

July 2006

Temperatures: July featured above-normal temperatures across the Washington/Baltimore area. Monthly temperature departures between 1.0°F and 3.5°F were observed at the three major airports. For both BWI and IAD, it was the 7th consecutive month with above-normal temperatures (see cover). Highs at or above 90°F were common; BWI recorded 18 such scorching days, IAD 16 and DCA 14.

The peak of the July heat occurred on the 17th and 18th as highs soared well into the 90's across the area, including a reading of 99°F at BWI and 97°F at DCA on the 18th. The excessive heat, combined with humid conditions, contributed to three heat related fatalities, according to press reports. Air quality also deteriorated forcing the area to declare it first "code red" air quality day in 2 years. Extreme heat led to excessive demand on utilities, according to press reports. Many nights were uncomfortably hot and humid. DCA noted 23 days with minimum temperatures at or above 70°F, including 9 days with lows at or above 75°F. The month's coolest weather occurred from the 6th-8th when highs held near 80°F and lows dropped to 56°F at IAD on the 7th.

Precipitation: Monthly rainfall was well below normal at many locations, although near normal totals were observed in the District of Columbia and above normal amounts were recorded in portions of upper Montgomery County, MD. Monthly precipitation totals included 1.81" at BWI (Dep. Nml.: -1.99"); 2.45" at IAD (Dep. Nml.: -1.12") and 3.56" at DCA (Dep. Nml.: -0.10"). The majority of the month's rainfall occurred during the first 5 days of the month as the excessively wet pattern from late June continued. Strong to severe thunderstorms on the 2nd knocked out power to more than 100,000 homes in the Washington D.C. area. On July 4th, WFO Sterling, VA, called up emergency procedures to successfully evacuate 80,000 holiday attendees from the National Mall before storms packing wind gusts up to 47 mph knocked over tents and caused some tree damage. Also on Independence Day, a NWS damage survey indicated a severe thunderstorm struck University Park bringing wind gusts of up to 80 mph, leading to damage of 20 structures and numerous downed power lines. More storms on the 5th caused localized flash flooding in Loudoun County, VA, and Frederick and Carroll Counties, MD. For both BWI and DCA, the July 5th event brought the month's largest daily rainfall total of the month with 1.03" and 0.87", respectively.

Thunderstorms on the 12th caused wind damage across Northern Virginia and portions of Prince Georges County, MD. On the 18th another series of strong storms produced damaging winds and hail across eastern West Virginia and portions of Maryland, including Prince Georges, Carroll, and Harford Counties. Hail up to 1.75" in diameter (golf ball) was reported in Grant, WV. The month's final round of strong to severe storms struck Frederick County and upper Montgomery County on the 27th; five people were injured from a lightning strike at a local carnival in Mt. Airy, while in Damascus strong storms dumped more than 2.5" of rain in an hour accompanied by wind gusts to 50 mph, resulting in damage to some homes along with numerous downed tree limbs. Despite sometimes severe isolated events, dry weather dominated the last half of the month with less than a half inch recorded at most locations, including the three major airports.

JULY 2006 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In.)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNml	Max	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr. to Date
National (DCA)	88.8	72.0	80.4	79.2	+1.2	97/18	62/7	3.56	3.66	-0.10	28.65
Baltimore (BWI)	90.2	69.5	79.8	76.5	+3.3	99/18	57/7	1.86	3.85	-1.99	20.35
Dulles (IAD)	88.5	68.7	78.6	75.7	+2.9	95/18 ¹	56/7	2.45	3.57	-1.12	25.65
Andrews (ADW)	87.0	69.0	78.0	N/A	N/A	95/17 ¹	59/7 ²	3.42	4.30	-0.88	21.05

Other Occurrence: ¹31, ²28

Looking Ahead to August: Will the consecutive streak of warmer than normal conditions continue at BWI and IAD? With both BWI and IAD observing a 7th consecutive month with above-normal temperatures, the question arises whether the streak will continue? Listed below are the five longest periods of consecutive warmer than normal months at both locations. (Based on 1971-2000 Normals.)

BWI
 17 months Oct. 1990 – Feb. 1992
 9 months Apr. – Dec. 1970
 8 months Jul. 1998 – Feb. 1999
 8 months Mar. 1995 – Oct. 1995
 8 months Apr. – Nov. 1969

IAD
 17 months Oct. 1990 – Feb. 1992
 8 months Nov. 1999 – Jun. 2000
 7 months Jan. – Jul. 2006
 7 months Oct. 2001 – Apr. 2002
 7 months Aug. 1998 – Feb. 1999