

# 2025-26 Winter Outlook and NWS Tools



*National Weather Service  
Baltimore/Washington*

# Outline



- ❑ What is normal, and recent winters
- ❑ This winter's outlook
- ❑ Tools to help you
- ❑ Advancements for this year
- ❑ NWS Services for Government Partners



# What is a “Normal” Winter (1991-2020 average)

DCA	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Temperature (High/Low)	58°/42°	49°/35°	45°/30°	48°/32°	57°/39°
Snowfall 13.7" total	0.1"	1.7"	4.9"	5.0"	2.0"

IAD	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Temperature (High/Low)	57°/36°	47°/29°	43°/25°	46°/27°	55°/34°
Snowfall 21" total	0.3"	2.8"	6.9"	7.0"	3.9" Apr 0.1

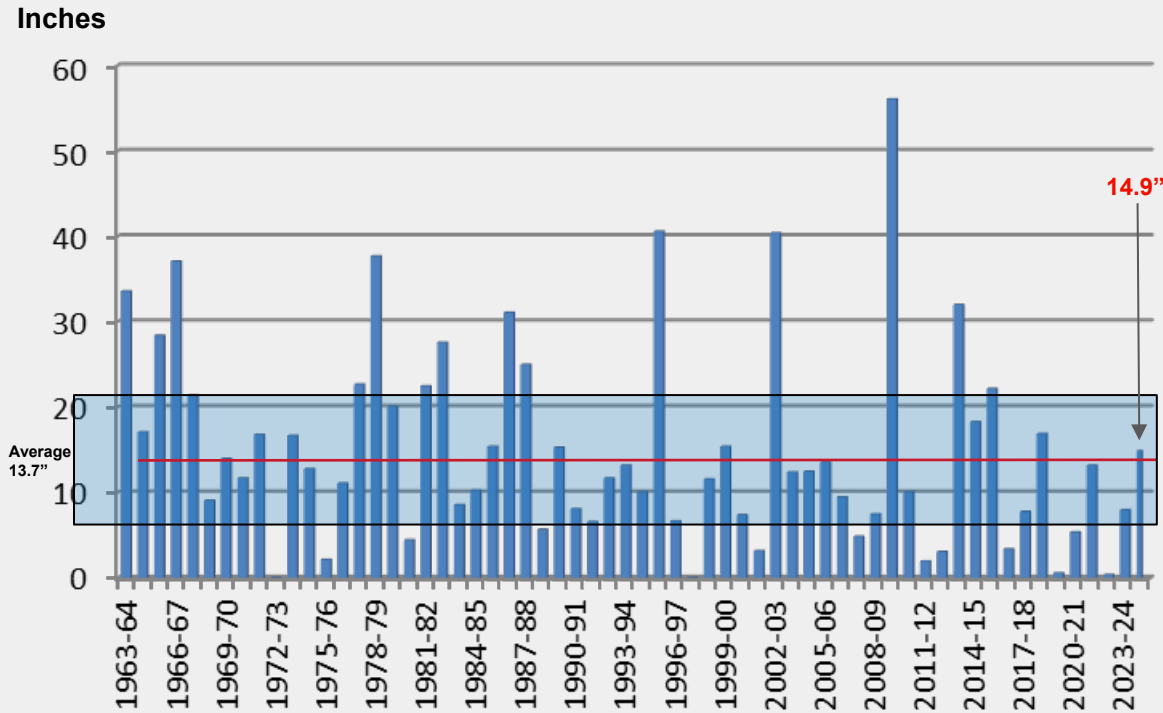


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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)



# DCA Winter Snowfalls



## Single Digit Snowfall Years

**1900 – 1950** 25% of winters

**1950 – 2000** 25% of winters

**2000 – 2020** 50% of winters

However, the “big snowfall”  
winters also persist

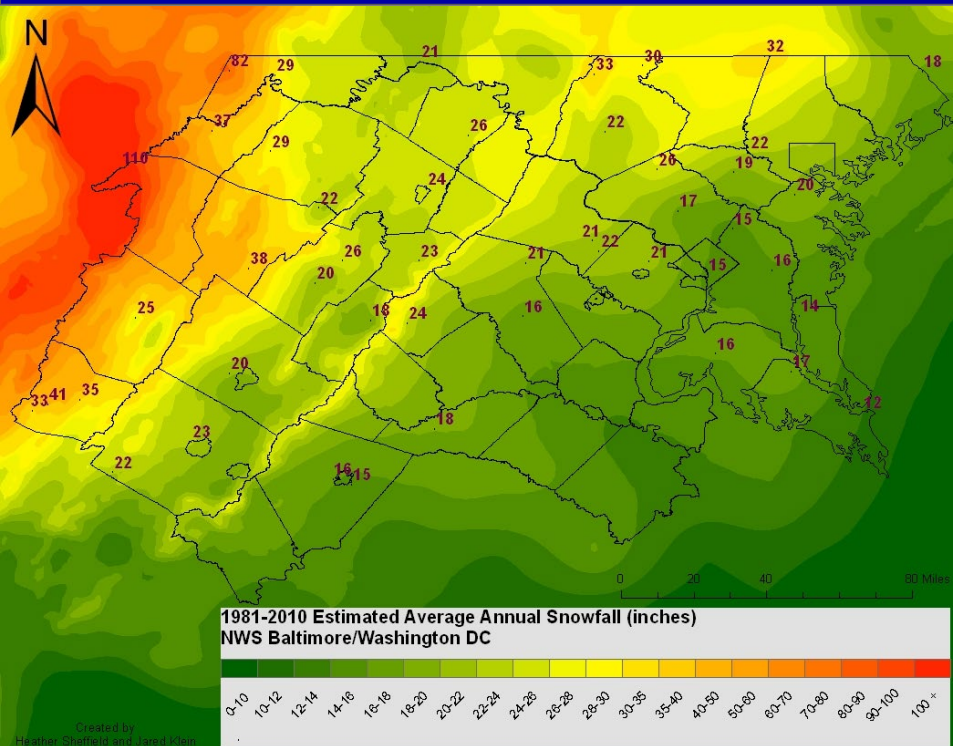


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# Snowfall: 30 yr Average (Normal)



