

SEPTEMBER 1997: The first month of meteorological Fall was highlighted by subnormal temperatures and rainfall across most of the local area. Monthly temperature departures ranged from about -1°F at DCA to -2°F at IAD and resulted in the eighth consecutive September with subnormal temperatures at DCA. Like August, most of the monthly temperature departures were due mainly to unusually cool nights. Lows across the Washington/Baltimore area routinely dipped into the forties and fifties and even dropped below the 40°F mark at IAD on the 22nd (38°F). Both BWI and IAD established daily record lows on the 5th (47°F & 42°F, respectively) and the 38°F reading on the 22nd at IAD tied a daily record low. DCA recorded 17 days with at or below normal temperatures. In sharp contrast, 90°F+ highs were reported on 3 days at DCA, pushing the yearly total to 41. Highs in the 90's were reported across the local area on the 20th, then the passage of a strong cold a short while later produced autumnlike conditions on the 21st, with highs in the upper sixties common across most of the local area.

Drier than normal conditions prevailed once again across most of the Washington/Baltimore area, marking the sixth consecutive such month at DCA. In fact, DCA has recorded only one wetter than normal month (March) during the January–September period. Precipitation totals ranged from just over an inch at ADW to nearly 3.75 at DAA (the only local airport with above normal September precipitation). There were only seven days with measurable precipitation (≥ 0.01 "") at DCA, but only one day with amounts greater than one-half inch (0.68" on the 28th). Both DCA and BWI reported the driest September since 1990. Farther west, parts of the Shenandoah Valley recorded up to 6 inches of rain during the first three days of the month, but amounts dropped off significantly to the east with less than 0.50" recorded at the three major airports. On the 10th and 11th, thunderstorms produced nearly half an inch of rain at DCA and nearly an inch at IAD. A soaking rain on the 28th provided about two-thirds of an inch across most of the local area. The unusually dry conditions were a significant contrast to last year, when DCA recorded its second wettest September on record (7.79"). Precipitation deficits for the January–September period of this year were between 4 and 6 inches at the three major airports.

SEPTEMBER 1997 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)			
Location	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr to Date
National (DCA)	79.8	61.1	70.5	71.3	-0.8	91/1	49/22	1.59	3.31	-1.72	23.76
Baltimore (BWI)	78.8	55.7	67.3	68.5	-1.2	91/20	41/25	1.47	3.41	-1.94	26.89
Dulles (IAD)	76.7	53.5	65.1	67.1	-2.0	90/2	38/22	3.04	3.36	-0.32	25.59
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	81.2	58.1	69.6	N/A	N/A	93/2	46/22	3.71	3.6	+0.1	28.98
Andrews AFB (ADW)	77.6	56.3	67.0	N/A	N/A	90/2	42/22	1.04	3.6	-2.6	27.14

LOOKING AHEAD TO OCTOBER: *The first frost and/or freeze.*

October is usually the month when we think about the first frost or freeze to affect the Washington/Baltimore area, especially away from the cities. Below is a list of the dates of the first 32°F or lower reading during the last ten years at DCA and IAD, along with the earliest and latest freezes on record in Washington.

Year	First 32°F (or lower) reading		Year	First 32°F (or lower) reading	
	DCA	IAD		DCA	IAD
1996	November 12	October 12	1991	November 4	October 8
1995	November 5	October 17	1990	November 19	October 20
1994	November 24	October 11	1989	November 18	October 23
1993	November 2	October 1	1988	November 25	October 6
1992	October 20	October 7	1987	November 11	October 9

Washington Earliest Freeze: October 10, 1895

Washington Latest Freeze: December 14, 1980