

**SEPTEMBER 2001:** Subnormal temperatures & precipitation and severe weather highlighted the first month of meteorological Autumn. Monthly temperature departures ranged between -1.7°F and -3.3°F at the three major airports. At DCA, it was the 11<sup>th</sup> September out of the last 12 with subnormal temperatures and the coolest back-to-back (2000 & 2001) Septembers since 1962 & 1963. There were 19 days with at or below normal temperatures at DCA and for the third consecutive September, there were no days with 90°F+ highs. In addition, daily temperatures averaged nearly 4°F below normal between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> and included 5 days (out of the last 6) with highs only in the sixties (readings typical of mid-late October). Cool Canadian air coupled with shorter daylight hours resulted in several chilly mornings, especially in the suburbs where lows often fell into the forties (40°F at IAD and 41°F at BWI on the 26<sup>th</sup>).

Precipitation was below normal at many locations, including two (DCA & BWI) of the three major airports. In fact, it was the driest September since 1990 at DCA. Measurable precipitation during the first 19 days of the month was infrequent with only 2 such days (10<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>) observed at DCA, BWI and IAD. Precipitation totals during this 19-day period were below 0.50" at the three major airports. In contrast, measurable precipitation fell on 7 of the final 11 days at DCA, but there were no days with amounts greater than 0.50". Of the three major airports, only IAD observed above-normal monthly precipitation due in large part to a daily record rainfall (2.17") on the 24<sup>th</sup>. On this same day, some of the strongest tornadoes to hit the region in more than 70 years caused extensive damage across parts of the Washington/Baltimore area. The strongest tornado (F3; winds up to 206 mph) battered College Park and Laurel, MD during the late afternoon. According to press reports, the tornado claimed the lives of two people, injured dozens more and caused tens of million dollars in damage, including more than \$10 million to the campus of the University of Maryland. The twister traveled 10-12 miles and carved a swath 50-150 yards wide across parts of Prince Georges County, Maryland. The tornado originated in Spotsylvania County, VA. and passed through Fairfax and Arlington counties before crossing the Potomac River and into the District of Columbia. It shattered windows and toppled trees onto power lines in Northern Virginia, knocking out power to 11,000 customers. It was the deadliest September tornado outbreak in Prince Georges County since 1880, according to press reports. Earlier that afternoon, another tornado (F1; winds up to 112 mph) struck parts of Northern Virginia, injuring one person (in Culpeper) and damaging homes in Culpeper, Rixeyville, Jeffersonson, Warrenton, and The Plains. Torrential rainfall accompanied the severe weather with 3.60" of rain reported in Damascus, MD. and 2.80" in Herndon, VA. There was only one other significant precipitation event to affect the local area during the month. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, morning showers and evening thunderstorms dumped over an inch of rain on portions of Montgomery County, and nearly an inch at IAD. Most areas received less than 2 inches of rain during the month, including DCA where the monthly precipitation total (1.42") was the lowest since October 2000.

**SEPTEMBER 2001 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:**

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmiT	DepNmi	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNmi	Yr to date
National (DCA)	77.8	60.0	68.9	71.3	-2.4	87/4*	46/26	1.42	3.31	-1.89	27.23
Baltimore (BW I)	76.0	54.4	65.2	68.5	-3.3	85/10	41/26	1.43	3.41	-1.98	31.12
Dulles (IAD)	77.3	53.4	65.4	67.1	-1.7	85/4#	40/26	3.42	3.36	+0.06	33.17
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M
Andrews AFB (ADW)	74.3	55.6	65.0	N/A	N/A	84/10@	41/26	1.20	3.6	-2.40	33.50

Other Occurrences: \* October 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>; # October 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>; @ September 22nd.

**LOOKING AHEAD TO OCTOBER:** *The first freeze?*

October is usually the month when we think about the first frost or freeze in 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
2000	November 16	October 8	1995	November 5	October 17
1999	November 18	October 28	1994	November 24	October 11
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

Washington earliest freeze: October 10, 1895

Washington latest freeze: December 14, 1980