



National Weather Service

Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena



January 1998

Location	Date	Time Local/ Standard	Path Length (Miles)	Path Width (Yards)	Number of Persons	Estimated Damage	Property	Crops	Character of Storm
					Killed	Injured			

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

DCZ001 **District Of Columbia**

06	0000EST	0	0	Unseasonably Warm
09	1200EST			

A sprawling area of high atmospheric pressure became anchored over the western Atlantic for several days. Circulation around the high brought an unencumbered flow of tropical air from the Caribbean region into the immediate Washington, DC metropolitan region over a 2 1/2 day period beginning around midnight on the 6th and continuing until around noon on the 9th. A new record high temperature was set at National Airport on the 8th. More interestingly, temperatures remained above 55 degrees for over 48 hours, spanning two mornings when the normal low temperatures were nearly 30 degrees colder!

After nine days, mean temperatures across the metropolitan region were between 18 and 20 degrees above normal - more like April than early January.

DCZ001 **District Of Columbia**

23	0700EST	0	0	Heavy Rain
	1400EST			

Low- and mid-level flow of deep moisture, overrunning a chilly surface air mass, produced a prolonged period of moderate to heavy rain across the District of Columbia and immediate suburbs during the morning and early afternoon of the 23rd. A daily rainfall record was set at National Airport, where 1.75 inches fell. In nearby Largo, MD, 1.84 inches fell. Two tunnels were closed in downtown Washington due to high standing water, and ponding was a common theme during the late morning and early afternoon. Area creeks and streams ran high but below bankful.

DCZ001 **District Of Columbia**

28	0400EST	0	0	Heavy Rain
	1600EST			

A fairly intense and slow-moving nor'easter produced a large area of moderate to heavy rain across the Washington metropolitan area beginning late on the 27th and continuing through late afternoon on the 28th. The heaviest rains fell while the low tracked along the South and North Carolina coastline. Storm totals ranged from 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 inches across the region.

High standing water posed some problems during both the morning and evening commute on the 28th. Astronomical high tides, combined with wind-driven waves and upstream runoff, caused minor flooding at the tidal basin near Haines Point. Wind gusts in excess of 35 mph produced scattered power outages and knocked down a few tree limbs at isolated locations around the area.

MARYLAND, Central

MDZ002>007-009>011-013>014-016>018 **Allegany - Washington - Frederick - Carroll - Northern Baltimore - Harford - Montgomery - Howard - Southern Baltimore - Prince Georges - Anne Arundel - Charles - St. Mary'S - Calvert**

06	0700EST	0	0	Unseasonably Warm
09	1200EST			

A sprawling area of high atmospheric pressure became anchored over the western Atlantic for several days. Circulation around the high brought an unencumbered flow of tropical air from the Caribbean region into all of Maryland for a 2 1/2 day period beginning around dawn on the 6th and continuing until around noon on the 9th. A new record high temperature was set at Hagerstown (MDZ003) on the 8th; the record was tied on the 6th. More interestingly, temperatures remained above 55 degrees for over 48 hours, spanning two mornings when the normal low temperatures were some 35 degrees colder!

After nine days, the mean temperatures across central and western Maryland were between 15 and 20 degrees above normal - more like April than early January.

Frederick County
Countywide

08	0700EST	0	0	10K	Flash Flood
	1200EST				

Carroll County
West Portion

08	0800EST	0	0	3K	Flash Flood
	1200EST				

Unseasonably warm and humid air plus developing low pressure over the Ohio Valley produced bands of heavy rain across portions of north central Maryland. The combination of tropical rainfall, saturated soil (due to recent snow melt) and time of year led to flash flooding of numerous small streams, creeks, and low-lying areas - especially in Frederick Co.

At least 40 secondary roads, and several major thoroughfares, were closed during the morning. Included were state routes 26, 351, and 880. At least three vehicles were stranded on back streets in the city of Frederick. Rainfall totals averaged between 2 and 3 inches. Portions of the Big Pipe Creek watershed in northern Carroll Co reported flash flooding, with 3 or more roads closed. Some flooding was reported on the Monocacy River in the town of Detour.



