

APRIL 1997: Persistently cool conditions enveloped the Washington/Baltimore area during April, producing the coolest such month in more than 10 years at all three major airports. The only mild weather occurred during the first week as temperatures averaged more than 5°F above normal from the 1st–7th and highs on the 4th reached the upper seventies across the local area. This turned out to be the warmest day of the month (79°F at DCA), resulting in the first April since 1988 without an 80°F reading. During the last three weeks, temperatures remained at or below normal every day except the 16th. For the month, there were 23 days with at or below normal readings, including 14 consecutive such days (17th–30th) at DCA. Lows across the area dipped into the twenties on the 10th as a blast of cold Canadian air pushed into the region. DCA recorded a daily record low of 28°F (on the 10th), marking the lowest reading there since late January. It also turned out to be the latest 32°F or lower reading at DCA since 1990. The cold snap caused some minor damage to local crops and plants. In addition, it was also a windy month with winds exceeding 50 mph on the 1st in the wake of a Nor'easter. On the 18th, strong wind gusts (> 40 mph) combined with highs only in the low to middle fifties to produce subfreezing wind chills across the region.

Precipitation was below normal across the area with deficits ranging from about a third of an inch at DCA to nearly an inch at IAD. The only significant precipitation event occurred on the 27th and 28th as a storm system dumped between 1 and 1.5 inches of precipitation. This one event accounted for more than half of the monthly totals at all of the airports. Up until that time, rainfall had been frequent, but only light amounts were recorded. In fact, through the first 26 days precipitation totals at the three major airports were only around one inch. There were 8 days with measurable precipitation ($\geq 0.01''$) at DCA, but only one event with more than half an inch. April turned out to be the sunniest month in Washington in a year and a half, with DCA recording 64% of possible sunshine.

APRIL 1997 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr to Date
National (DCA)	63.9	44.0	54.0	56.5	-2.5	79/4	28/10	2.41	2.71	-0.30	11.54
Baltimore (BWI)	63.1	40.1	51.6	53.4	-1.8	78/4	26/10	2.39	3.09	-0.70	13.14
Dulles (IAD)	62.4	38.2	50.3	52.7	-2.7	79/4	25/10	2.18	3.11	-0.93	10.63
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	67.6	42.4	55.0	N/A	N/A	83/4	29/10	2.70	3.3	-0.5	12.89
Andrews AFB (ADW)	63.3	41.3	52.3	N/A	N/A	78/4	28/10	2.67	3.4	-0.3	11.98

LOOKING AHEAD TO MAY: The First 90°F Day.

Although the Washington area has not experienced any truly summerlike weather up to this point, the summer season is not far away. With that in mind, our attention turns toward the first 90°F+ reading in Washington. Below is a list of the last ten years and the date of the first 90°F or greater temperature at DCA, in addition to the earliest and latest such reading in Washington.

<u>Year</u>	<u>First 90°F or greater reading</u>
1996	May 19 (95°F)
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)

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

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