

## January 2009

**Temperature:** For the first time since 2004, subnormal January temperatures were recorded across the Washington/Baltimore area. Negative departures were -3.3°F at DCA, -3.0°F at BWI and -2.1°F at IAD, marking the coldest January at DCA since 2004 and 3rd coldest in the past 15 years (see cover graphic). This blustery weather was in sharp contrast to last January when temperatures in Washington averaged 8.4°F warmer. Temperatures during the second half of the month averaged 5.8°F below normal at DCA. DCA and IAD observed 6 days with highs at or below freezing and BWI 8 such days. The months' most intense cold occurred from the 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> when maximum readings were subfreezing with highs on the 16<sup>th</sup> reaching only 18°F at DCA and BWI, and 17°F at IAD; wind chill values were in the single digits during that period. The 16<sup>th</sup> marked the coldest maximum reading in Washington since 1994. Minimum temperatures were in the single digits on the 17<sup>th</sup> and in most locations on the 16<sup>th</sup>. DCA's low of 8°F on the 17<sup>th</sup> was its first occurrence below 10°F since 2004. BWI recorded 2°F on the 17<sup>th</sup>, its coldest day since 1996, while IAD observed 0°F, its coldest day since 1994. The cold lingered throughout the month. DCA and BWI's minimum temperature was at or below freezing from the 8<sup>th</sup> through months' end (24 days), while at IAD the streak reached 26 days by the end of the month (beginning the 6<sup>th</sup>). DCA's reading of 51°F on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> were its coolest monthly maximum in January since 1994.

**Precipitation:** Slightly below normal precipitation fell across the region with amounts close to 3". Totals included 2.68" (-0.53") at DCA, 2.73" (-0.74") at BWI, and 2.64" (-0.41") at IAD. The months' greatest precipitation event occurred on the 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> when more than an inch water equivalent fell at the three major airports and up to 2" in some locations. Freezing rain was reported in a few areas with 0.25" ice on some exposed surfaces, including Reisterstown, MD, (Baltimore County), Millers, MD, (Carroll County) and Lucketts, VA (Loudoun County). The precipitation event left isolated patches of ice on roadways on the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> and resulted in a 10-car pileup on I-270 in Montgomery County, injuring 12, according to press reports. Brief but intense snow showers on the 19<sup>th</sup> across the northern and western suburbs lead to 42-car pileup on I-70 in Frederick County, MD, with 2 fatalities reported by media. Snowfall totals included 3.0" in Wolfsville, MD (Frederick County), 2.2" in Kingsville, MD (Baltimore County), and 1.0" at both the NWS forecast office in Sterling, VA, and at IAD (first inch of season). The seasons' first measurable snowfall across much of the area occurred on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Totals ranged from an inch across some of the northern suburbs to about 3" south and east of Washington. Totals included 3.3" in Waldorf, MD (Charles County), and 3.0" in Franconia, VA (Fairfax County). DCA's 1.7" was its latest first inch of snow of the season since January 28, 1995. The snow changed to sleet and freezing rain during the evening and overnight before ending as rain showers during the afternoon of the 28<sup>th</sup>. Ice accumulations were as thick as 0.4" in Ellicott City, MD (Howard County), and 0.3" in Ashburn, VA (Loudoun County). While driving conditions were hazardous, with numerous reported accidents, ice accretions were generally not significant enough to cause tree damage or result in power disruptions. Precipitation totals from the event were generally between 0.50" and 0.80".

### JANUARY 2009 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

| Location               | Station Temperatures (°F) |      |      |      |        | Extreme/Day |      | Precipitation (Inches) |      |        |      |
|------------------------|---------------------------|------|------|------|--------|-------------|------|------------------------|------|--------|------|
|                        | AvMx                      | AvMn | AvgT | NmIT | DepNml | Max         | MinT | Total                  | Norm | DepNml | Snow |
| <b>National (DCA)</b>  | 38.3                      | 25.0 | 31.6 | 34.9 | -3.3   | 51/23       | 8/17 | 2.68                   | 3.21 | -0.53  | 1.9  |
| <b>Baltimore (BWI)</b> | 37.3                      | 21.4 | 29.3 | 32.3 | -3.0   | 55/23       | 2/17 | 2.73                   | 3.47 | -0.74  | 2.1  |
| <b>Dulles (IAD)</b>    | 38.0                      | 21.2 | 29.6 | 31.7 | -2.1   | 57/23       | 0/17 | 2.64                   | 3.05 | -0.41  | 2.0  |

**Looking Ahead to February:** *Subnormal January Snowfall = Subnormal February Snowfall?* DCA measured 1.9" of snowfall in January, well below the normal of 6.2". Does this indicate February snow will also be subnormal? Listed below are the most recent 10 Januaries with subnormal snowfall and the corresponding February totals.

| Year                     | 2009 | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 | 2003 | 2002 | 2001 | 1999 | 1998 | 1997 |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>January Snowfall</b>  | 1.9  | 1.3  | 1.3  | T    | 4.5  | 2.7  | 2.4  | 2.2  | T    | 2.3  |
| <b>February Snowfall</b> | ?    | 1.0  | 5.9  | 8.8  | 28.7 | 0.5  | 2.8  | 0.2  | T    | 4.0  |