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MARYLAND, Central

MDZ002-005>006-009>010 **Allegany - Carroll - Northern Baltimore - Montgomery - Howard**

15	0800EST 1600EST				0	0	5K		Winter Weather
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MDZ003>004 **Washington - Frederick**

15	1200EST				0	0	15K	20K	Ice Storm
16	0200EST								

Warm moist air overrunning a shallow polar surface air mass produced a variety of winter weather beginning around daybreak on the 15th and continuing until just after midnight on the 16th. Precipitation began as a mix of sleet and snow but quickly changed to rain and freezing rain across areas west of the Chesapeake Bay.

The combination of quick action by Maryland State Highway Administration road crews, and the still above freezing subsoil temperatures, kept most main arteries and secondary roads free from accumulation. However, in the ice storm area, free standing structures such as trees, power poles/wires, and exposed bridges received between 1/4 and 1/2 inch of ice accretion. A small area of higher terrain between Hagerstown/Williamsport (MDZ003) and Middletown (MDZ004) received the most icing. In these locations, spotty power outages were noted, and a few large limbs and small trees snapped under the weight of the ice. Allegheny Power reported 150 customers were without power in the Hagerstown/Sharpsburg vicinity during the evening of the 15th and early morning of the 16th. Some wires reportedly burned.

In the winter weather area, mixed precipitation quickly changed to rain during the late morning and early afternoon hours, but not before causing a minor build up of ice, along with an early morning coating of slush on area roadways.

MDZ002>003 **Allegany - Washington**

22	2200EST				0	0			Winter Weather
23	2200EST								

Low pressure over the southeastern U.S., combined with weak polar high pressure moving east of New England, produced a small area of light snow and sleet which changed to freezing rain late at night. In Washington Co (MDZ003), snow/sleet accumulations ranged from 1 inch near Hagerstown to 3 inches near Hancock. A broad area of 3 inches of measured snow was observed in Allegany Co, with the highest elevations of the far western portion (Frostburg) receiving around 4 inches. Slushy roads were noted, especially from western Washington Co through Allegany Co. Precipitation changed to a cold rain around dawn on the 23rd.

Though several accidents were noted, few were significant. A notable accident involved a tractor-trailer which flipped along Interstate 70 just east of Hancock (MDZ003). No injuries occurred.

MDZ004>005 **Frederick - Carroll**

24	1800EST 2200EST				0	0			Snow
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A band of light to moderate snow developed over northern and central Maryland during the evening, as a vigorous upper-level disturbance enhanced low- and mid-level lifting of residual moisture left behind from a previous system. The snow, which fell onto relatively warm ground, produced accumulations which varied greatly with elevation. In general, accumulations along the Catoctin Mountains were between 3 and 4 inches. Higher piedmont locations of northern Frederick (MDZ004) and Carroll (MDZ005) Cos averaged 2 to 3 inches, and lower elevations reported generally around 1 inch.

MDZ003 **Washington**

27	1500EST				0	0			Winter Weather
28	1400EST								

MDZ002 **Allegany**

27	1900EST				0	0	2K		Winter Storm
28	1300EST								

A winter storm developed along the Georgia coast on the 27th, then intensified as it moved slowly northward along the coast later on the 27th and 28th. The cyclone, which tracked to the Virginia capes by late afternoon on the 28th, spread a variety of winter weather across portions of western Maryland during a 24-hour period. As had been the case with other episodes during the 1997/98 winter, accumulations varied greatly with elevation. In Washington Co (MDZ003), accumulations were generally 1 to 2 inches, with up to 3 inches at higher elevations. Accumulations were even more varied in Allegany Co. Between 2 and 4 inches fell from the Allegany/Washington Co border to just west of Cumberland, at least a foot fell in Frostburg near the Allegheny plateau. Allegheny Power reported 200 customers without power in Allegany Co alone.

MDZ005>007-009>011-013>014 **Carroll - Northern Baltimore - Harford - Montgomery - Howard - Southern Baltimore - Prince Georges - Anne Arundel**

28	0400EST 1600EST				0	0			Heavy Rain
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MDZ013>014-017>018 **Prince Georges - Anne Arundel - St. Mary'S - Calvert**

28	0700EST 1600EST				0	0	75K		Gusty Wind
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MARYLAND, Central

Frederick County Countywide	28	0900EST 1600EST			0	0	5K		Flood
Calvert County Countywide	28	1100EST 1700EST			0	0	5K		Flood
Charles County East Portion	28	1100EST 1700EST			0	0			Flood
St. Mary'S County Countywide	28	1100EST 1700EST			0	0	10K		Flood

A fairly intense and slow-moving nor'easter produced a large area of moderate to heavy rains across central and lower southern Maryland beginning late on the 27th and continuing through late afternoon on the 28th. The heaviest rain fell while the storm was tracking along the South and North Carolina coastline. Storm totals ranged from 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 inches over the area, except between 3 and 4 inches across lower southern Maryland.

