

OCTOBER 1991: For the first month since April and only the second month this calendar year, the monthly weather headlines focused on precipitation (or lack of) instead of temperatures. Despite a relatively wet initial seventeen days this month, with some areas recording over three inches of rain, a blocking pattern developed across the U.S. with a ridge across the East, preventing storm systems over the central and western U.S. from moving eastward. As a result, the final two weeks of the month produced no measurable precipitation across the region. During this period, dense fog was prevalent during the early morning hours from the 23rd to the 27th. The majority of the monthly rainfall occurred during two events. The first was rare late night thunderstorms ushering in the leading edge of cooler air on the 5th, providing up to 1.75 inches of rainfall in Fairfax County. The second rain event was an all-day, widespread, general rain on the 17th which produced two-thirds of an inch of rain in some areas to over two inches in portions of Calvert County as a nor'easter-type storm system moved northward along the East Coast.

While temperatures averaged slightly above normal, no prolonged warm spells occurred during the month. After several highs in the seventies early in the month, frontal passages prevented a return to record temperatures prevalent during the summer. Frost was common in many western suburban areas during the latter third of the month ending the growing season, although the minimum temperature at "heat-island" DCA was only 37°F (see table). Even during the period of the blocking pattern, maximum temperatures, while comfortable, did not reach unseasonably high levels due to morning fog, weaker sunshine, and less daylight.

OCTOBER 1991 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)		
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNm	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNm
National (DCA)	70.2	50.5	60.4	59.3	+1.1	85/4	37/30	2.03	2.90	-0.87
Baltimore (BWI)	69.2	46.4	57.8	56.9	+0.9	85/4	31/21	3.20	3.11	-0.09
Dulles (IAD)	70.0	43.1	56.6	55.3	+1.3	85/4	27/30	1.37	3.01	-1.64
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	70.1	44.0	57.0	57	0	85/4	30/21	1.30	3.4	-2.1
Andrews AFB (ADW)	69.1	45.5	57.3	58	-1	85/4	30/21	1.93	3.3	-1.4

LOOKING AHEAD TO NOVEMBER: THE FIRST INCH OF SNOW AT DCA.

With all the airports (except the "urban heat island" DCA) recording their first freezes of the 1991-1992 season during October, the next logical question is when will the first inch of snow fall? The average date at DCA is Dec. 15, but during the past 10 years, this date can greatly vary at National as shown below. The earliest significant snowfall (>1") at Washington probably occurred during October 1925 (2.2") and October 1940 (1.5"), while no significant snow occurred during the 1972-1973 season (total=0.1") and 1975-1976 season (total=2.2").

<u>Winter Season</u>	<u>First 1" snow</u>	<u>Winter Season</u>	<u>First 1" snow</u>
1990-1991	Dec. 27	1985-1986	Dec. 20
1989-1990	Nov. 22	1984-1985	Jan. 4
1988-1989	Dec. 9	1983-1984	Jan. 11
1987-1988	Nov. 11	1982-1983	Dec. 12
1986-1987	Jan. 22	1981-1982	Dec. 15