

March 2009

Temperatures: DCA and BWI recorded slightly below normal temperatures (DCA, -1.3°F; BWI, -0.6°F) while IAD recorded slightly above normal readings (+0.3°F). Meteorological spring began with mid-winter cold. All three major airports observed subfreezing highs on the 2nd and 3rd. This was the first such occurrence of consecutive subfreezing days in March since 1996. Additionally, highs held below 40°F across the area on the 1st and 4th. Minimum readings plummeted to the teens and single digits region wide from the 2nd-4th. BWI's low of 10°F on the 3rd set a new record and its 8°F low the 4th equaled the third coldest minimum ever recorded in March and the lowest temperature since March 21, 1965. DCA's 14°F on the 3rd was its lowest March temperature since March 8, 1986. IAD's low of 8°F on the 4th equaled its fifth lowest ever in March and coldest March reading since March 10, 1996. Chilly conditions were prevalent on numerous days, including the 12th-16th, with DCA recording 7 days with highs in the 40s, BWI, 10 days and IAD, 9 days. March brought some warm days as well. Highs soared into the 70s on the 7th and 8th including a monthly high of 77°F at IAD on the 8th. Highs reached 70°F or greater across most of the area on the 11th and 29th.

Precipitation: Despite a significant snowfall on March 1st-2nd, precipitation was well below normal for the month. Airport totals included 1.97" at DCA (-1.63"); 2.07" at BWI (-1.86") and 2.41" at IAD (-1.14"). March was the sixth consecutive month with subnormal precipitation at the three major airports and 8th month in past nine with below normal totals at DCA and BWI. The month started off wintry when about an inch of snow fell in many areas, mixed with sleet at times, early on the 1st. By late in the day/overnight, a more significant commenced, ending about midmorning on the 2nd. The storm system was a result of a coastal low with the heaviest snowfall totals south and east of Baltimore and Washington with Southern Maryland receiving the greatest amounts. Amounts included 13" in Port Republic and 10" in Prince Frederick (Calvert County), 11" in Hollywood (St. Mary's County). Significant totals also were reported closer to the metro areas including 9" in Upper Marlboro (Prince Georges County, MD), 8.5" in Arlington, VA, and 8.2" in Alexandria, VA. The three major airports measured their greatest total March snowfall since 1999: BWI, 5.6"; DCA, 5.1"; and IAD, 3.7". The snowstorm caused power outages and treacherous road conditions across the area.

The majority of the months' rainfall occurred between the 26th-27th. About .50" was reported on the 26th, followed by a soaking rainfall overnight on the 27th, resulted in totals over an inch in some areas, including 1.32" in Potomac (Montgomery County, MD) and .92" at IAD. January through March precipitation totals were only about 50 percent of normal throughout much of the area. DCA's total for 2009 through March 31 was 5.00" (normal 9.44").

The seasons first severe weather event occurred across Northern Maryland during the late afternoon on the 29th when hail measuring 0.88" struck Hereford (Baltimore County, MD) and hail measuring 0.75" fell near Churchville (Harford County, MD).

MARCH 2009 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (Inches)				
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNml	Max	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Snow	Yr. to Date
National (DCA)	53.6	36.7	45.2	46.5	-1.3	76/29	14/3	1.97	3.60	-1.63	5.5	5.00
Baltimore (BWI)	52.7	33.5	43.1	43.7	-0.6	76/29	8/4	2.07	3.93	-1.86	5.8	5.06
Dulles (IAD)	53.8	33.5	43.7	43.4	+0.3	77/8	8/4	2.41	3.55	-1.14	6.0	5.40

Looking Ahead to April: Last Freeze at DCA and IAD. April is usually the last month before autumn 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
2008	March 9 (29°F)	2003	April 1 (32°F)	2008	April 16 (31°F)	2003	April 1 (27°F)
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)