

APRIL 2003: Near-normal temperatures and subnormal precipitation prevailed during the second month of Spring. Monthly temperatures were near average: +0.5°F at most locations including the three major airports. The month featured several brief warm periods followed by much cooler weather. Highs topped 80°F across much of the area on the 2nd & 3rd, including a high of 83°F on the 3rd at DCA. On the 15th & 16th, highs again soared into the 80s with all three major airports recording a high of 85°F on the 16th (readings about 20°F above normal). Just a few days after each warm spell, highs failed to reach 40°F at most locations. On the 8th, 11th and 18th, (39°F at BWI), clouds and precipitation kept highs in the 30's and 40's at most locations. The final freeze of the season occurred on the 1st at most locations although a few areas recorded freezing temperatures on the 24th, including BWI (32°F). Many locations reported significant temperatures rises on several days during the month. On the 2nd, the temperature at IAD rose 43°F, from a morning low of 38°F to an afternoon high of 81°F. The month ended with a more consistent temperature pattern as highs reached the 70s from the 27th through months end.

Monthly precipitation totals around 2.50" were recorded at all three airports, causing a monthly deficit of about 0.50" at IAD and BWI. April marked only the second month since September 2002 with below-normal precipitation at at the three major airports. The majority of the month's rainfall occurred between the 7th-11th and 25th-26th. The first storm was long lasting, starting the morning of the 7th as sleet fell in some areas before changing to rain of varying intensity that lasted through the 9th. After sunny weather on the 10th, more rain fell on the 11th. Total precipitation between the 7th and 11th was about 1.50" across the local area. The second rainy period, the 25th-26th, brought about 0.79" to BWI and up to an inch in some areas, mostly from heavy morning rain on the 26th. In sharp contrast to April 2002, most areas experienced their only thunderstorm during the final hour of the month. Pollen was especially high during dry and windy periods with levels reaching more than 2,000 grains per cubic meter, producing uncomfortable conditions for those with seasonal allergies.

APRIL 2003 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)	64.8	45.4	55.1	56.1	-1.0	85	32	2.55	2.77	-0.22	14.61
Baltimore (BWI)	63.5	41.8	52.7	53.2	-0.5	85	27	2.40	3.00	-0.60	15.86
Dulles (IAD)	65.1	41.8	53.4	53.1	+0.3	85	27	2.71	3.22	-0.51	14.24
Andrews AFB (ADW)	64.8	43.7	54.3	N/A	N/A	86	27	3.17	3.0	+0.20	19.17

LOOKING AHEAD TO MAY: *The first 90°F+ reading of 2003?*

With slightly below-normal temperatures in April and four days with 80°F+ highs at DCA, the question arises: will May produce the first 90°F+ reading? Below is a list of the last ten years and the date of the first 90°F or greater reading at DCA, in addition to the earliest and latest such readings in Washington.

Year	First 90°F+ Reading	Year	First 90°F+ Reading
2002	April 16 th (92°F)	1997	May 19 th (96°F)
2001	June 13 th (93°F)	1996	May 19 th (95°F)
2000	May 7 th (90°F)	1995	April 19 th (91°F)
1999	May 30 th (92°F)	1994	April 27 th (90°F)
1998	May 19 th (90°F)	1993	June 9 th (93°F)

Earliest first 90°F+ reading in Washington: March 22, 1907 (90°F)

Latest first 90°F+ reading in Washington: July 12, 1979 (93°F)