Friday–Saturday" rain event of the month occurred on the 27th and 28th when showers and thunderstorms provided more than an inch of rain across most of the area. Like the three weeks before, tornadoes were reported, this time in Spotsylvania County, VA and St. Marys County, MD.

Temperatures averaged above normal with monthly departures of +2°F or higher observed at all five airports. The monthly average temperature was 61.1°F at BWI, making October 1995 the fourth warmest such month on record. Highs of 80°F or higher were recorded on six of the first 15 days across most of the local area, but cooled mainly to the sixties during the latter half of the month. The first freeze of Autumn was observed at IAD on the 17th when the mercury dropped to 32°F. Lows dipped into the thirties in many of the suburbs and frost was reported at several locations, but the lowest reading of the month at DCA was only 41°F on the 30th.

OCTOBER 1995 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	Yr to Date	DepΔ
National (DCA)	71.8	52.7	62.3	59.7	+2.6	85/6	41/30	8.65	3.02	+5.63	32.86	+0.47
Baltimore (BWI)	72.3	49.8	61.1	56.6	+4.5	86/6	38/30	6.24	2.98	+3.26	30.15	-3.88
Dulles (IAD)	71.6	44.9	58.3	55.1	+3.2	86/6	31/30	6.51	3.20	+3.31	33.40	-0.32
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	71.7	46.1	58.9	57	+2	86/6	33/17*	10.08	3.4	+6.7	37.26	+1.7
Andrew AFB (ADW)	74.2	51.6	62.9	58	+5	88/6	40/22#	7.88	3.3	+4.6	35.16	-0.9

Other occurrences: * October 30th; # October 29th.

LOOKING AHEAD TO NOVEMBER: *The first inch of snow in Washington.*

As mentioned earlier, some of the suburban locations recorded their first frost or freeze of the Fall in October. With that in mind, our attention now focuses on the first inch of snow in the local area. The largest single snow event for any November in Washington (since records began) occurred in 1987 when 11.5 inches blanketed the airport. This particular event also tied December 17, 1932 as the greatest single event snowfall during any astronomical Autumn in Washington. The date of the first inch of snow in Washington can vary greatly from year to year. During the last ten years it has occurred between mid–November and late January (see below). The earliest snows (≥1") in Washington (city) took place on October 30, 1925 (2.2") and October 20, 1940 (1.4") while the earliest measurable snow ever recorded at National Airport fell on October 10th, 1979 (0.3"). In contrast, no significant snowfall was observed at all during the 1972–1973 season (DCA total=0.1").

Snow Season

1994–1995
 1993–1994
 1992–1993
 1991–1992
 1990–1991
 1989–1990
 1988–1989
 1987–1988
 1986–1987
 1985–1986

First 1" (or greater) Snowfall

January 28
 December 28
 December 10
 January 25
 December 27
 November 22
 December 9
 November 11
 January 22
 December 20