

April 2006

April Temperatures: For the second consecutive year, April featured above normal temperatures. In fact, it was the second warmest April ever recorded at IAD (5th at BWI and 11th in Washington). Monthly temperature departures between +3°F and +5°F were common across the local area including the three major airports. April marked the 15th month out of the last 18 with above normal temperatures at DCA. Warm temperatures were prevalent the majority of the month with only 3 days at BWI and 4 days at DCA and IAD when highs stayed in the 60s. Highs soared above 70°F for half the month at all three airports and reached summertime levels on the 15th and 20th when the mercury soared into the 80's across the area. Warmer than normal minimum temperatures were also common at DCA, which recorded 16 days with lows at or above 50°F, including the first 60°F+ minimum temperature (15th) since mid-October. The growing season began early with many trees and flowers blossoming several weeks ahead of schedule. The month's only freezing temperatures occurred in the outer suburbs on the 10th, when IAD recorded a low of 31°F.

April Precipitation: Monthly precipitation totals were above normal throughout most of the area, including the three major airports. DCA and BWI recorded monthly precipitation surpluses of about 1/3 inch; IAD reported a surplus of 1.64", primarily the result of drenching rains on the 22nd. Monthly precipitation totals were as low as 2" in the West Virginia panhandle and above 6" in areas impacted by the storm on the 22nd. The month's first significant storm occurred on the 3rd as a strong cold front ignited an intense line of thunderstorms across the Blue Ridge that eventually moved eastward into the metropolitan area. The area recorded rainfall totals of about .5", including 0.63" at BWI, marking the largest precipitation total since the mid-February snowstorm. The thunderstorms were accompanied by 1/4" to 1/2" hail at many locations. Additional thunderstorms on the 7th followed by a steady rain during the morning and midday hours on the 8th resulted in rainfall totals of over an inch at some locations (0.93" at BWI). A week later, severe thunderstorms accompanied by large hail measuring up to 1.5" struck Stafford, Fredericksburg and King George counties in Virginia and Charles County in Maryland. According to press reports, hail covered the runway of the Quantico Marine Base airport.

The month's final significant storm system brought soaking rains on the 22nd, especially in the evening. A slow moving band of moderate to heavy rain stretched from portions of Baltimore County, MD, to central Virginia. The Sterling NWS Forecast Office issued numerous flood warnings as high water closed roads and caused some street flooding in Old Town Alexandria, VA, and a water rescue near Seneca Creek State Park in Montgomery County, MD, according to press reports. Rainfall totals reached 4.08" in Gaithersburg, MD, and 3.43" in Rixeyville, VA, (Culpeper County), 3.10" in Syria, VA (Madison County), 3.0" in Calvert Beach, MD, and 2.82" in Whit Hall, MD (Baltimore County). IAD recorded 2.88" from the event, establishing a daily precipitation record for the date. Despite the wetter than normal conditions in April, most locations report precipitation deficits between 3"-4" for January-April 2006. DCA and BWI are nearly 5" drier than for the same period last year.

APRIL 2006 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In.)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	Max	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr. to Date
National (DCA)	69.7	49.3	59.5	56.1	+3.4	83/15	34/9	3.10	2.77	+0.33	8.86
Baltimore (BWI)	69.1	45.8	57.4	53.2	+4.2	83/20	33/10	3.28	3.00	+0.28	9.58
Dulles (IAD)	69.6	45.1	57.4	53.1	+4.3	82/15	31/10	4.86	3.22	+1.64	9.71
Andrews (ADW)	68.0	46.0	57.0	N/A	N/A	84/7	32/9	2.36	3.22	- 0.86	6.35

Looking Ahead to May: Do warm temperatures in April predict a hot summer to come? The earliest first 90°F+ reading in Washington was March 22, 1907 (90°F). The latest first 90°F+ reading in Washington was July 12, 1979 (93°F). Below is a list of the last 10 years and the date of the first 90°F or greater reading at DCA.

Year	First 90°+ Reading of Year at DCA	Year	First 90°+ Reading of Year at DCA
2005	June 28 (94°F)	2000	May 30 (90°F)
2004	April 19 (91°F)	1999	May 7 (92°F)
2003	June 26 (93°F)	1998	May 19 (90°F)
2002	April 16 (92°F)	1997	May 19 (96°F)
2001	June 13 (93°F)	1996	May 19 (95°F)