Widespread minor to moderate flooding of small streams, creeks, and low-lying areas occurred over much of lower southern Maryland. Other localized flooding was observed in Frederick Co.

The Maryland State Highway Administration and local emergency management officials reported numerous road closures in these areas. In Frederick Co, fifteen roads were closed due to high water. More pronounced road closures were noted in lower southern Maryland and portions of east-central Maryland.

Nuisance road closures (for instance, Davidsonville Road and Crownsville Road) occurred in the Annapolis area. In St Mary's Co, at least two dozen roads were closed. Most were secondary roads, but two were rural state highways (routes 5, 235, and 238). A local NWS cooperative observer noted nearly 6 1/2 inches in a five-day period, with 3.96 inches from the nor'easter alone. In Charles Co, six secondary roads were closed.

Though no coastal flooding was observed, there was some minor overwash at Annapolis, Chesapeake Beach (Calvert Co), and Breton Beach (St Mary's Co). Channelling northerly winds down the bay reduced the flood threat, especially since tides were astronomically high. These same northerly winds, blowing at gale force, built waves in the Bay to 5 feet or more. Unfortunately, these waves aided in sinking a tugboat 1 1/2 miles northeast of the Thomas Point Lighthouse. The three-man crew was rescued at approximately 0130EST on the 28th.

Gale-force winds extended inland a bit, affecting most of the counties along the western shore of the Bay. Gusts in excess of 30 mph were observed in the piedmont, and over 40 mph along the coastal plain. The combination of gusty winds and saturated soil caused several instances of trees, limbs, and power lines to come down. Baltimore Gas and Electric, and Potomac Electric Power Co reported 3800 and 538 customers without power, respectively, during the peak of the storm (0945EST on the 28th). In Calvert Co (MDZ018), two homes sustained minor damage from fallen trees. At least 20 trees/limbs blocked roads in St Mary's (MDZ017) Co; numerous other trees/limbs and wires were down across Charles, Calvert, and Anne Arundel Cos. Eleven lines were down across Prince Georges Co, and several fell in Anne Arundel.

MDZ009>011-013>014	Montgomery - Howard - Southern Baltimore - Prince Georges - Anne Arundel								
	29	0500EST 0900EST			0	0			Black Ice

Residual moisture from rainfall of the previous evening combined with clear calm conditions to produce abundant black ice in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, DC and Baltimore during the morning commute. Dozens of accidents occurred as motorists travelled at unsuitable rates of speed considering the untreated roads. Sixty accidents were reported in northern Anne Arundel Co alone, and one bridge in the Annapolis area was briefly closed. No serious injuries were reported.

VIRGINIA, North

VAZ021-025>031-036>042-050>057	Highland - Augusta - Rockingham - Shenandoah - Frederick - Page - Warren - Clarke - Nelson - Albemarle - Greene - Madison - Rappahannock - Fauquier - Loudoun - Orange - Culpeper - Prince William - Fairfax - Arlington - Stafford - Spotsylvania - King George								
	06 09	0000EST 1200EST			0	0			Unseasonably Warm

A sprawling area of high atmospheric pressure became anchored over the western Atlantic for several days. Circulation around the high brought an unencumbered flow of tropical air from the Caribbean region into all of Virginia for a 2 1/2 day period beginning around midnight on the 6th and continuing until around noon on the 9th. New record high temperatures were set at Dulles Airport (VAZ042) on these days. More interestingly, temperatures remained above 60 degrees across much of western Virginia for over



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Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena



January 1998

Location	Date	Time Local/ Standard	Path Length (Miles)	Path Width (Yards)	Number of Persons Killed	Number of Persons Injured	Estimated Damage Property	Estimated Damage Crops	Character of Storm
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VIRGINIA, North

48 hours, spanning two mornings when the normal low temperatures were some 40 degrees colder!

In fact, there was one cooling degree day recorded during the the period (January 8). After nine days, the mean temperatures across northern Virginia were between 15 and 20 degrees above normal - more like April than early January.