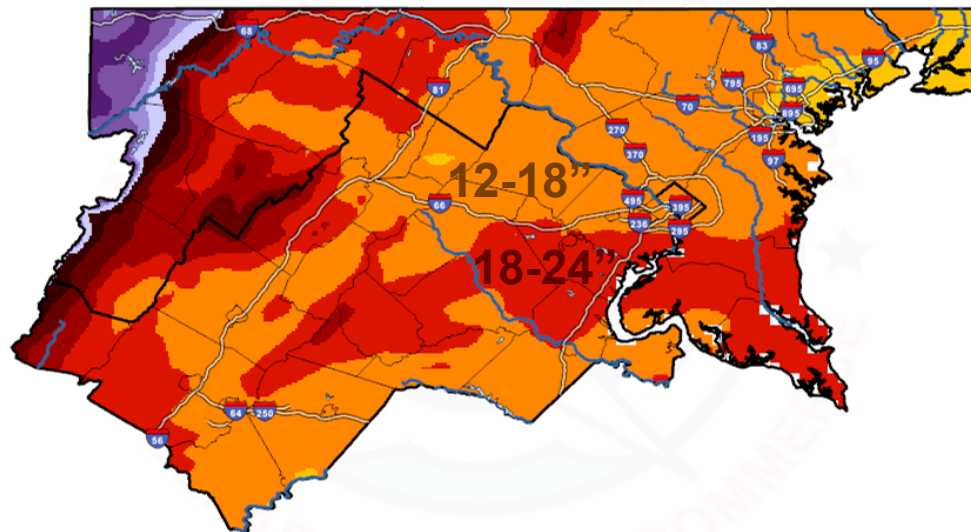
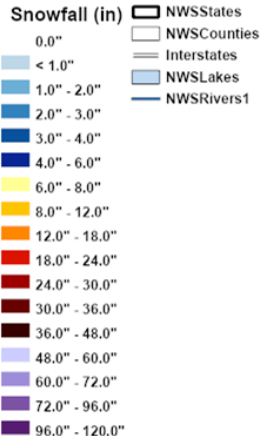
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# Snowfall: Last Winter (2024-25)



Created:  
08/27/2025 09:07AM

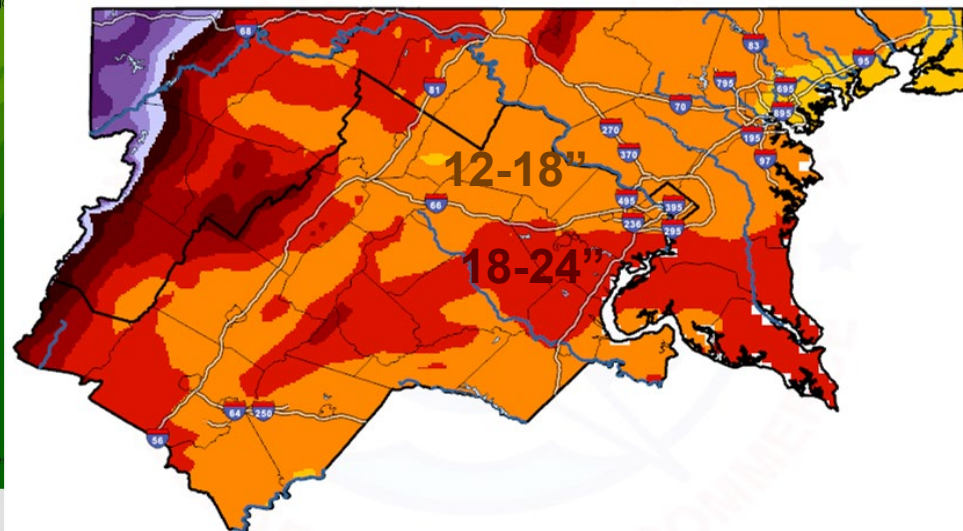
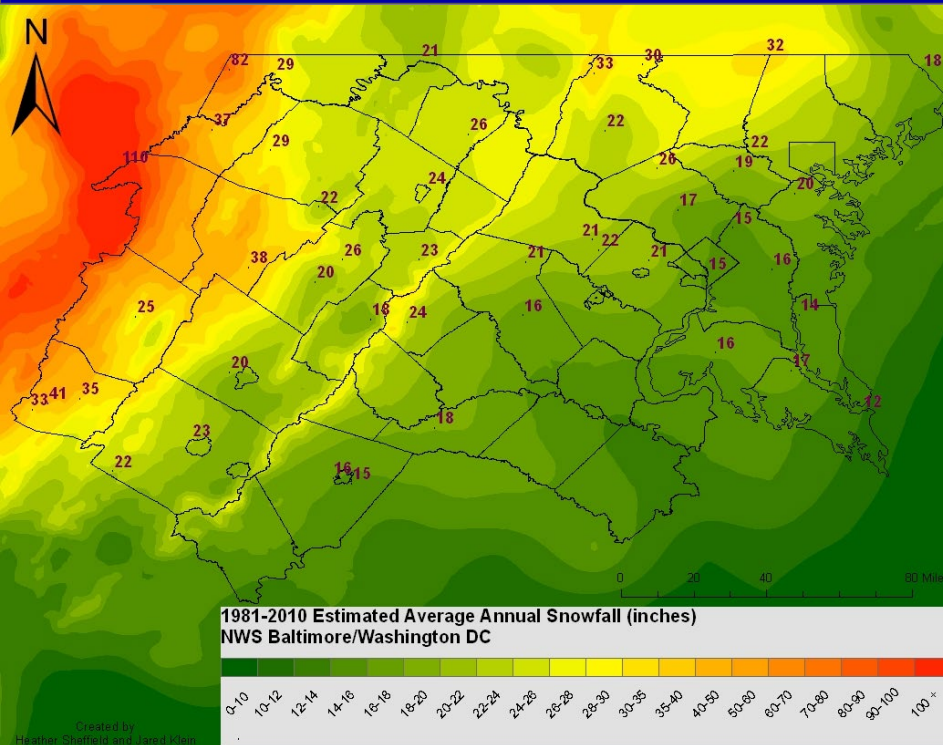


