

AUGUST 1997: Cooler than normal conditions dominated the Washington/Baltimore area for the second consecutive August. Temperatures were at or below normal on 21 days at DCA, resulting in relatively pleasant weather for the last month of the meteorological summer. There were numerous days (19 at DCA) with subnormal minimum temperatures which contributed significantly to the negative monthly temperature departures across the area. For example, the low at DCA dipped to 59°F on the 24th (10°F below normal). At BWI, lows dropped into the fifties on 10 days (9 at IAD), including a daily record low of 53°F on the 8th. In sharp contrast, a brief period of intense heat enveloped the region around mid-month with 100°F+ highs common across the local area on the 16th and 17th. DCA established daily records on both of these days with highs of 102°F and 105°F. In fact, the 105°F reading was the highest temperature ever recorded at the airport (second overall in Washington – tied with July 10, 1936). BWI also observed daily record highs on the 16th (101°F) and 17th (100°F) while IAD recorded a daily record on the 16th (100°F). The passage of a cold front during the evening of the 17th ushered in much cooler weather that lasted the remainder of the month.

For the first time since March 1997, many areas recorded their first month with above normal precipitation. DCA was one exception, however, as subnormal precipitation was observed for the fifth consecutive month. Both BWI and IAD reported above normal monthly totals with 4.21" and 5.32", respectively. The month began very dry with less than 0.50" of rain measured at all three major airports from the 1st–16th. The first significant rains fell on the 17th as strong, slow-moving thunderstorms associated with a cold front moved through the area. IAD reported a daily record 3.32" of rain while totals at both DCA and BWI topped an inch. Beneficial, soaking rains on the 20th provided much of the area with an additional 1–4 inches of rain. These two precipitation events accounted for most of the month's precipitation totals. In fact, DCA reported only 4 days with measurable precipitation ($\geq 0.01"$) during the month.

AUGUST 1997 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr to Date
National (DCA)	87.3	67.9	77.6	78.5	-0.9	105/17	59/24	3.51	3.91	-0.40	22.17
Baltimore (BWI)	85.8	62.2	74.0	75.6	-1.6	101/16	53/8*	4.21	3.92	+0.29	25.42
Dulles (IAD)	85.3	61.3	73.3	74.2	-0.9	100/16#	50/24	5.32	3.94	+1.38	22.55
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	88.9	65.5	77.2	N/A	N/A	104/17	55/23	3.37	4.4	-1.0	25.27
Andrews AFB (ADW)	84.5	63.6	74.0	N/A	N/A	101/16	55/22*	4.28	4.4	-0.1	26.10

Other Occurrences: * August 24th; # August 17th.

SUMMER (JUNE–AUGUST) 1997: While the Summer of 1997 resulted in subnormal temperatures and precipitation across the local area, it will be remembered most for its brief, but intense heat and extended periods of very dry conditions. The summer commenced with springlike conditions at DCA, with the first 17 days of June yielding at or below normal temperatures. Daily temperature departures between -9°F and -15°F were observed from the 2nd–8th at DCA. A dramatic change occurred during the last third of the month as more summerlike weather settled across the area. On nine consecutive days (20th–28th) 90°F+ readings were reported, including a high of 100°F on the 25th at DCA. The short-lived hot spell was not significant to overcome the cool conditions earlier in the month, therefore resulting in the coolest June in 5 years at DCA and the sixth and seventh coolest such month on record at BWI and IAD, respectively. July yielded near normal temperatures, although there were a few periods of intense heat, as well as several days with abnormally cool conditions. DCA recorded 90°F+ highs on 18 days (10 days > 95°F), including a stretch of 9 consecutive days (11th–19th), and two days of 100°F (17th and 28th) readings. In sharp contrast, unusually cool conditions prevailed from the 23rd–25th, with daily departures between -7°F and -14°F. On the 24th, the high temperature at DCA was only 69°F, establishing a daily record low maximum temperature. August was highlighted by numerous pleasant days with relatively cool conditions and low humidity. There were 21 days with at or below normal temperatures at DCA and several nights when lows dipped into the fifties in suburban areas. In sharp contrast, a brief but intense period of heat gripped the area around mid-month, producing numerous record daily highs across the area as readings soared above 100°F.

Subnormal seasonal rainfall was recorded throughout the area, with precipitation deficits of more than 2 inches quite common. Rainfall was sporadic and was often preceded by extended periods of very dry weather. June precipitation totals averaged about 1.5" below normal across much of the area. Most of the June's rain fell during the first 3 days, as up to 2 inches soaked some areas. Strong thunderstorms on the 18th generated about an inch of rain and wind gusts up to 80 mph, causing some property damage and power outages. Dry conditions continued throughout July as DCA recorded the driest such month in more than 30 years. The largest July rain event at DCA was a mere 0.34" on the 24th and all three major airports recorded less than a quarter inch of precipitation between the 3rd and 22nd. August yielded near normal rainfall for many areas primarily due to two precipitation events. The first was a line of strong thunderstorms associated with a cold front on the 17th. These storms generated over three inches of rain and ended the brief, but intense heat wave that gripped the local area. A few days later, a soaking rain generated 1–4 inches of precipitation. However, the rains came to late to benefit many local crops and gardens. As a result, some counties were declared federal disaster areas due to substantial crop losses.

SUMMER 1997 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Mth–Day		Precipitation (In)		
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml
National (DCA)	86.7	67.3	77.0	78.1	-1.1	105/8–17	50/6–8	7.59	11.09	-3.50
Baltimore (BWI)	85.7	61.8	73.8	75.1	-1.3	101/8–16	44/6–5	9.27	11.28	-2.01
Dulles (IAD)	84.8	60.6	72.7	73.7	-1.0	100/8–16*	43/6–5#	9.06	11.35	-2.29
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	88.1	64.4	76.2	N/A	N/A	104/8–17	46/6–5#	8.39	11.9	-3.5
Andrews AFB (ADW)	84.6	63.5	74.0	N/A	N/A	101/8–16	47/6–5@	11.89	12.4	-0.5

Other Occurrences: * August 16th; # June 8th; @ June 8th & 9th.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SEPTEMBER: Another Cool September?

After a cooler than normal summer across the Washington/Baltimore area our attention now turns toward Autumn. Since 1990, there hasn't been a September with above normal temperatures at DCA. The question arises whether this will be the eighth consecutive cooler than normal September. Below is a list of the September average temperatures since 1990. [Normal September Average Temperature: 71.3°F]

Year	Average Temperature (°F)	Dep. Nml.	Year	Average Temperature (°F)	Dep. Nml.
1996	70.6	-0.7	1992	69.2	-2.1
1995	71.0	-0.3	1991	71.0	-0.3
1994	70.2	-1.1	1990	69.6	-1.7
1993	71.0	-0.3			