Augusta County									
East Portion	08	0530EST 1200EST			0	0	20K		Flash Flood
Highland County									
Countywide	08	0530EST 1100EST			0	0	5K		Flash Flood
Nelson County									
Countywide	08	0530EST 1200EST			0	0			Flash Flood
Albemarle County									
West Portion	08	0600EST 1200EST			0	0			Flash Flood
Greene County									
Countywide	08	0600EST 1200EST			0	0	10K		Flash Flood
Page County									
Countywide	08	0600EST 1200EST			0	0	5K		Flash Flood
Rockingham County									
East Portion	08	0600EST 1200EST			0	0	20K		Flash Flood
Shenandoah County									
Countywide	08	0600EST 1200EST			0	0	20K		Flash Flood
Clarke County									
Countywide	08	0700EST 1200EST			0	0	15K		Flash Flood
Culpeper County									
West Portion	08	0700EST 1200EST			0	0			Flash Flood
Loudoun County									
West Portion	08	0700EST 1200EST			0	0	20K		Flash Flood
Madison County									
Countywide	08	0700EST 1200EST			0	0	5K		Flash Flood
Rappahannock County									
Countywide	08	0700EST 1200EST			0	0	5K		Flash Flood
Warren County									
Countywide	08	0700EST 1200EST			0	0	5K		Flash Flood
Fauquier County									
North Portion	08	0800EST 1200EST			0	0			Flash Flood

Unseasonably warm and humid air plus developing low pressure over the Ohio Valley produced bands of heavy rain across much of the Shenandoah Valley. The combination of tropical rainfall, saturated soil (due to recent snow melt) and time of year led to flash flooding of numerous small streams, creeks, and low lying areas. Two areas were hit particularly hard: the northern edge of the Blue Ridge and a small area just west of Skyline Drive.

In western Loudoun Co, over 3 inches of rain in a 5-hour period flooded between 25 and 30 roads, including state route 9 northwest of Leesburg, state route 7 near Purcellville, and state route 287. Each road was closed during the morning commute. Several cars were abandoned on local secondary roads, and one person had to climb to safety when his truck became nearly submerged. Some school buses were unable to reach students in rural areas. In Clarke Co, at least 20 secondary roads were



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VIRGINIA, North

closed, and federal highway 50 was down to 1 lane at the base of Paris Mountain. Gravel runoff from secondary roads caused minor property damage in the form of fouled springs and dirty ponds used for local drinking water.

In an area encompassing Page, eastern Rockingham, and eastern Augusta Cos, dozens of secondary roads were deemed impassable. Flooding was more acute in Sherando (Augusta Co) where a local dam neared its release point. In Craigsville, several homes were slightly inundated along the Little Calfpasture River along state route 42. In Rockingham Co, 25 roads were closed, including one with pavement failure. Rainfall totals at the highest elevation along Skyline Drive were as much as 6 to 7 inches, with one report of 7.80 inches at Lewis Camp Mountain (Page Co). Adjacent counties such as Warren, Rappahannock, and Greene sustained varying amounts of flooding. Fifteen secondary roads closed in Rappahannock Co; in Greene Co, a few secondary roads which had been rebuilt in the wake of the 1996 floods were washed out once again. In Warren Co, several low-water bridges flooded.

Farther west, 39 secondary roads were closed in Shenandoah Co, where schools did not open. At least one low water bridge collapsed. In the other affected counties, closed roads numbered less than 10 on average.

The rain tapered off shortly before noon, and conditions improved rapidly during the afternoon as creeks and streams receded.

VAZ036>037-041-051>053

Nelson - Albemarle - Fauquier - Culpeper - Prince William - Fairfax

15	0700EST 1300EST		0	0	10K	Winter Weather
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VAZ025>031-038>040-042

Augusta - Rockingham - Shenandoah - Frederick - Page - Warren - Clarke - Greene - Madison - Rappahannock - Loudoun

15	1000EST		0	0	50K	75K	Ice Storm
16	0200EST						

Warm moist air overrunning shallow polar surface air produced a variety of winter weather, starting around daybreak on the 15th and continuing just after midnight on the 16th. Precipitation began as a mix of sleet and snow but quickly changed to rain and freezing rain across much of the state.