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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)



# Snowfall: 30 yr Average vs. Last Winter



Snowfall: Last Winter (2024-25)

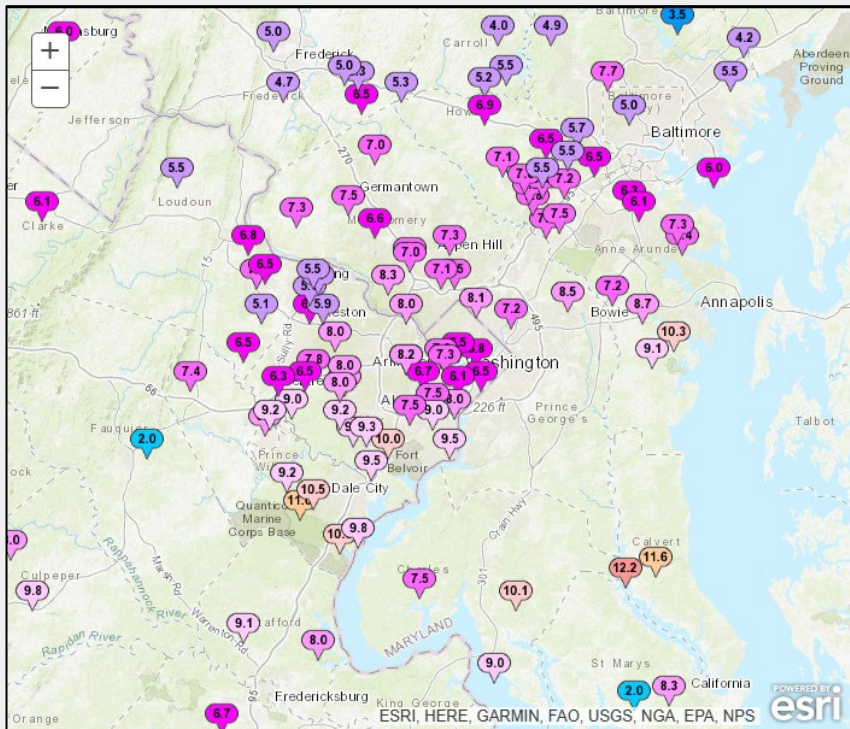


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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)



# Biggest snow last winter for DCA Jan 6th



6.1" at DCA

Almost half of the snowfall last winter



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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)





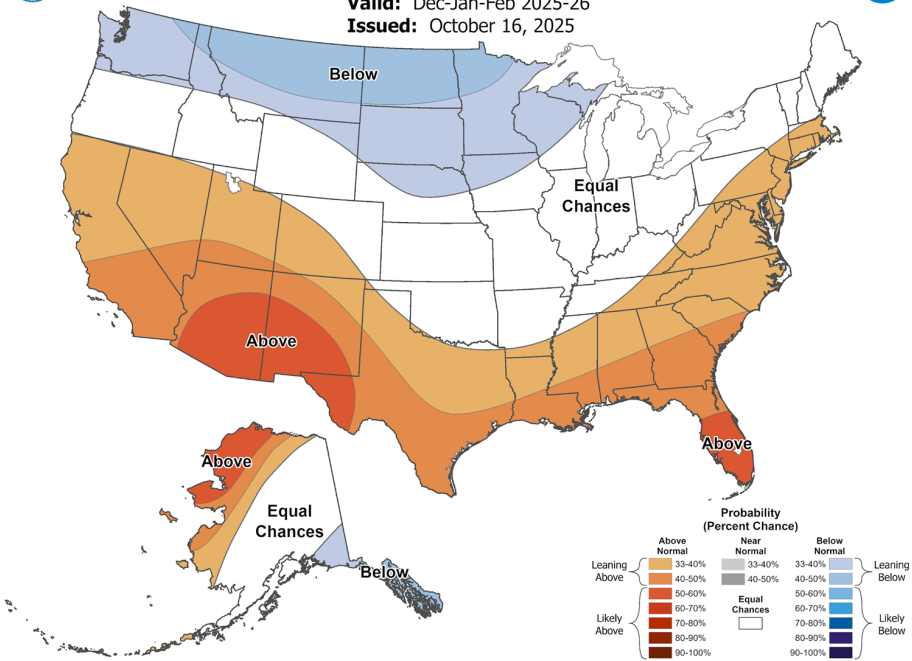
# Winter Outlook - Temperature & Precipitation



## Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid: Dec-Jan-Feb 2025-26

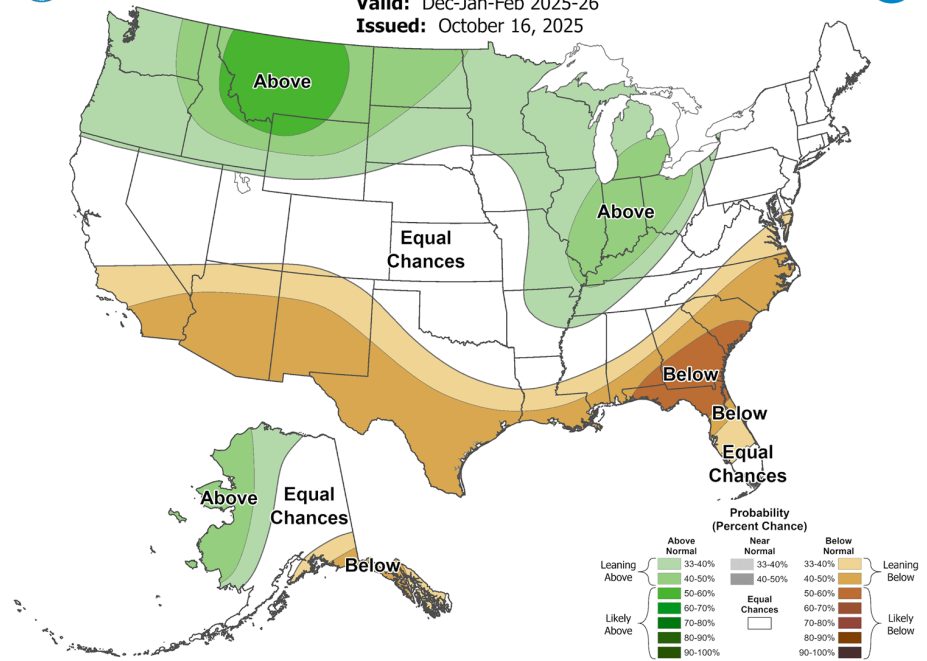
Issued: October 16, 2025



## Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

Valid: Dec-Jan-Feb 2025-26

Issued: October 16, 2025



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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)

# Winter Outlook - Mid Atlantic Region



## ■ El Niño/La Niña Cycle

### ■ La Niña

- Weak La Niña favored, similar to last winter
- Lesser chances for a big coastal snowstorm
- Greater chances for mixed precip, freezing rain

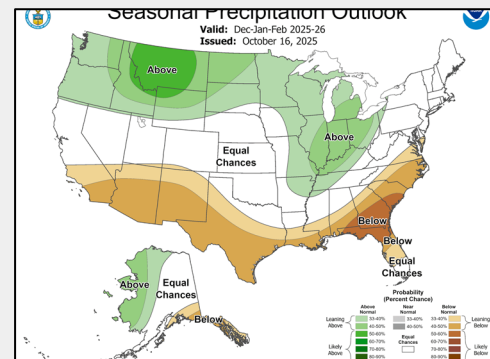
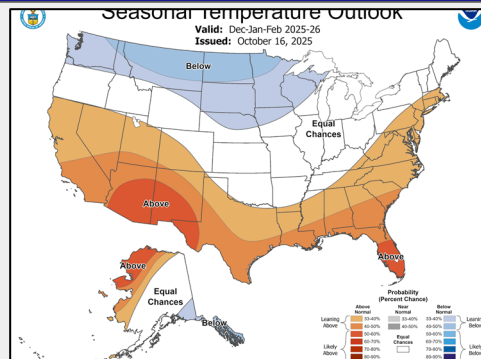
## ■ Mid-Atlantic Outlook:

### ■ Temperature

- Higher odds of warmer than average (as a whole)

### ■ Precipitation

- Near normal
- Sandwiched between wet Midwest and dry Southeast



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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)

# NWS Winter Tools - [weather.gov/washington/wintermaps](https://weather.gov/washington/wintermaps)



Still can be snow in the forecast.  
Check webpage, and monitor our partner emails for notifications.



## Winter Storm **Watch**

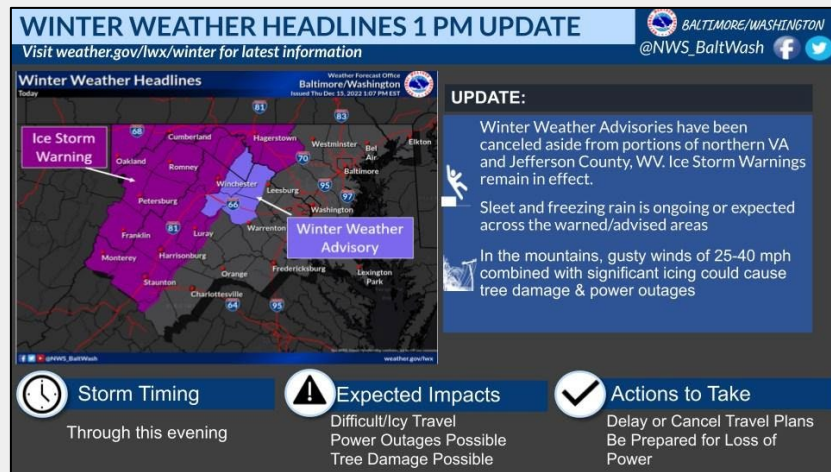
- Possibility of 5+” snow
- ~1-3 days in advance



