

DECEMBER 2006 Temperature: Significantly warmer than normal conditions prevailed across the Washington/Baltimore area in the first month of meteorological winter. Monthly temperature departures were +4.7°F at DCA, +5.7°F at BWI and +5.9°F at IAD, resulting in the 10th warmest December on record at DCA, 5th at BWI (13th in Baltimore), and 4th at IAD. It was the warmest December since 2001 at DCA, since 1994 at BWI, and since 1984 at IAD. Temperatures were at or above normal on 24 days at DCA, including the final 22 days of the month. Record highs were set at all three major airports on the 1st and 18th as temperatures soared into the 70's throughout the local area. All three airports topped out at 75°F on the 1st, while on the 18th highs reached 76°F at IAD, 74°F at DCA and 72°F at BWI. The only cold spells occurred from the 3rd-5th and on the 8th-9th. The lowest daytime readings for December occurred on the 8th as highs struggled into the mid 30's, accompanied by a gusty northwest wind and wind chill values in the 20's. Lows dropped into the teens at most locations on the 9th, including a low of 15°F at IAD. DCA's minimum temperature remained at or above 32°F from the 11th through month's end as the consistently warmer than normal pattern continued. DCA recorded only 9 days in December with lows at or below freezing, the fewest since 2001.

Precipitation: After three consecutive months with above normal rainfall in the area, well below normal precipitation fell in December. Monthly precipitation totals were generally between 1.50" and 2.00", resulting in deficits of 1.49" at DCA, 1.47" at BWI and 1.33" at IAD. The area received its major rainstorm for the month the 22nd-23rd, when 0.75" to about 1.50" soaked most of the area. The heaviest rain fell north and east of Washington with the largest totals observed in Baltimore, Howard, Harford, and Carroll Counties, MD. BWI recorded a 2-day total of 1.02". A second, but weaker storm impacted the area on Christmas with most locations recording about 0.50" of rain; however, a few areas, especially in the eastern suburbs, measured up to 0.85". Strong winds impacted the area on the 1st when a powerful cold front moved through the area with winds gusts to 53 mph at IAD, 48 mph at DCA and 40 mph at BWI. Wintergreen Ski Area in Nelson County, VA, recorded a gust of 71 mph. Most locations observed their first and only snow flurries of the month on the 5th and/or 7th during December's only cold spell.

DECEMBER 2006 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In.)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNml	Max	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Snow
National (DCA)	52.8	35.6	44.2	39.5	+4.7	75/1	19/9	1.56	3.05	-1.49	T
Baltimore (BWI)	52.5	32.3	42.4	36.7	+5.7	75/1	18/9	1.88	3.35	-1.47	T
Dulles (IAD)	53.0	30.8	41.9	36.0	+5.9	76/18	15/9	1.74	3.07	-1.33	T
Andrews (ADW)	53.4	32.8	43.1	N/A	N/A	74/1	16/9	1.30	3.40	-2.10	T

ANNUAL Temperature: The Washington/Baltimore area recorded well above normal temperatures in 2006. DCA's average annual temperature of 59.2°F was 1.6°F above normal, resulting in the 8th warmest year on record in Washington (see cover). BWI recorded an average annual temperature of 57.3°F, 2.7°F above normal, (4th warmest on record), IAD 57.0°F, 2.8°F above normal; its second warmest year (tied with 1990) on record. DCA marked 8 months with above normal temperatures; only May, September and October recorded subnormal temperatures. Some of DCA's largest monthly temperature departures were recorded in January and December. Both months ranked in the top 10 warmest ever, April (11th warmest on record) and August (7th warmest on record). After the warm January, February brought a return to winter with seasonal cold, but slightly warmer than normal readings. March and April ushered in spring with above normal readings. May brought near normal temperatures. With minor exceptions, June, July and August brought above normal heat, especially in late July and early August. September and October were the only two consecutive months with subnormal temperatures. November and December ended the year as it began with well above normal temperatures.

ANNUAL Precipitation: For the 4th consecutive year, most of the local area recorded above normal precipitation. Annual precipitation totals at the three major airports included 47.77" at DCA (+8.42"), 45.98" at IAD (+4.18") and BWI 43.24" (+1.30"). The significant disparity between the Washington and Baltimore areas is primarily attributed to significantly greater rainfall observed in Washington during the late June torrential rainfall event when over 10" of rain was measured in 3 days, resulting in widespread flooding. January brought near to slightly below normal precipitation with negligible snowfall, with the area recording thunderstorms on as many as 3 days. February saw a return of winter weather with a major snowfall and three other storm systems. Almost no precipitation was observed in March; totals of less than .25" resulted in the driest March ever recorded at all three major airports. April brought much needed rainfall with above average totals. May's rainfall was near normal rainfall. June brought unprecedented rainfall with totals of 18.61" at DCA, 15.48" at IAD and 10.63" at BWI. The most significant rainfall arrived when a tropical air mass interacting with a stationary frontal system ignited intense tropical downpours from June 25-27. July brought drier conditions with well below normal precipitation in many areas. The well below normal rainfall continued throughout August, then ended dramatically on September 1 when remnants of Tropical Storm Ernesto moved through the area bringing the metro areas 2" to 5" of rain and gusty winds to 40 mph. Autumn continued wet with well above normal rainfall all three months. December returned to drier than normal conditions but most areas had already exceeded annual totals during November.

ANNUAL 2006 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In.)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNml	Max	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Snow
National (DCA)	67.8	50.5	59.2	57.5	+1.7	101/8-3	14/2-19	47.77	39.35	+8.42	8.8
Baltimore (BWI)	67.5	47.1	57.3	55.6	+1.7	100/8-3	12/2-19	43.24	41.94	+1.30	13.1
Dulles (IAD)	67.6	47.4	57.5	54.2	+3.3	99/8-3	10/2-19	45.98	41.80	+4.18	8.1
Andrews (ADW)	67.2	47.9	58.0	N/A	N/A	99/8-2,3	14/20/19	39.17	42.50	-3.33	5.5

Looking Ahead to JANUARY: Subnormal winter snowfall? With just a trace of measurable snow across in December, what will the remaining two winter months bring? Below is a look at the most recent 10 Decembers with a trace or zero snowfall at DCA and the winter season total.

Winter	2001/02	1999/00	1994/95	1991/92	1987/88	1986/87	1983/84	1979/80	1978/79	1972/73
December	0	T	0	0	T	T	T	T	T	0
January	2.7	14.5	3.9	4.0	13.1	20.8	6.5	8.6	4.0	T