The combination of quick action by Virginia Department of Transportation road crews, and the still above freezing subsoil temperatures, kept most main arteries and secondary roads free from accumulation. However, in the ice storm area, free standing structures such as trees, power poles/wires, and exposed bridges received between 1/4 and 1/2 inch of ice accretion. A small section of higher elevation areas along and just west of the Blue Ridge received the most icing. In these areas, spotty power outages were noted, and several large limbs and small trees snapped under the weight of the ice. In forested areas of the northern Shenandoah Valley, specifically between 500 and 1000 feet above sea level, hundreds of trees sustained limb damage. Portions of the following counties were hit hardest: western Loudoun (VAZ042), Clarke (VAZ031), northern Warren (VAZ030), northern Shenandoah (VAZ027), and Frederick (VAZ028). Other pockets of substantial ice accretion likely occurred in Page, eastern Rockingham, and eastern Augusta Cos (VAZ025>026; 029).

Power outages were rather scattered. In Clarke and Frederick Cos (VAZ028-031), three transformers blew due to ice accretion; several lines fell from the combination of fallen tree limbs and the weight of the ice. An estimated 200 Allegheny Power customers lost electricity.

In the winter weather area, mixed precipitation quickly changed to rain during the late morning and early afternoon hours, but not before causing a minor build up of ice, along with early morning light coatings on area roadways.

VAZ028

Frederick

22	2200EST		0	0	Winter Weather
23	0600EST				

Low pressure over the southeastern U.S., combined with weak polar high pressure moving east of New England, produced a small area of light snow and sleet which changed to freezing rain late at night. Accumulations of snow ranged from 1 to 2 inches across the county, with some icing on top of that. Minor road problems were noted. Precipitation changed to a cold rain around dawn on the 23rd.

VAZ025>026-029>031-036>037-040>042-051>054

Augusta - Rockingham - Page - Warren - Clarke - Nelson - Albemarle - Rappahannock - Fauquier - Loudoun - Culpeper - Prince William - Fairfax - Arlington

23	0400EST 1300EST		0	0	Heavy Rain
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**Greene County
Countywide**

23	0600EST 1000EST		0	0	2.5K	Flood
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**Madison County
Countywide**

23	0600EST 1000EST		0	0	2.5K	Flood
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January 1998

Location	Date	Time Local/ Standard	Path Length (Miles)	Path Width (Yards)	Number of Persons		Estimated Damage		Character of Storm
					Killed	Injured	Property	Crops	

VIRGINIA, North

Low- and mid-level flow of deep moisture, overrunning a chilly surface air mass, produced a prolonged period of moderate to heavy rain across north central Virginia during the morning of the 23rd. Rainfall totals across the area ranged from 1 to 2 inches; a record daily total (1.46 inches) fell at Dulles Airport (VAZ042). The long duration allowed a slow rise among area streams and creeks. Most remained in their banks. However, several locations in Madison and Greene Co reported closed roads from high water and creek overflows. Elsewhere, nuisance ponding and local high standing water was observed.

VAZ021-025>027-029>030

Highland - Augusta - Rockingham - Shenandoah - Page - Warren

	27	1500EST			0	0	12K	10K	Winter Storm
	28	1400EST							

VAZ028-031

Frederick - Clarke

	27	1500EST			0	0	Winter Weather		
	28	1400EST							

A winter storm developed along the Georgia coast on the 27th, then intensified as it moved slowly northward along the coast later on the 27th and 28th. The cyclone, which tracked to the Virginia capes by late afternoon on the 28th, spread a variety of winter weather across the northern and central Shenandoah Valley during a 24-hour period. As had been the case with other episodes during the 1997/98 winter, accumulations varied greatly with elevation. From the Skyline Drive to the Shenandoah Mountain and North Mountain range, accumulations ranged from around 4 inches in the valleys to 8 inches above 1500 feet. West of the Shenandoah Range, in the plateau region of Highland Co (VAZ021), accumulations ranged from 12 to 18 inches.

The weight of the snow caused numerous tree limbs and some trees to fall in areas where more than one foot of snow accumulated, mainly in Highland Co.

Warmer air circulating around the storm caused a rain/sleet/snow mix over the northern Shenandoah Valley, where between 1 and 3 inches of wet snow accumulated. Similar accumulations were noted along the foothills just east of the Blue Ridge.