## Winter Storm **Warning** (Blizzard, Ice Storm)

## Winter Weather **Advisory**

- Expectation (5”+ Warning; 1-4” Advisory)
- ~12-24 hours in advance



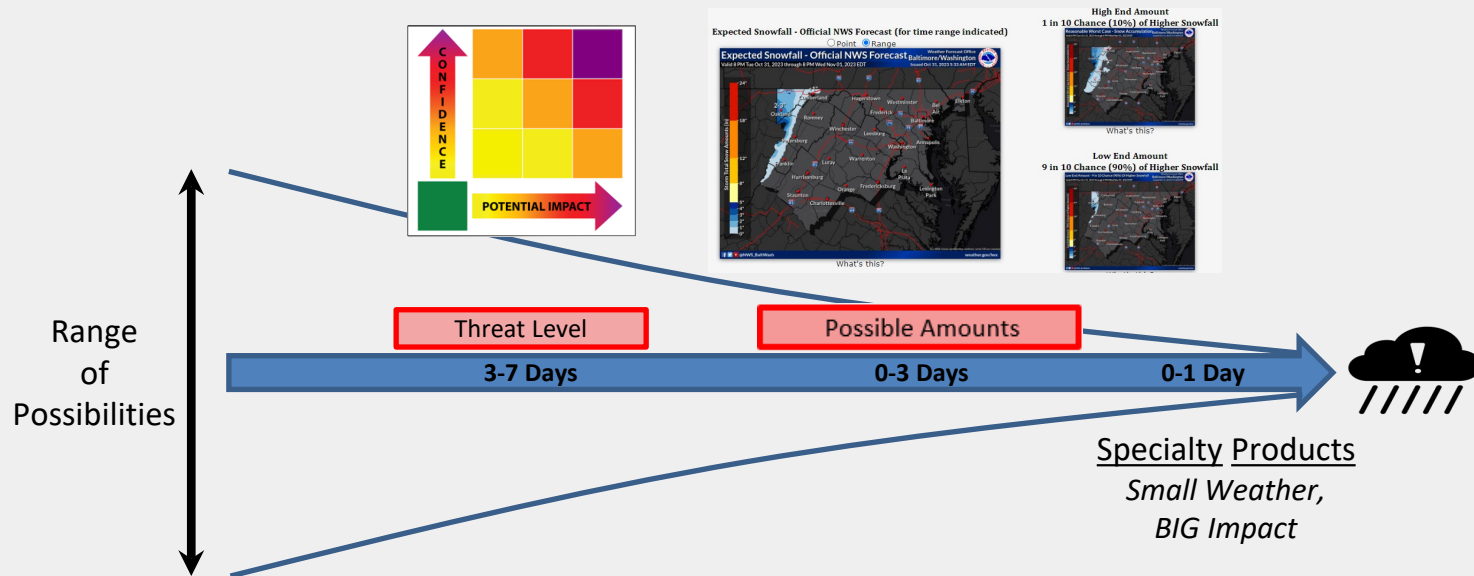
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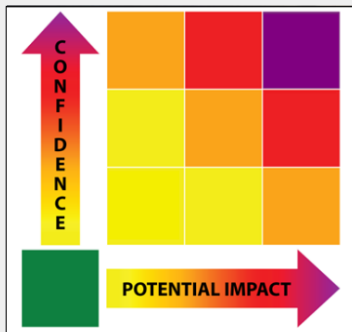
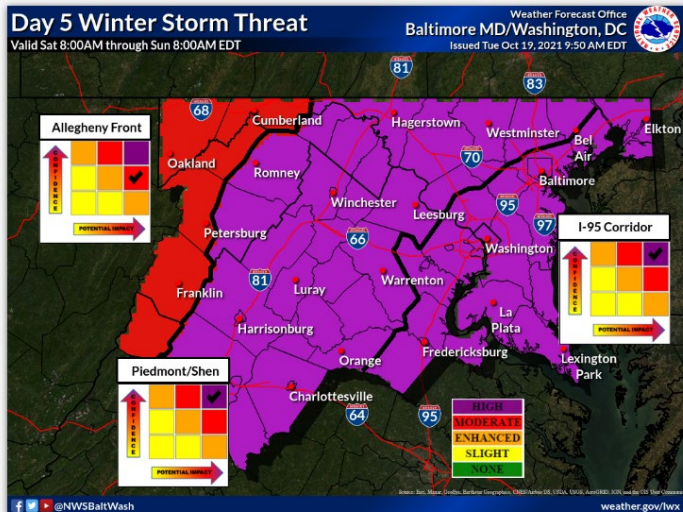


As event nears, “Range of Possibilities” shrinks & forecast detail increases.





