

MARCH

Temperature: The first month of meteorological spring featured above normal temperatures across the region. Positive departures were +2.5°F at DCA and IAD and +1.3°F at BWI. The last month with subnormal readings across the area was April 2007. Warm temperatures were prevalent throughout March. DCA recorded 6 days with highs at or above 60°F and 4 days with highs at or above 70°F, including a monthly maximum of 74°F on the 28th. BWI recorded 8 days with highs at or above 60°F and 2 days with highs at or above 70°F with a monthly maximum of 71°F on the 4th. IAD observed 9 days with highs at or above 60°F and 2 days at or above 70°F. IAD monthly maximum also occurred on the 4th (71°F). There were no arctic cold surges into the region during the month. In fact, DCA recorded just 2 days with subfreezing lows. The monthly minimum was a relatively mild 29°F.

Precipitation: Subnormal precipitation was observed across the Washington/Baltimore area for the month with monthly totals generally between 2.5" – 3.5"; Portions of Northern Virginia recorded somewhat higher totals. The months' greatest departure occurred at BWI with a total of 2.37" (-1.56"). IAD recorded 2.47" (-1.08") and DCA 2.80" (-0.80"). The month featured four storm systems. Wind was a significant component in three of the events.

The first storm impacted the area on the 4th-5th. The storm was noted for extremely strong wind gusts. Shortly after midnight on the 5th, DCA recorded a gust at near hurricane force, 74 mph, the strongest wind speed ever observed in March. Winds at Andrews Air Force Base were clocked at 66 mph at about the same time. High winds were also observed outside the immediate metro area: White Plains (Charles County, MD) measured 73 mph. Thousands of customers were without power from the storm. Rainfall was heavy in some areas with 2.70" measured in McLean, VA, and 2.58" in Matua, VA, (Fairfax County), and 1.99" in Colesville, MD, (Montgomery County). Rainfall was less intense at the airports with IAD observing the highest total with .93".

The next event occurred 3 days later on the 8th, when light rain and strong winds once again blew through the region. Wind gusts reached 73 mph in Westminster, MD (Carroll County), 60 mph at DCA and 50 mph at BWI. Thousands lost power across the area. Winds tore a 654 foot car-carrying ship from a pier in the Baltimore Harbor, according to press reports.

A third system impacted the area on the 15th-16th. Rainfall averaged between 0.25" and 0.50", although some heavier amounts were measured. Columbia, MD. (Howard County) recorded 0.65" and DCA observed .60".

The months' final significant storm again contained strong winds. Wind gusts reached 60 mph in Severn, MD (Ann Arundel County), 50 mph at DCA and 48 mph at BWI. Rainfall was about 0.50" throughout the area with somewhat higher totals observed in select areas: 0.76" was recorded at Wheaton-Glenmont, MD, (Montgomery County) and Odenton, MD, (Ann Arundel County); BWI observed 0.64".

MARCH 2008 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Total	Precipitation (Inches)		
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNml	Max	MinT		Norm	DepNml	Year to Date
National (DCA)	58.3	39.7	49.0	46.5	+2.5	74/28	29/9	2.80	3.60	-0.80	8.34
Baltimore (BWI)	55.5	34.4	45.0	43.7	+1.3	71/4	23/2	2.37	3.93	-1.56	7.64
Dulles (IAD)	56.2	35.5	45.9	43.4	+2.5	71/4	24/2, 25	2.47	3.55	-1.08	6.41

Looking Ahead to April: Last Freeze at DCA and IAD. April is usually the last month before fall when a 32°F or lower reading occurs in Washington. The city has never recorded a freezing reading in May, although suburban areas have. Below is a list of the last 32°F or lower reading at urban DCA and suburban IAD for the last 10 years.

At DCA				At IAD			
Year	Date of last 32°F or lower reading	Year	Date of last 32°F or lower reading	Year	Date of last 32°F or lower reading	Year	Date of last 32°F or lower reading
2007	April 9 (31°F)	2002	April 7 (32°F)	2007	April 11 (28°F)	2002	April 1 (27°F)
2006	March 23 (32°F)	2001	March 28 (28°F)	2006	April 10 (31°F)	2001	April 26 (32°F)
2005	March 18 (31°F)	2000	March 19 (32°F)	2005	April 17 (31°F)	2000	April 14 (32°F)
2004	April 5 (31°F)	1999	March 23 (32°F)	2004	April 16 (30°F)	1999	April 25 (31°F)
2003	April 1 (32°F)	1998	March 25 (31°F)	2003	April 1 (27°F)	1998	April 13 (32°F)