VAZ053>054

Fairfax - Arlington

	28	0400EST 1600EST			0	0	Heavy Rain		
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Albemarle County

North Portion

	28	0900EST 1600EST			0	0	Flood		
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Clarke County

Countywide

	28	0900EST 1600EST			0	0	Flood		
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Fauquier County

Countywide

	28	0900EST 1600EST			0	0	Flood		
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Frederick County

Countywide

	28	0900EST 1600EST			0	0	2K	Flood	
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Greene County

Countywide

	28	0900EST 1600EST			0	0	Flood		
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Loudoun County

West Portion

	28	0900EST 1600EST			0	0	5K	Flood	
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Madison County

Countywide

	28	0900EST 1600EST			0	0	Flood		
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Rappahannock County

Countywide

	28	0900EST 1600EST			0	0	Flood		
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Shenandoah County

Countywide

	28	0900EST 1600EST			0	0	5K	Flood	
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Warren County

Countywide

	28	0900EST 1600EST			0	0	Flood		
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VIRGINIA, North

Culpeper County Countywide	28	1000EST 1600EST			0	0			Flood
Orange County Countywide	28	1000EST 1600EST			0	0			Flood
Prince William County Countywide	28	1000EST 1600EST			0	0			Flood
King George County Countywide	28	1100EST 1700EST			0	0	2.5K		Flood
Spotsylvania County Countywide	28	1100EST 1700EST			0	0	2.5K		Flood
Stafford County Countywide	28	1100EST 1700EST			0	0			Flood
VAZ057									
King George	28	1100EST 1700EST			0	0	2K		Gusty Winds

A fairly intense and slow-moving nor'easter produced a large area of moderate to heavy rains across central and northeastern Virginia beginning late on the 27th and continuing through late afternoon on the 28th. The heaviest rains fell while the storm tracked along the South and North Carolina coastline. Storm totals ranged from 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 inches, with isolated totals of over 3 inches at higher elevations along the foothills, as well as portions of the Northern Neck region.

Widespread minor to moderate flooding of small streams, creeks, and low-lying areas occurred over all of the Piedmont, stretching east to King George Co in the Northern Neck. The Virginia Department of Transportation reported over 150 roads closed in the area due to high standing water, or creeks that exceeded bankful. Some of the larger number of road closures included: Shenandoah Co (32 - a combination of runoff, poor drainage, and some river flooding); Loudoun Co (27); Frederick Co (15); Orange Co (13); Albemarle Co (12). Drainage flooding occurred in Waynesboro (Augusta Co) when the combination of slowly melting snow and runoff closed six roads.

The storm also produced wind gusts in excess of 30 mph from the eastern Piedmont through the coastal plain. The combination of gusty winds and saturated soil caused isolated instances of trees, limbs, and power lines to come down. Two trees fell in a yard in Mt Vernon (VAZ053) during the afternoon of the 28th.

VAZ042-052>053									
Loudoun - Prince William - Fairfax	29	0500EST 0900EST			0	0			Black Ice

Residual moisture from rainfall of the previous evening combined with clear calm conditions to produce abundant black ice in the Virginia suburbs of Washington, DC, during the morning commute. Dozens of accidents occurred as motorists travelled at unsuitable rates of speed considering the untreated roads. No serious injuries were reported.

WEST VIRGINIA, East

WVZ051>053									
Morgan - Berkeley - Jefferson	06 09	0700EST 1200EST			0	0			Unseasonably Warm

A sprawling area of high atmospheric pressure became anchored over the western Atlantic for several days. Circulation around the high brought an unencumbered flow of tropical air from the Caribbean region into the eastern West Virginia panhandle for a 2 1/2 day period beginning around dawn on the 6th and continuing until around noon on the 9th. Interestingly, temperatures remained above 55 degrees for over 48 hours, spanning two mornings when the normal low temperatures were some 35 degrees colder!

After nine days, the mean temperatures across central and western Maryland were between 15 and 20 degrees above normal - more like April than early January.

Jefferson County Countywide	08	0800EST 1200EST			0	0	5K		Flash Flood
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Unseasonably warm and humid air combined with developing low pressure over the Ohio Valley to produce bands of heavy rain



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WEST VIRGINIA, East

across portions of the eastern panhandle. The combination of tropical rainfall, saturated soil (due to recent snow melt) and time of year led to flash flooding of several small streams, creeks, and low lying areas.

