

May 2009

Temperatures: The area observed near to above normal temperatures in May with the following departures from normal: DCA, -0.1°F; BWI, +0.8°F; IAD, +2.7°F. Although May did not match the 90°F+ heat recorded on several days in April, it did bring some warm weather. IAD recorded 12 days with highs at or above 80°F; DCA, 9 days; and BWI, 8. In sharp contrast, maximum readings held in the 50s on the 4th into the 5th in some locations. The coolest minimum readings occurred on the 19th with some suburban locations recording temperatures in the upper 30s, including a record low of 38°F at BWI. IAD also recorded a low of 38°F for the month.

Precipitation: For the second consecutive May, excessively wet conditions prevailed across the region. Monthly totals included 8.05" (+4.23") at DCA, 8.42" (+4.53") at BWI and 10.26" (+6.04") at IAD. IAD equaled its wettest May on record (see cover graphic). Rainfall was frequent and often heavy with several episodes of severe weather. DCA observed 8 days with at least ½" of rain, the most since August 1955; IAD set a record with 8 days of more than ½" of rain. The most intense period of rainfall occurred from the 25th-29th when some locations received a total of more than 6". Scattered but intense thunderstorms on Memorial Day brought 1.10" to White Oak (Montgomery County) and 60 mph winds to Montpelier, MD (Prince Georges County). On the 26th, the entire area was drenched with 1.5" to more than 4" rainfall overnight. Totals included 4.23" in Silver Spring, MD (Montgomery County) and 4.18" in Herndon, VA (Fairfax County). Daily records on the 26th were set at IAD with 3.59" and BWI 2.28". The torrential rainfall led to numerous water rescues, forced road closures, impacted transportation and resulted in loss of power to nearly 20,000 customers, according to press reports. Scattered thunderstorms brought additional heavy rainfall through the 29th; IAD reported 1.13" on the 28th and BWI, 1.17" on the 29th. Severe weather impacted some areas on the 29th with hail up to 1.25" near La Plata, MD (Charles County) and thunderstorm wind damage in Arnold, MD (Anne Arundel County). Heavy rainfall occurred between the 3rd and 7th with 5-day totals generally between 3"-4"; some roads were closed due to high water. April-May rainfall at DCA was its 5th wettest (12.27"), and 2nd wettest at IAD (14.38") and BWI (14.22"). See cover graphic.

MAY 2009 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (Inches)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	Max	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr. to Date
National (DCA)	73.8	57.2	65.5	65.6	-0.1	86/9	45/19	8.05	3.82	+4.23	17.27
Baltimore (BWI)	73.4	54.0	63.7	62.8	+0.8	86/23	38/19	8.42	3.89	+4.53	19.28
Dulles (IAD)	74.8	55.2	65.0	62.3	+2.7	86/9,23	38/19	10.26	4.22	+6.04	19.77

Spring Temperature (March-May): Temperatures averaged slightly above normal across the Washington/Baltimore area with departures of +0.2°F at DCA, +0.6°F at BWI and +1.8°F at IAD. March started off the season with mid-winter cold. All three major airports observed subfreezing highs on March 2-3, the first such occurrence of consecutive subfreezing days in March since 1996. Minimum readings plummeted to the teens and single digits regionwide from the 2nd-4th. BWI's low of 10°F on the 3rd set a new record and its 8°F low on the 4th equaled the 3rd 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 5th lowest ever in March and coldest March reading since March 10, 1996. March observed some warm days; high 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. April brought above normal temperatures, largely the result of the season's first heat wave from the 25th-28th. Highs soared into the 90s. IAD's high of 92°F for each of those days set a new record on the 25th and equaled the record the following 2 days. Many suburban areas recorded their final freeze of the season on April 13th, including a low of 29°F at BWI and 32°F at IAD. May ended with near normal temperatures (see monthly summary above.)

Spring Precipitation: Spring 2009 continued where the previous spring left off—wet across the region. Seasonal precipitation totals were 15.87" at DCA, 16.29" at BWI and 16.79" at IAD. March marked the 6th consecutive month with subnormal precipitation, despite a significant snowfall on March 1-2. The snow event resulted in up to 13" in the area with DCA recording a total of 5.5"; BWI, 5.8"; and IAD, 6.0". The snowstorm caused power outages and treacherous road conditions across the area. The seasons first severe weather event occurred across Northern Maryland during the late afternoon on March 29 when hail measuring 0.88" struck Hereford (Baltimore County, MD). April brought much needed relief from 6 months of drier than normal weather. After the 2nd driest February-March ever recorded in Washington, well above normal rainfall was observed across the region. It was the 6th consecutive April with above normal rainfall. April also recorded severe thunderstorms with hail measured at an estimated 2" in Fredericksburg. A second severe weather event included a plane struck by lightning after takeoff from BWI. The plane landed safely at IAD. Strong winds occurred across the area on the April 4. Gusts to 52 mph were reported in Glen Burnie (Ann Arundel County) and in Gaithersburg, MD (Montgomery County). May continued the wetter than normal weather (see monthly summary above.)

SPRING 2009 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (Inches)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Snow
National (DCA)	64.7	47.0	55.9	56.1	+0.2	92/4-26	14/3-3	15.87	10.19	+5.68	5.5"
Baltimore (BWI)	64.0	43.8	53.9	53.3	+0.6	91/4-26, 27	8/3-4	16.29	10.82	+5.47	5.8"
Dulles (IAD)	65.4	44.3	54.8	53.0	+1.8	92/4-26, 27	8/3-4	16.79	10.99	+5.80	6.0"

Looking Ahead to June: *Does a wet spring indicate a cool summer?* Listed below are the most recent above normal spring precipitation totals at DCA and the subsequent average summer temperatures. The average DCA summer temperature is 78.3°F. Hotter than normal years are in orange.

Year	2009	2008	2005	2003	2002	2001	2000	1998	1996	1994
Spring Rainfall	16.79"	18.07	13.13	15.13	11.66	11.97	10.28	13.04	14.28	11.61
Summer Temps	?	78.9°F	78.8°F	76.0°F	79.4°F	76.5°F	74.8°F	77.1°F	77.1°F	78.9°F