

The Richmond International Airport had 10.9 inches of snow in this storm

The President's Day snowstorm February 18, 1979

On February 18th, 1979 a small, but intense low pressure system "exploded" near Cape Hatteras, North Carolina and moved slowly up the coast. Snow began to fall in the District during the afternoon of February 18th. On the morning of February 19th Washingtonians awoke to the biggest snowfall since the Knickerbockers snowstorm of 1922. National Airport received 18.7 inches of snow, while up to 26 inches of snow buried the eastern suburbs. With 6 inches of snow on the ground before the storm, the snow-covered in Washington area ranged from 24 to 30 inches on the ground.

Forecasters believed the storm would move south of Washington and out to sea only grazing the area with a light snow of 1 to 3 inches. As snow piled up across the Washington area snow forecast were updated frequently to catch up with the rapid increase in accumulation. National Airport received 18.7 inches of snow and Dulles Airport received 16.3 inches of snow. . (p. 81-86 Washington Weather Book 2002 by Ambrose, Henry, Weiss)