# NWS Winter Tools - [weather.gov/washington/wintermaps](https://weather.gov/washington/wintermaps)



3-7 Days Out

Winter Storm Threat

High	High threat of high impact winter storm. Potential impacts include significant travel delays, closures, and threats to life and property. Plan ahead to minimize impact on you and your family.
Moderate	Moderate winter storm threat. Potential impacts include significant travel delays and closures. Plan ahead to minimize impact on you and your family.
Enhanced	Enhanced winter storm threat. Primary threat is disruption to travel.
Slight	Slight winter storm threat. If threat materializes, may cause travel disruptions.
None	No significant winter storm threat is currently expected. However, light wintry precipitation may still be possible.



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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)

# NWS Winter Tools - [weather.gov/washington/wintermaps](https://weather.gov/washington/wintermaps)



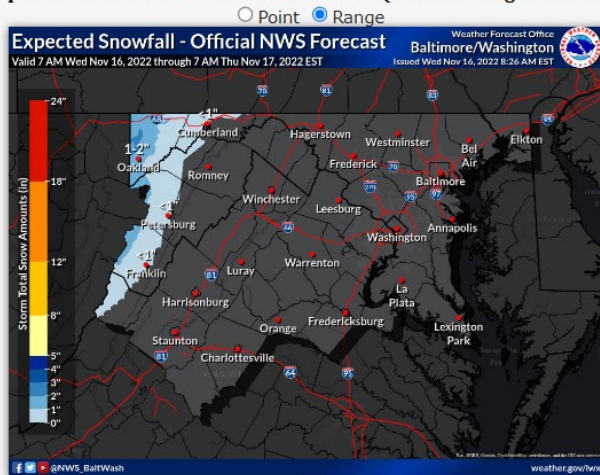
## 0-3 Days Out      Range of Possible Accumulations

### Current Snowfall Expectation

What our forecasters expect now.

Based on the latest, constantly - evolving models

Expected Snowfall - Official NWS Forecast (for time range indicated)



What's this?

High End Amount  
1 in 10 Chance (10%) of Higher  
Snowfall



What's this?

Low End Amount  
9 in 10 Chance (90%) of Higher  
Snowfall



What's this?

High-End  
Potential

How much/little  
could it be, given  
what some models  
still show

Low-End  
Potential



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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)

# NWS Winter Tools - [weather.gov/washington/wintermaps](https://weather.gov/washington/wintermaps)



0-3 Days Out

Range of Possible Accumulations

## Snow Amount Potential

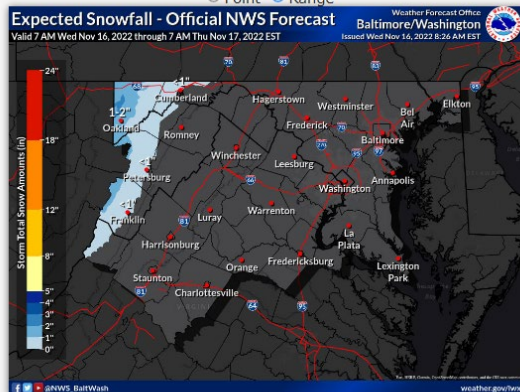
Experimental - Leave feedback

[Click here for more information on these products](#)

[Click here for the NWS Probabilistic Precipitation Portal](#)

Expected Snowfall - Official NWS Forecast (for time range indicated)

○ Point ● Range



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Snowfall



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Snowfall



What's this?

Now in GIS!

Link to national GIS map  
(Pan & Zoom)



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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)

# NWS Winter Tools - [weather.gov/washington/wintermaps](https://weather.gov/washington/wintermaps)



## 0-1 Day Out

## Potential Winter Commuting Hazard Statement

### Recipe for a Traffic Disaster

- 1" or less of snow
- During urban rush hour
- Sub-freezing road temperatures

Together, these often created gridlock.

*Potential Winter Commuting Hazard Statement (~24hrs in advance)*  
if we see a chance of these coming together



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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)

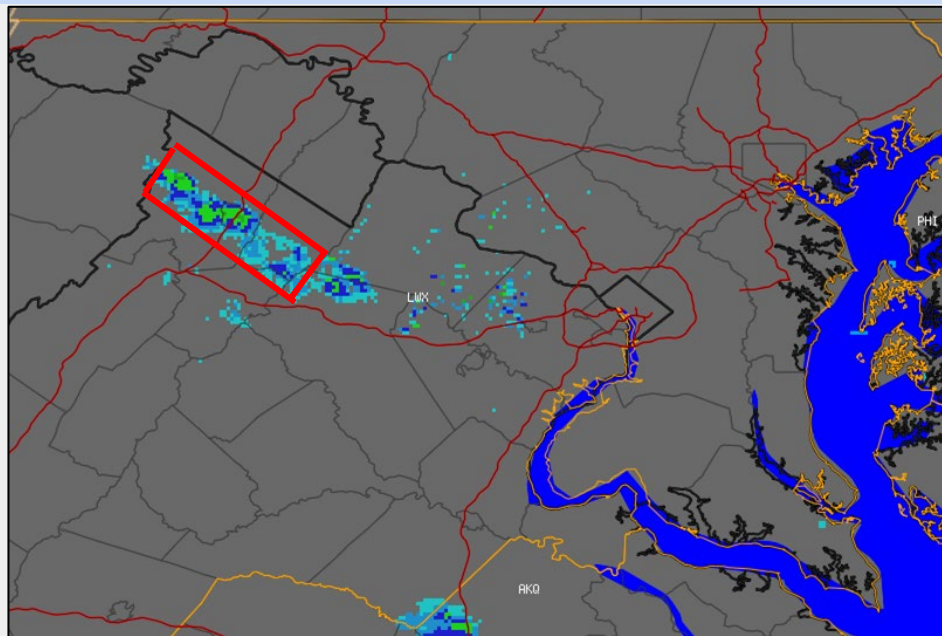


# NWS Winter Tools - [weather.gov/washington/wintermaps](https://weather.gov/washington/wintermaps)



Minutes to 1 hour Out

Snow Squall Warning



When they occur over highways,  
they often cause multi-vehicle crashes



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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)

