

SEPTEMBER 1999: Drought conditions that enveloped the local area since late Summer of 1998 came to an abrupt end as two tropical systems generated abundant rainfall across the Washington/Baltimore area. Double-digit monthly precipitation totals were common across most of the area. The five local airports reported amounts of 6-14 inches and totals between 15 and 20 inches were observed in portions of Baltimore, Anne Arundel and Montgomery counties in Maryland. BWI observed its wettest September on record (11.50") while DCA recorded the second wettest (4th overall in Washington) with 10.27" and IAD the third wettest (9.32"). In addition, it was the second wettest month ever recorded at BWI and the wettest since August 1955. At DCA, it was the wettest month since September 1975 (15th wettest overall). The first significant rain event occurred from the 4th-6th as the remnants of Tropical Storm Dennis moved through the region, dumping 1"-3" of precipitation on most locations and over 4" in portions of Montgomery, Howard, and Anne Arundel counties in Maryland. To the south and west of Washington, precipitation totals from this event topped 9 inches in Augusta County, VA. Strong thunderstorms associated with a frontal system produced heavy rain across most of the local area during the evening of the 9th. Many locations received between 0.50" and 1.50" but over 3 inches was observed in Montgomery County, MD. The major rain event for most of the local area occurred on the 16th as Hurricane Floyd tracked to the south and east of Washington and Baltimore. Rainfall actually commenced on the 15th (about an inch for most areas), as easterly winds on the north side of Hurricane Floyd interacted with a frontal system to the west of Washington. Farther south, Hurricane Floyd made landfall near Cape Fear, North Carolina, as a Category Two hurricane (winds of 96-110 mph) and dumped more than two FEET of rain on parts of eastern North Carolina and eventually over 12 inches across much of the Virginia Tidewater area as it moved northeastward. According to press reports, the heavy rains in these areas generated the worst flooding on record. In the local area, winds and rain increased in intensity on the morning of the 16th. Tropical storm force winds (39-73 mph) battered much of the area, downing numerous trees and power lines and resulted in widespread power outages (lasting up to a week in some areas). The storm produced nearly a foot of rain around Annapolis, MD while 2-6 inches were observed at the three major airports. At BWI, 5.02" of rain fell on the 16th, making it the wettest September day and the second wettest calendar day since records began in August 1951. DCA reported 3.67" on the 16th, the wettest calendar day since September 5, 1979. On the 21st, soaking rains associated with a cold front provided another inch of rain for many locations. Another cold front at the end of the month generated more than an inch of rain, gusty winds and more power outages for parts of the local area. Combined rainfall for August and September accounted for 40%-50% of the year-to-date (January-September) totals at the three major airports. In addition, the September precipitation totals exceeded Autumn (September-November) normals at both DCA and BWI.

Near to slightly below normal temperatures prevailed across the local area. At or below normal readings were observed on 17 days at DCA and for the first time since 1992, there were no days with 90°F+ highs. Subnormal temperatures prevailed across the area with negative temperature departures of about 1F. Lows dipped into the forties across most of the area on the 23rd, including readings of 40°F, 45°F & 48°F at IAD, BWI, and DCA, respectively. In addition, it was the ninth September out of the last ten with subnormal temperatures at DCA.

SEPTEMBER 1999 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)	77.7	62.5	70.1	71.3	-1.2	86/8*	48/23	10.27	3.31	+6.96	33.76
Baltimore (BWI)	77.0	59.3	68.1	68.5	-0.4	85/7*	45/23	11.50	3.41	+8.09	36.54
Dulles (IAD)	77.2	56.8	67.0	67.1	-0.1	86/3*	40/23	9.32	3.36	+5.96	36.66
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	80.6	60.4	70.5	N/A	N/A	90/6^	45/23	6.53	3.6	+2.9	36.27
Andrews AFB (ADW)	76.7	59.6	68.2	N/A	N/A	88/9	46/18*	13.96	3.6	+10.4	37.31

Other Occurrences: * September 9th; ° September 8th; ° September 7th, 8th, & 9th; ^ September 7th & 8th; * September 23rd.

LOOKING AHEAD TO OCTOBER: The first 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
1998	November 5	October 2	1993	November 2	October 1
1997	November 16	October 2	1992	October 20	October 7
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

Washington earliest freeze: October 10, 1895

Washington latest freeze: December 14, 1980