

JANUARY 1991: Despite a new calendar year, the consistent warmth so prevalent in 1990 continued into the first month of 1991. While there were no daily record highs, temperatures averaged above normal throughout the majority of the month, with 9 days exceeding 50°F. Combined with an unseasonably mild December 1990, nearly half (45%) of the daily highs this Winter have been at or above 50°F. In addition, there were no strong or prolonged Arctic air outbreaks that are common in January. This kept minimum temperatures near or above normal during most of the month. Only IAD observed single-digit readings (9°F on January 22nd), and DCA only fell to 18°F. Even though January 1991 was unusually mild, temperatures actually remained at or below freezing throughout January 22nd (26°F/18°F) and January 25th (32°F/20°F) at DCA, the first time this has happened during January since January 27, 1988 (31°F/16°F).

Nearly all the precipitation during the month occurred from the 6th to the 17th. Rain changed to snow on the 7th from the northwest to the southeast across the region. While the District received 2–3 inches, amounts varied considerably, with up to 5 1/2 inches in parts of Montgomery County, MD while Fort Belvoir recorded less than an inch. Two days later, light freezing rain glazed the area, causing many traffic accidents. The event would have been significantly more dangerous had salt not been on the roads from the previous snow. Later in the week, a third storm brought 2 to 3 inches of early morning snow before changing to rain. An unusual occurrence for January was two thunderstorm events. As a cold front moved through on the 16th, thunderstorms were reported during the late afternoon in the southern sections of the area. Early in the morning on the 21st, more thunder and lightning was noted across the northern sections of the region as a second cold front approached.

JANUARY 1991 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station <u>Location</u>	<u>Temperatures (°F)</u>					<u>Extreme/Day</u>			<u>Precipitation (In)</u>			
	<u>AvMx</u>	<u>AvMn</u>	<u>AvgT</u>	<u>NmIT</u>	<u>DepNm</u>	<u>MaxT</u>	<u>MinT</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Norm</u>	<u>DepNm</u>	<u>Snow</u>	
National (DCA)	46.3	30.8	38.6	35.2	+3.4	59/15	18/22 [®]	2.90	2.76	+0.14	4.8	
Baltimore (BWI)	44.7	25.9	35.3	32.7	+2.6	56/16 [*]	12/23	3.54	3.00	+0.54	4.2	
Dulles (IAD)	44.2	23.9	34.1	31.4	+2.7	59/15	9/22	2.67	2.83	-0.16	6.3	
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	47.2	27.3	37.3	32	+5	60/20	12/23	2.15	2.8	-0.6	2.1	
Andrews AFB (ADW)	44.5	25.4	35.0	34	+1	57/16	12/22 [#]	2.57	3.1	-0.5	4.5	

Other dates of occurrence: * January 20 and 30; # January 26; ® January 23.

LOOKING AHEAD TO FEBRUARY: WARMEST WINTERS

After a mild December and January, with temperatures averaging 4.5°F above normal, here is a look at the five mildest winters (December–February) recorded at Washington since 1871 (Winter normal 37.5°F, base period 1951–1980):

<u>Season</u>	<u>Departures (°F)</u>
1931–1932	+ 7.1
1889–1890	+ 6.8
1949–1950	+ 5.4
1948–1949	+ 4.7
1974–1975	+ 4.0