# NWS Winter Tools - [weather.gov/washington/wintermaps](https://weather.gov/washington/wintermaps)



## Social Media



@NWS\_BaltWash



@NWSBaltWash

**NWS Baltimore-Washington** @NWS\_BaltWash

Make use of today's quiet weather to prepare for Wednesday's winter storm. A Winter Storm Warning is in effect where we are most confident of heavier snow. A Watch remains in effect where heavy snow is possible but not yet certain. Keep up-to-date at [weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)

**First Widespread Winter Storm of the Season**

**National Weather Service Headlines**  
New York/Washington, December 18, 2020

**When: Wednesday & Wednesday night**  
Expected Snowfall - Official NWS Forecast  
WDC: 12/18/2020 07:00 AM - 12/19/2020 07:00 AM EST

**What: Heavy snow, changing to Ice & Rain near and east of I-95**

Issued at 12/18/2020 4:44 AM  
Baltimore/Washington

<http://www.weather.gov/lwx>  
National Weather Service BaltWash @NWS\_BaltWash

- Message of the Moment
- Public-facing for easy sharing



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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)

# Advancements



on: [weather.gov/washington/wintermaps](https://weather.gov/washington/wintermaps)

- Peak Snow Rate & Snow Character
- Ice Accumulation “Range of Possibilities” now also available
- Snow accumulation maps available on national GIS map (Pan & Zoom)
- End-Time of Wintry Precipitation graphic



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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)

# Advancements

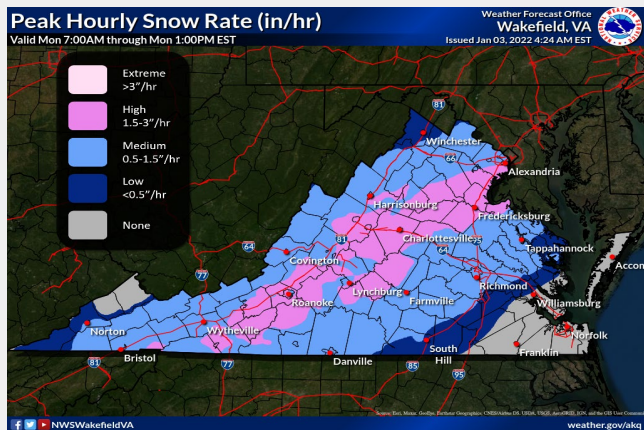
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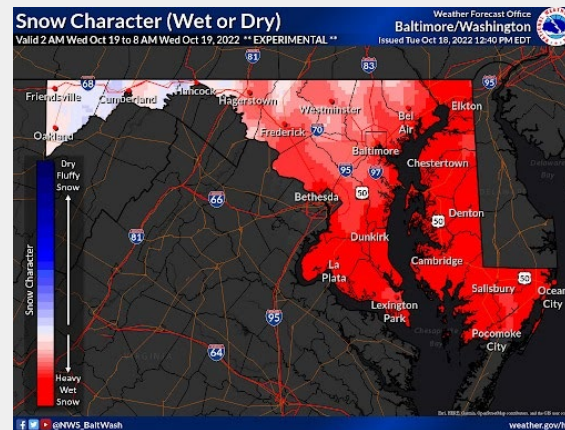
## Forecast Peak Rate & Character

- Shows where more potential for impact
- 6-hour periods through the event

### Peak Snow Rates



### Wet / Dry Snow (Character)



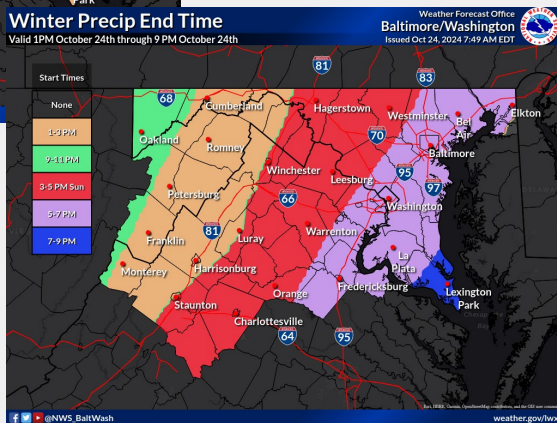
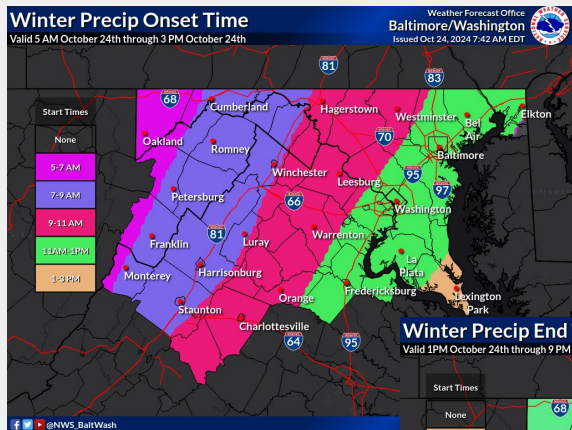
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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)



