

September 2008

Temperature: Well above normal temperatures prevailed across the Washington/Baltimore area for the first month of meteorological autumn. The major airports recorded positive departures of +3.4°F at DCA, +2.0°F at BWI and +2.1°F at IAD, resulting in the 15th month out of the past 17 with above normal readings. DCA recorded 6 days with highs at or above 90°F; the 4th equaled a record set in 1985 of 95°F. This was DCA's 5th warmest September since 1980. BWI and IAD observed four 90°F or higher days for the month when the area was impacted with hot conditions from the 2nd-5th as well as on the 13th-14th. Minimum temperatures were quite warm as well. DCA noted 9 days with lows at or above 70°F, including a minimum of 75°F on the 14th. The months' coolest temperatures occurred on the 25th when highs held in the 60s throughout the area. Many suburban locations observed lows in the 40s on the 21st including 46°F at IAD.

Precipitation: September brought a mix of very wet and very dry weather. Despite a long dry period with less than ¼" of rain falling between the 7th and 24th, the area recorded well above normal rainfall with monthly totals generally in the 6"-10" range. DCA observed 6.41" (+2.62"), BWI, 7.22" (+3.24"), and IAD, 7.18" (+3.36"). Two major events brought most of the rain. The first event was Tropical Storm Hanna, which passed over the area on the 5th-6th. The second major event was a coastal storm that brought needed rain from the 25th-28th.

Tropical Storm Hanna brought the region torrential downpours with the highest amounts from Washington DC into Northern Virginia. Some the heaviest totals include 8.35" in Woodbridge, VA (Prince William County); 7.83" in Oakton, VA, and 7.53" in Burke Lake (Fairfax County). Maryland totals were lower; the greatest amounts were 5.0" in Nanjemoy (Charles County) and 4.63" in Point of Rocks (Frederick County). Storm totals at the three major airports were 5.41" at IAD (5.11" on 6th was 2nd greatest daily September total and 4th greatest daily total) and 3.90" at DCA (3.5" on 6th was eighth greatest daily September total. See cover graphic). BWI storm total was 1.72". The copious rainfall caused flooded roads and resulted in numerous water rescues. Winds gusted to 54 mph at Thomas Point Light in Annapolis, MD, and 50 mph at Solomons Island, MD (Calvert County).

A more localized event impacted some locations in Maryland on the 12th with heavy rainfall. Totals included 1.82" in Westminster (Carroll County) and 1.54" in Hamilton (Baltimore County). The widespread heavy rainfall resulting from a coastal system from the 25th-28th included areas that missed the heaviest downpours from Hanna. Totals included 6.03" in Owings Mills, 5.36" in Towson (Baltimore County); 5.80" in Pasadena, MD (Ann Arundel County) and 4.15" at BWI. Although Mt. Vernon observed 3.04" (Fairfax County), amounts in Northern Virginia were generally below 2" with 0.95" recorded at IAD.

The month ended on a wet note with evening thunderstorms on the 30th. Some severe storms were reported in Prince William and Fauquier Counties in Virginia with ¾" hail and wind gusts to 60 mph near Haymarket. Calvert County, MD, recorded thunderstorm wind damage and 1.08" rainfall at Marlton.

SEPTEMBER 2008 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Total	Precipitation (Inches)		
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT		Norm	DepNml	Year to Date
National (DCA)	81.6	66.0	73.9	70.5	+3.4	95/3,4	56/20,21	6.41	3.79	+2.62	39.96
Baltimore (BWI)	78.9	59.9	69.4	67.4	+2.0	93/3,4	49/21	7.22	3.98	+3.24	37.90
Dulles (IAD)	79.4	59.3	69.4	67.3	+2.1	93/4	46/21	7.18	3.82	+3.36	38.06

Looking Ahead to October: The first freeze! October traditionally marks the first freeze in suburban locations. When will the Washington/Baltimore area record its first freeze in 2007? Below is a list of the first 32°F or lower readings at DCA and IAD in the last 10 years.

Year	First 32°F (or lower) reading		Year	First 32°F (or lower) reading	
	DCA	IAD		DCA	IAD
2007	November 24	October 29	2002	November 27	October 18
2006	November 4	October 15	2001	December 22*	October 9
2005	November 17	November 11*	2000	November 16	October 8
2004	December 4	October 18	1999	November 18	October 28
2003	November 10	October 3	1998	November 5	October 2

*Latest date for first freeze ever recorded