

OCTOBER 2002: In sharp contrast to the previous four October's, much above-normal rainfall highlighted weather conditions across the local area. Monthly precipitation totals between five and seven inches were common throughout the Washington/Baltimore area, yielding monthly precipitation surpluses between 1 and 3 inches at the three major airports. It was the wettest October since 1995 and the wettest month since July 2000 at DCA. At ADW, 6.64" of rain was recorded. The excessive rainfall was due in large part to an active storm track across the southern U.S. that provided copious amounts of moisture from the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean, resulting in significant rainfall even with fast moving storms. There were four significant storm systems during the month with each system providing more than an inch of rain at most locations. The month actually started off with no measurable rainfall until the 9th. On the 10th-11th, the first major storm system of the month moved through the local area, generating more than an inch of rain at DCA and nearly 2 inches at BWI. Five days later a second storm impacted the area, producing 1.65" of rain at BWI and 1.38" at DCA. A quick moving storm during the overnight hours of the 25th-26th produced heavy rain across much of the local area. BWI again received the most rain (1.13") of the three major airports. The last significant rainfall of the month occurred from the 29th-30th. More than an inch of rain soaked much of the local area, including all three major airports. During this precipitation event, temperatures were well below-normal (highs only in the 30's at most locations), resulting in the first wintry weather conditions of the season in western Maryland (Garrett County). According to press reports, freezing rain coated trees and power lines, knocking out power to 12,000 customers and closing schools closed for three days. The much needed rainfall provided beneficial water to local streams and reservoirs and trimmed long-term precipitation deficits plaguing much of the local area.

While temperatures averaged near-normal at most locations, a sharp contrast occurred between the first and second halves of the month. The month began with abnormally warm weather from the 1st-5th as highs routinely soared into the eighties at many locations. On the 5th, DCA recorded a high of 90°F, the first such October reading and the latest such reading since 1997. It was the 56th day of 2002 with a 90°F+ high, the most such readings in a calendar year since 1991. On the 4th, humid conditions kept minimum temperatures above 70°F at a few locations, including DCA (72°F) and BWI (71°F). In sharp contrast, much cooler conditions commenced around mid-month as frequent storminess and cold Canadian air infiltrated the local area. Subnormal temperatures prevailed on 16 of the last 18 days at DCA, including the 29th, 30th and 31st when lows dipped into the thirties across the Washington/Baltimore area. IAD recorded its first freezing temperature of the season on the 18th (32°F). October marked only the second month of 2002 with subnormal temperatures at DCA.

OCTOBER 2002 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr to date
National (DCA)	65.6	51.7	58.6	58.8	-0.2	90/5	38/31	5.00	3.22	+1.78	25.54
Baltimore (BWI)	63.9	48.1	56.0	55.4	+0.6	86/3	34/31	6.01	3.16	+2.85	30.56
Dulles (IAD)	64.0	45.9	55.0	55.0	0.0	87/5	31/31	5.04	3.37	+1.67	30.43
Andrews AFB (ADW)	64.0	48.8	56.4	N/A	N/A	88/5	37/14*	6.64	3.6	+3.0	30.00

Other Occurrences: * October 18th, 22nd, 30th & 31st.

LOOKING AHEAD TO NOVEMBER: The first inch of snow in Washington.

With some locations around the Washington/Baltimore area having recorded their first frost or freeze, our attention now focuses on the first inch of snow in the local area. In Washington, the largest single November snow event occurred in 1987 when 11.5 inches blanketed DCA. This particular event also tied December 17, 1932 as the greatest single snowfall event during any astronomical autumn in Washington. The date of the first inch of snow in Washington can vary greatly from year to year. During the last ten years, it has occurred between early December and late January (except in 1997-98, when no 1"+ snows occurred). The earliest snows ($\geq 1"$) in Washington (city) took place on October 30, 1925 (2.2") and October 20, 1940 (1.4") while the earliest measurable snow ever recorded at National Airport fell on October 10, 1979 (0.3"). In contrast, no significant snowfall was observed at all during the 1997-98 & 1972-73 seasons at DCA (total=0.1").

<u>Snow Season</u>	<u>First 1" (or greater) Snowfall at DCA</u>	<u>Snow Season</u>	<u>First 1" (or greater) Snowfall at DCA</u>
2001-2002	January 19	1996-1997	January 9
2000-2001	December 19	1995-1996	December 9
1999-2000	January 20	1994-1995	January 28
1998-1999	January 8	1993-1994	December 28
1997-1998	No 1" amount recorded	1992-1993	December 10

