

OCTOBER 1998: Very dry conditions continued across the Washington/Baltimore area with most locations recording less than 2 inches of precipitation. At DCA, less than an inch of rain (0.59") fell for the second time in three months, producing the driest October since 1963 (ninth overall in Washington), the 2nd driest on record at ADW, 3rd at DAA, 4th at BWI, & 8th at IAD. For the July-October 1998 period, only 4.80" of rain (normal: 14.10") fell in Washington, yielding the driest such period on record at DCA (2nd overall in Washington). In addition, DCA recorded less than two inches of rainfall for the fourth consecutive month (July-October), the longest such period (tied w/ four other occurrences) ever observed in Washington. Measurable precipitation (≥ 0.01 ") fell on only 5 days at DCA, 7 days at BWI and 4 at IAD. Both BWI and IAD observed an extended period [17 days (11th-27th) and 18 days (14th- 31st)] with no measurable precipitation. Most of the monthly precipitation totals (97% at DCA, 99% at both BWI & IAD) fell during the first 10 days of the month. The only significant rainfall occurred on the 8th as a steady and often heavy rain fell across most of the local area. DCA reported 0.55" (93% of the monthly total) while nearly 1.50" inches fell at IAD. Light precipitation fell on 4 other days (3th, 4th, 19th and 22nd) at DCA with totals each day of only 0.01". Very little precipitation fell after the 11th with only 0.02" at DCA, 0.01" at BWI, and a trace at IAD. The dry weather exacerbated ongoing drought conditions and numerous counties in Maryland and Virginia were declared federal disaster areas as agricultural losses mounted. There were also reports of several forest fires in parts of the Shenandoah National Park around the end of the month.

Temperatures averaged near normal across the area with monthly departures of +0.3°F recorded at DCA, -0.4°F at BWI and +1.1°F at IAD. Unlike October 1997, there were no prolonged periods of heat or cold. Maximum temperatures topped 80°F on only 1 day (82°F on the 1st) at DCA versus 8 such days last year. In contrast, unusually cool weather prevailed on the 3rd as highs only reached the fifties (the lowest maximum readings since May). During the last half of the month, brief periods of warm weather prevailed from the 17th-20th and again from the 24th-26th, as highs rose well into the seventies. In sharp contrast, the first freezing readings of Autumn occurred at both BWI (31°F on the 31st) and IAD (32°F on the 2nd). In fact, IAD reported 5 days with lows at or below freezing, including a low of 28°F on the 23rd.

OCTOBER 1998 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr to date
National (DCA)	68.6	51.5	60.0	59.7	+0.3	82/1	40/23	0.59	3.02	-2.43	33.28
Baltimore (BWI)	67.3	45.2	56.2	56.6	-0.4	82/1	31/30	1.06	2.98	-1.92	31.99
Dulles (IAD)	68.9	43.5	56.2	55.1	+1.1	81/1*	28/23	1.52	3.20	-1.68	34.71
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	71.5	48.1	59.8	N/A	N/A	84/1	34/22*	0.84	3.6	-2.8	40.29
Andrews AFB (ADW)	68.1	48.4	58.2	N/A	N/A	81/1	36/22 [®]	0.62	3.6	-3.0	36.98

Other Occurrences: * October 18th; * October 23rd; ® October 23rd & 30th.

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

With many locations around the Washington/Baltimore area having recorded their first frost or freeze, our attention now focuses on the first inch of snow in the local area. In Washington, the largest single November snow event 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 late November and late January [not at all at DCA last winter]. 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 1997-98 & 1972-73 seasons at DCA (total=0.1").

<u>Snow Season</u>	<u>First 1" (or greater)</u> <u>Snowfall at DCA</u>	<u>Snow Season</u>	<u>First 1" (or greater)</u> <u>Snowfall at DCA</u>
1997-1998	No 1" amount recorded	1992-1993	December 10
1996-1997	January 9	1991-1992	January 25
1995-1996	December 9	1990-1991	December 27
1994-1995	January 28	1989-1990	November 22
1993-1994	December 28	1988-1989	December 9