

APRIL 2004: Above normal temperatures and rainfall highlighted weather conditions across the Washington/Baltimore area. Monthly temperatures averaged 1.2°F above normal at DCA, 1.5°F at BWI, and 1.6°F at IAD. There were 15 days with highs at or above normal at DCA, with the majority of above normal temperatures recorded during the second half of the month (see cover graphic). The most prolonged period of abnormal warmth occurred from the 17th-24th with daily highs at or above 70°F and above 80°F on four days (17th, 18th, 22nd, 23rd). The first 90°F+ high of the year occurred on the 19th at many locations, including the three major airports. In sharp contrast, chilly conditions prevailed the first half of the month. Highs in the 40s, more typical of February, occurred on four of the first five days and again on the 12th at many locations. The season's last freeze occurred on the 5th at DCA (31°F) but as late as the 16th at some locations away from the city (30°F at IAD). The strong April sun and dry air produced several days with large diurnal temperature changes. On the 17th, BWI warmed more than 40°F, from a morning low of 38°F to an afternoon high of 82°F.

The region experienced lots of April showers with wetter than normal conditions across the area. Monthly precipitation generally totaled between 4" to 6". This heavier rain yielded monthly precipitation departures of +1.07" at DCA, +2.33" at BWI, and +1.83" at IAD. Two long duration storms occurred from the 1st-4th and 12th-14th, each soaking the area with well over an inch of rain. BWI recorded 2.09", the highest precipitation total of the three major airports. The second storm system produced 1.79" at IAD, 1.74" at BWI, and 1.62" at DCA. Some areas observed their first thunderstorm of the year on the 23rd with rainfall totals generally around 0.5" (0.66" at BWI) but, no severe weather was reported. The month's final precipitation event on the 26th also yielded some significant precipitation amounts. The all day rain brought up to an inch of rain at many locations including 0.99" IAD. It was the wettest April since 2000 at the three major airports and the first month with above normal precipitation since December 2003 across the region.

APRIL 2004 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day			Precipitation (In)		
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr-to-date
National (DCA)	66.4	48.3	57.3	56.1	+1.2	1/19	31/5	3.84	2.77	+1.07	9.56
Baltimore (BWI)	64.9	44.5	54.7	53.2	+1.5	90/19	29/6	5.33	3.00	+2.33	11.72
Dulles (IAD)	65.3	44.2	54.7	53.1	+1.6	90/19	28/6	5.05	3.22	+1.83	10.76
Andrews AFB (ADW)	67.0	48.0	57.5	N/A	N/A	93/19	30/5	4.68	3.00	+1.68	11.82

LOOKING AHEAD TO MAY: *Does the brief April heat wave point to a hot summer?*

With above-normal temperatures in April and the first 90°F day recorded at all three major airports, will this be a hotter than normal year? Below is a list of years since 1960 recording one or more 90°F days in April, and the total number of 90°F days for that year in the Washington/Baltimore area.

Year	# April Days Above 90°F	# Days Above 90°F for Year	Year	# April Days Above 90°F	# Days Above 90°F for Year
1960	5	23	1990	2	28
1969	1	39	1994	1	46
1974	1	32	1995	1	52
1976	5	36	2002	3	56
1977	2	46	2004	1	???
1985	2	28			