# Advancements

on: [weather.gov/washington/wintermaps](https://weather.gov/washington/wintermaps)



## Winter Precip Onset/Ending

- Trigger: when a winter weather advisory or warning is in effect
  - Generally within 24 hours of event starting
- Will now be issued for an area forecast to receive more than 0.1" or snow or 0.01" of ice
  - No longer confined to headline area



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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)

# Advancements

on: [weather.gov/washington/wintermaps](https://weather.gov/washington/wintermaps)



## Range of Possibilities in GIS

- Snow
- Freezing Rain/Ice Glazing
- Precipitation/Rain

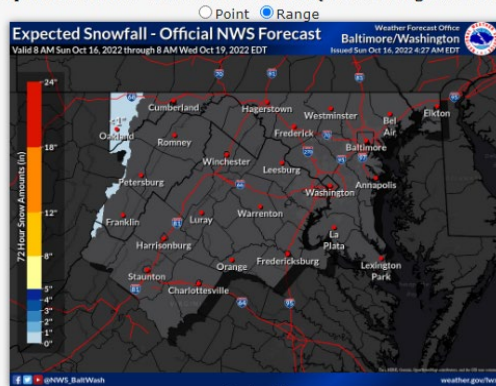
Link to national GIS map  
(Pan & Zoom)

### Snow Amount Potential

Experimental - Leave feedback

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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)

# Advancements

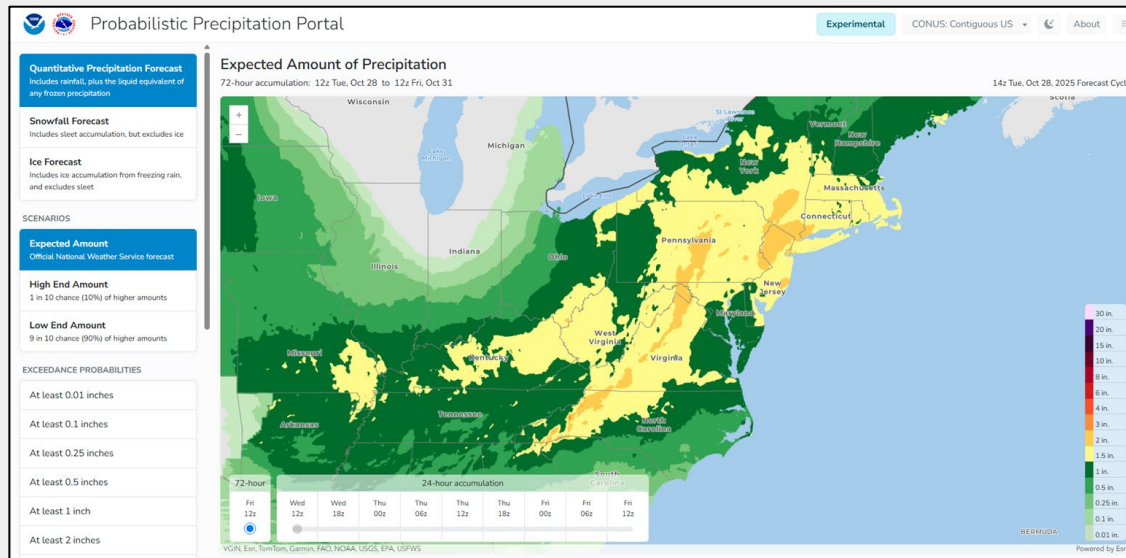
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## Range of Possibilities in GIS

- Snow
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Link to national GIS map  
(Pan & Zoom)



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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)



# NWS Services for Government Partners

## **“Heads Up” Email**

- Threats before Watches & Warnings
- Email addresses to [christopher.strong@noaa.gov](mailto:christopher.strong@noaa.gov) to be added

## **iNWS alerts**

- For Watches & Warnings (text and/or email)
- Register at: [inws.ncep.noaa.gov](https://inws.ncep.noaa.gov)

## **Monday/Friday 10:30 A.M. 7 day Weather Threat Webinar**

- 5 min look at threats for next 7 days
- Briefing time is 10:30 am
- Email addresses to [christopher.strong@noaa.gov](mailto:christopher.strong@noaa.gov) to be added



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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)





# Constant Teamwork for Constant Improvement

- **MWCOG / MATOC Group**
  - Monthly Meetings
- **Pre-winter visits & Exercises**
- **When threats arise -**  
**Phone calls to government transportation sector**
- **Event-based conference calls**
- **Regional COG conference calls**



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[weather.gov/lwx](https://weather.gov/lwx)



# Summary: [weather.gov/washington/wintermaps](https://weather.gov/washington/wintermaps)

- **The NWS – Transportation & EM partnerships have helped develop current ways to communicate snow forecasts:**
  - Days 3-7 Winter Storm Threat Level
  - Days 0-3 “Range of Possible” Accumulations (in GIS)
  - Days 0-1 Potential Winter Commuting Hazard Statement
    - Snow Squall Warning
    - Peak Snow Rate & Wet/Dry Snow
    - Onset & Ending Times
- **Existing framework**
  - **Watch** / **Warning** or **Advisory**
- **NWS winter outlook 2025-26**
  - Higher odds of warmer than average (as a whole)
  - Near normal precipitation
  - Greater chances for mixed precip, freezing rain

Chris Strong  
Warning Coordination Meteorologist  
NWS Baltimore/Washington  
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