

APRIL 1998: Wet and mild conditions, so prevalent most of the Winter and early Spring, continued during April, with all three of the major airports reporting slightly above normal temperatures, and three of the five airports recording above normal rainfall. Like March, most of the precipitation fell during the first three weeks of the month as numerous storm systems, the result of an active subtropical jet stream, affected the region. Unlike the previous three months, precipitation totals were generally lower (in the 3-4 inch range). However, monthly totals were significant enough to make the January-April 1998 period the wettest such period on record at all three of the major airports. Precipitation totals for the first four months of this year reached or exceeded 20.00" at four of the five airports (see table below). Measurable precipitation (≥ 0.01 ") occurred on 10 days at both DCA and IAD and 11 days at BWI. Nearly an inch of rain was observed at DCA on the 1st and 4th and more than an inch soaked most of the area on the 9th. Additional rainfall between the 17th and 20th produced another inch of rain at many locations. Thunderstorms were quite prevalent during the month with many areas reporting as many as five such storms, but only a few approached severe levels. A relatively dry period prevailed during the last ten days of the month as less than 0.25" of rain was observed at the three major airports. The abundant Winter and Spring moisture accompanied by mild weather has caused plants and trees to flourish and has resulted in one of the most prolific pollen episodes in the local area and in turn has created one of the worst allergy seasons.

As mentioned earlier, slightly warmer than normal conditions prevailed across the Washington/Baltimore area, producing monthly temperature departures of about +1°F to +2°F. There were no episodes of summerlike warmth as in late March. In fact, DCA failed to top 80°F for the second consecutive April. The warmer than normal conditions were due in part to numerous cloudy days (and nights) that limited large daily variations in temperature. The average monthly maximum temperature at DCA was only 0.2°F above while monthly lows averaged 1.5°F above normal. Unlike past years, there was no widespread hard freeze during the month, but several scattered frosts were observed mainly in the northern and western suburbs, but they did not have a negative impact on the growing season across the local area. There were a few days with at or below freezing temperatures reported at both BWI and IAD, including a reading of 28°F at IAD on the 7th. One noteworthy temperature highlight occurred during the early evening of the 26th as a strong cold front pushed through the local area. The passage of the frontal system resulted in a 30°F temperatures drop in less than two hours at many locations, including DCA where the mercury plunged from 80°F to 50°F in a relatively short period of time.

APRIL 1998 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Month-Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr to date
National (DCA)	66.9	47.9	57.4	56.5	+0.9	79/16	38/7	3.96	2.71	+1.25	20.00
Baltimore (BWI)	67.3	43.1	55.2	53.4	+1.8	81/16	32/6*	3.03	3.09	-0.06	20.64
Dulles (IAD)	67.4	42.4	54.9	52.7	+2.2	80/17	28/7	2.92	3.11	-0.19	19.76
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	71.8	45.9	58.8	N/A	N/A	84/16	34/7*	3.43	3.2	+0.2	22.82
Andrews AFB (ADW)	66.8	44.7	55.8	N/A	N/A	79/2@	34/7	4.07	3.0	+1.1	20.81

Other Occurrences: * April 7th & 12th; # April 12th; @ April 16th.

LOOKING AHEAD TO MAY: *The First 90°F+ Reading in Washington.*

Despite slightly warmer than normal conditions in April, there were no days with highs at or above 80°F at DCA. An abnormally warm week at the end of March produced the first 90°F+ highs of the year at both DAA and ADW, but no such reading at any of the three major airports. With that in mind, the question arises: will May produce the first 90°F+ reading at DCA? Below is a list of the last ten years and the date of the first 90°F or greater temperature at DCA, in addition to the earliest and latest such readings in Washington.

<u>Year</u>	<u>First 90°F+ Reading</u>
1997	May 19 th (96°F)
1996	May 19 th (95°F)
1995	April 19 th (91°F)
1994	April 27 th (90°F)
1993	June 9 th (93°F)
1992	May 23 rd (91°F)
1991	May 12 th (90°F)
1990	April 26 th (91°F)
1989	June 1 (94°F)
1988	May 30 th (91°F)

Earliest 90°F+ reading in Washington: March 22, 1907 (90°F)
 Latest 90°F+ reading in Washington: July 12, 1979 (93°F)