

February 2006: Temperatures: The final month of meteorological Winter brought more typical weather conditions across the area. Monthly temperatures averaged slightly above normal across the area, including the three major airports. February marked the 13th month in the last 16 with above normal readings at DCA and IAD. The month's highest readings were recorded on the 16th when the mercury reached 66°F at all three major airports. Readings at or above 60°F were observed on 3 days at each of the major airports. On the 19th, winter returned as Arctic air kept temperatures below freezing throughout the area for the first time since Dec. 14th and only the third day this winter season. Minimum temperatures reached the low to mid teens across most of the area on the 19th (the lowest for the season), including a low of 10°F at IAD. Readings rebounded to 50°F two days later but then chilly conditions returned through months' end, with highs holding in the 30's on the 22nd, 26th and 27th at many locations.

Precipitation: Total monthly precipitation amounts were generally between 2"-3". All three major airports recorded slightly below normal totals. Four storm systems impacted the region in February. The first two, on the 3rd and 4th, were rainmakers, producing precipitation totals well over an inch across the region. Two day precipitation totals included 1.41" at BWI, 1.36" at IAD and 1.07" at DCA. The following weekend, a rapidly deepening coastal storm brought heavy snow to the area. The storm began as rain in most areas early on the 11th, and then changed to snow in the afternoon. Heavy snowfall overnight yielded totals of more than 20" at some locations. The largest snowfall totals were seen in Baltimore and Howard Counties, MD, as early morning thunder snows on the 12th, resulted in 2"-4" of snow per hour. Totals peaked at 22.5" in Columbia Hills, 22" in Randallstown, 21" in Columbia, MD, and 20" in Owings Mills, MD. BWI recorded 13.1", DCA, 8.8", and IAD, 8.1". The heavy snowfall caused large branches and trees to fall, knocking out power to as many as 300,000 customers across the region, according to press reports. The three major airports experienced shutdowns, delays and cancellations; however, NWS Sterling minimized the storm's impact by providing significant lead time warning of the event. The event hitting on weekend, when traffic is lighter, also helped. The month's final storm on the 22nd brought a mixture of rain and wet snow but yielded only minimal snow accumulations.

FEBRUARY 2006 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Total	Precipitation (In.)		
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNml	Max	MinT		Norm	DepNml	Snow
National (DCA)	46.6	30.6	38.6	38.1	+0.5	66/16	14/19	2.46	2.63	-0.17	8.8
Baltimore (BWI)	45.7	26.5	36.1	35.5	+0.6	66/16	12/19	2.64	3.02	-0.38	13.1
Dulles (IAD)	45.9	26.1	36.0	34.8	+1.2	66/16	10/19	2.38	2.77	-0.39	8.1
Andrews (ADW)	44.0	29.0	36.5	N/A	PN/A	66/16	14/19	1.29	3.30	-1.81	5.5

Winter (December-February) Temperatures: Above normal temperatures and near normal precipitation and snowfall highlighted weather conditions across the Washington/Baltimore area. Seasonal temperatures averaged 1.8°F above normal at DCA, 2.4°F above at BWI and 3.0°F above at IAD, largely due to unusual warmth in January. December started the season with consistently cold temperatures, averaging more than 6°F below normal at DCA. On the 13th-14th, the area recorded the first days of the season with at or below freezing highs at most locations. On December 24, a warming trend began that lasted through the end of the calendar year. Highs topped 50°F on 4 of the last 9 days of the month. On the 29th, DCA marked a minimum temperature of 43°F, a reading more typically the normal high for late December. January continued the warm temperatures. The abnormal warmth produced monthly temperature departures of +8.1°F at DCA; +9.2°F at BWI, and +10.1°F at IAD, resulting in the 7th warmest January (tied with 1998) in Washington, second warmest at BWI (warmest since 1990) and warmest January ever observed at IAD. In all, DCA marked 16 days with highs 50°F or greater and only two days with below normal temperatures (7th and 26th). February featured numerous swings in temperature (see above).

Winter Precipitation totals were generally between 8"-11" across most of the area, yielding seasonal surpluses of 0.15" at DCA, and 0.18" at BWI with a deficit at IAD of 1.18". December opened the season with the first 1"+ snowfall on the 5th. Many locations received 3"-5". On Dec. 9th, a second winter storm dropped a mix of snow, sleet and freezing rain, causing hazardous driving conditions and school closings. The month's most significant precipitation occurred on Dec. 15th-16th when snow quickly changed to freezing rain and then to a soaking rain. All three major airports measured more than an inch. January brought near to slightly below normal precipitation with negligible snowfall. Monthly precipitation totals ranged from about 2.50" to 3.50" across most of the area. The month's most significant rainfall fell overnight from Jan. 22nd-23rd, when some locations measured greater than an inch. At times January's precipitation pattern was more like spring than mid-winter, with the area recording thunderstorms on as many as three days. Warm conditions limited snowfall to trace amounts, the least January snowfall in Washington since 1998 and at BWI and IAD since 1973. February saw a return of winter weather with a major snowfall and three other storm systems (see above).

WINTER 2005-2006 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Total	Precipitation (In.)		
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNml	Max	MinT		Norm	DepNml	Snow
National (DCA)	47.0	31.7	39.4	37.5	+1.8	66/2-16	14/2-19	9.05	8.89	+0.16	13.6
Baltimore (BWI)	46.4	28.0	37.2	34.8	+2.4	66/2-16	12/2-19	10.02	9.84	+0.18	19.1
Dulles (IAD)	46.4	27.7	37.1	34.1	+3.0	66/2-16	10/2-19	7.71	8.89	- 1.18	13.8
Andrews (ADW)	45.3	30.3	37.8	N/A	N/A	66/2-16	14/2-19	6.41	9.30	- 2.89	10.0

Looking Ahead to March: Month of Transition. March can be a month of extremes. Below is a list of some notable March climatological statistics for Washington since records began in 1871 (snowfall records began in 1988).

Temperature Extremes			Precipitation Extremes		
Coldest: 1885	Avg. Temp.: 34°F	Dep. Nml.: -12.°F	Wettest: 1891	Tot. Prec.: 8.84"	Dep. Nml.: +5.24"
Warmest: 1921 & 1945	Avg. Temp.: 55.°F	Dep. Nml.: +9.°F	Driest: 1910	Tot. Prec.: 0.57"	Dep. Nml.: -3.03"
Extreme Minimum: 4°F (March 4, 1873)			Snowiest: 1914	Tot. Snowfall: 19.3"	Dep. Nml.: +17.7"
Extreme Maximum: 93°F (March 23, 1907)			Most precipitation in one day (liquid): 2.79" (March 9, 1881)		
Most days with: lows < 32°F: 24 (1960) ; highs > 90°F: 3 (1907)			Most snowfall in one day: 11.3" (March 29, 1942)		