

APRIL 1996: After five consecutive months with subnormal temperatures at DCA and a winter with record snowfall across much of the Washington/Baltimore area, springlike conditions finally arrived during April with slightly warmer than normal temperatures reported at four of the five airports. There were 4 days when the mercury topped 80°F and no days with subfreezing lows at DCA. Readings in the eighties were common across the local area on the 12th and the high of 84°F at DCA was the first day since October 12, 1995 with an 80°F+ reading. For many locations this was the warmest day since October 6, 1995. The most prolonged stretch of warm weather occurred from the 18th–23rd when highs each day topped 70°F at all five airports; many locations recorded their warmest day of the month (and year-to-date) on the 22nd when readings soared into the upper eighties (87°F at DCA, 89°F at BWI & 88°F at IAD). The first 90°F reading of the year was reported on this same day at ADW. The last freeze of the season occurred at most locations by the 18th (31°F at both IAD and DAA), although lows in the thirties were reported as late as the 28th at some locations. Most of the subnormal readings occurred during the first third of the month due primarily to cloud cover and/or precipitation, but the remainder of the month featured many days with clear to partly cloudy skies and the percent of possible sunshine for the month was (61%) at DCA, slightly above normal.

Precipitation was slightly above normal at most of the airports with monthly surpluses of about half an inch observed at DCA, BWI and IAD. Only ADW recorded subnormal precipitation with just over 2 inches reported. Four significant events accounted for the majority of the month's precipitation. A developing coastal storm on the 1st produced about an inch of precipitation across most of the area. On the 9th, a cold rain occasionally accompanied by snow and sleet yielded totals of nearly 0.50" at the five airports. A series of strong thunderstorms on the 15th and 16th dumped almost an inch of rain at DCA and nearly 1.5 inches at BWI. The month closed with more showers and about half an inch of precipitation across the Washington/Baltimore area. The last vestiges of wintry precipitation were observed on the 6th and again on the 9th–10th, with a mixture of rain, sleet and snow affecting much of the area. The latter storm generated 2.5 inches of snow at IAD, raising their all-time seasonal record to 61.9". The month was also quite windy as numerous weather systems quickly moved through the region. Wind gusts of 50–70 mph accompanied a cold front during the evening of the 24th, resulting in minor property damage in some areas. DCA reported an average monthly wind speed of 12.7 mph (2.2 mph above the April average).

APRIL 1996 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

| Station Location | Temperatures (°F) | | | | DepNm | Extreme/Day | | Total | Precipitation (In) | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|------|------|------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|--------------------|-------|-------------|
| | AvMx | AvMn | AvgT | NmIT | | MaxT | MinT | | Norm | DepNm | Yr. to Date |
| National (DCA) | 66.9 | 46.7 | 56.8 | 56.5 | +0.3 | 87/22 | 35/8 | 3.17 | 2.71 | +0.55 | 13.77 |
| Baltimore (BWI) | 66.2 | 41.9 | 54.1 | 53.4 | +0.7 | 89/22 | 29/8 | 3.76 | 3.09 | +0.67 | 16.49 |
| Dulles (IAD) | 67.1 | 42.0 | 54.6 | 52.7 | +1.9 | 88/22 | 25/8 | 3.69 | 3.11 | +0.58 | 15.44 |
| Ft. Belvoir (DAA) | 66.9 | 42.1 | 54.5 | 55 | 0 | 88/22 | 30/8* | 4.00 | 3.2 | +0.80 | 17.73 |
| Andrew AFB (ADW) | 68.2 | 46.1 | 57.2 | 55 | +2 | 90/22 | 34/8 | 2.17 | 3.0 | -0.8 | 13.54 |

Other occurrences: * April 11.

LOOKING AHEAD TO MAY: The first 90°F+ day at DCA.

Much of the area enjoyed the first warm days of the Spring during April as readings soared into the eighties on several days, including a high of 87°F at DCA on the 22nd. Our attention now turns to when the first 90°F+ reading of 1996 will occur at DCA. Below is a list of the last ten years and the date of the first 90°F or greater maximum temperature at DCA, in addition to the earliest and latest such reading in Washington.

| Year | First 90°F or greater reading |
|------|-------------------------------|
| 1995 | April 19 (91°F) |
| 1994 | April 27 (90°F) |
| 1993 | June 9 (93°F) |
| 1992 | May 23 (91°F) |
| 1991 | May 12 (90°F) |
| 1990 | April 26 (91°F) |
| 1989 | June 1 (94°F) |
| 1988 | May 30 (91°F) |
| 1987 | May 18 (91°F) |
| 1986 | May 7(91°F) |

Earliest 90°F+ reading in Washington: March 22, 1907 (90°F)

Latest 90°F+ reading in Washington: July 12, 1979 (93°F)