In Jefferson Co, several secondary roads were closed due to high water, and many creeks were at or just above bankful. A portion of federal highway 340 was closed briefly just west of Harpers Ferry. Rainfall totals in the affected area ranged from 2 to 3 inches.

WVZ051>052	Morgan - Berkeley								
	15	0900EST 1300EST			0	0			Winter Weather

WVZ050-053-055	Hampshire - Jefferson - Hardy								
	15	1000EST			0	0	13K		Ice Storm
	16	0200EST							

Warm moist air overrunning a shallow polar surface air mass produced a variety of winter weather starting around daybreak on the 15th and continuing until just after midnight on the 16th. Precipitation began as a mix of sleet and snow but quickly changed to rain and freezing rain across much of the area.

The combination of still above freezing subsoil temperatures and low traffic volume kept most main arteries and secondary roads free from accumulation. However, in the ice storm area, free standing structures such as trees, power poles/wires, and exposed bridges received between 1/4 and 1/2 inch of ice accretion. A strip of higher elevation areas (roughly between 500 and 1000 feet above sea level) in Jefferson Co received the most icing. In this area, spotty power outages were noted, and a few large limbs and small trees snapped under the weight of the ice. Allegheny Power reported 150 customers were without power in Jefferson Co.

In the winter weather area, mixed precipitation quickly changed to rain during the late morning and early afternoon hours, but not before causing a minor build up of sleet and ice (up to 3/4 inches of sleet followed by some freezing rain), some of which coated area roadways.

WVZ049>051-055	Mineral - Hampshire - Morgan - Hardy								
	22	2200EST			0	0			Winter Weather
	23	0600EST							

Low pressure over the southeastern U.S., combined with weak polar high pressure moving east of New England, produced a small area of light snow and sleet which changed to freezing rain late at night across the POTomac Highlands. Accumulations of snow/sleet ranged from 2 to 3 inches across Mineral, Hampshire, and Morgan Co (WVZ049>051). Around 1 inch of snow fell in hardy Co (WVZ055) before a prolonged period of freezing rain and sleet caused some icing problems. Slushy roads were the main culprit of the precipitation before a changeover to cold rain occurred around dawn on the 23rd.

WVZ053	Jefferson								
	23	0500EST 1200EST			0	0			Heavy Rain

Low- and mid-level flow of deep moisture, overrunning a chilly surface air mass, produced a prolonged period of moderate to heavy rain across extreme eastern West Virginia during the morning of the 23rd. Rainfall totals across the area were approximately 1.5 inches. The relatively long duration allowed a slow rise among area streams and creeks, and all remained just below bankful. However, many areas reported high standing water due to ponding.

WVZ053	Jefferson								
	24	1800EST 2200EST			0	0			Snow

A band of light of moderate snow developed over the eastern panhandle of West Virginia during the evening, as a vigorous upper-level disturbance enhanced low- and mid-level lifting of residual moisture left behind from a previous system. The snow, which fell onto relatively warm ground, produced accumulations which varied greatly with elevation. In general, accumulations along the ridges near Harpers Ferry were around 3 inches. Areas to the west received a general accumulation of 1 or 2 inches.

WVZ051>053	Morgan - Berkeley - Jefferson								
	27	1500EST			0	0			Winter Weather
	28	1400EST							

WVZ048>050-054>055	Grant - Mineral - Hampshire - Pendleton - Hardy								
	27	1600EST			0	0	15K	10K	Winter Storm
	28	1300EST							

A winter storm developed along the Georgia coast on the 27th, then intensified as it moved slowly northward along the eastern seaboard later on the 27th and 28th. The cyclone, which tracked to the Virginia capes by late afternoon on the 28th, spread a variety of winter weather across eastern West Virginia during a 24-hour period. As had been the case with other episodes during the 1997/98 winter, accumulations varied greatly with elevation. In the eastern panhandle, 1 to 2 inches of mixed snow, sleet, and rain fell. Over the lower elevations of the Potomac Highlands, roughly 2 to 6 inches accumulated. Some of the highest accumulations were noted across western Pendleton, Grant, and Mineral Cos (WVZ048>049-054), where 8 to 16 inches were noted. The largest individual totals reported were in Elk Garden (Mineral Co - 15 inches) and Hardy Co (20 inches).

The weight of the snow likely caused tree limbs, some trees, and power lines to fall on the 28th, especially where more than 1 foot of snow accumulated.