

APRIL 1999: Near normal temperatures and subnormal rainfall prevailed across the Washington/Baltimore area during April. While temperatures averaged close to normal at most locations, the month featured periods of unusual warmth as well as cold conditions, sometimes within a few days of each other. The month began with relatively warm weather as temperatures averaged 7°F above normal at DCA between the 1st and 9th. During this time period, some locations noted a significant temperature rise during the day (on the 8th) from lows in the thirties to highs in the eighties. Highs above 80°F were common on the 8th at most locations, marking the warmest conditions since last September. Both DCA and IAD observed 3 days with 80°F+ highs while 2 were reported at BWI. The remainder of the month featured unusually cool conditions occasionally interspersed with a warm day. On the 11th, very chilly conditions prevailed as clouds and rainfall held maximum temperatures in the upper forties and lower fifties throughout the area. At DCA, at or below-normal temperatures were reported on 16 of the last 21 days and temperatures during this period averaged more than 2.5°F below normal. On the 6th, the last freeze of the season was reported at BWI, while at IAD this event didn't occur until the 25th.

Precipitation was slightly below normal across the local area with monthly totals between two and three inches common. The majority of the precipitation fell during the first half of the month with amounts of 1.5"-2" reported at the three major airports. Showers on the 1st, 4th and 5th produced a combined total of about one inch at many locations, while rains on the 11th provided another one-third to one-half inch. On the 23rd, strong, fast-moving thunderstorms raked portions of northern Virginia, generating brief heavy rains, frequent lightning, and hail up to 4 inches in diameter. The severe thunderstorms were part of a "super-cell" thunderstorm complex that formed over West Virginia earlier in the day and progressed eastward through portions of the local area during the afternoon. This event marked the final measurable rains across the local area as the remainder of the month brought dry weather, though often accompanied by unusually high levels of pollen.

APRIL 1999 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr-to-date
National (DCA)	66.4	46.6	56.5	56.5	0.0	85/8	41/6*	2.09	2.71	-0.62	13.92
Baltimore (BWI)	64.2	41.8	53.0	53.4	-0.4	83/8	32/6	2.27	3.09	-0.82	13.08
Dulles (IAD)	65.8	40.1	52.9	52.7	-0.2	85/8	31/25	2.68	3.11	-0.43	14.13
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	69.7	44.7	57.2	N/A	N/A	90/8	37/5*	2.03	3.2	-1.2	16.26
Andrews AFB (ADW)	65.8	42.6	54.2	N/A	N/A	84/8	36/6*	2.54	3.0	-0.5	12.96

Other Occurrences: * April 19th, 21st and 24th; † April 5th, 6th, 19th, 21st, 25th; ‡ April 19th, 21st and 29th.

LOOKING AHEAD TO MAY: The first 90°F+ reading of 1999?

Despite a relatively warm start to April, the month finished with near-normal temperatures and only 3 days when the mercury topped 80°F. 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 reading at DCA, in addition to the earliest and latest such readings in Washington. Coincidentally, the first 90°F+ reading at DCA has occurred on the same day for the last 3 years (see table).

Year	First 90°F+ Reading	Year	First 90°F+ Reading
1998	May 19 th (90°F)	1993	June 9 th (93°F)
1997	May 19 th (96°F)	1992	May 23 rd (91°F)
1996	May 19 th (95°F)	1991	May 12 th (90°F)
1995	April 19 th (91°F)	1990	April 26 th (91°F)
1994	April 27 th (90°F)	1989	June 1 (94°F)

Earliest 90°F+ reading in Washington: March 22, 1907 (90°F)

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