

## The cold December

The Mean temperature for December in Richmond was 31.3°F which was the coldest December since 1917 when the mean was 30.1 °F.

Some say this December 1989 was the coldest December in the last century.

Below are some facts about this unusual December as recorded in Northern Virginia.

1. This December was the coldest in at least the last 43 years.  
The average temperature was 4 degrees colder than December, 1963.
2. The average temperature of 22.6 degrees was 13.4 degrees below average.  
The average low temperature was an unbelievable 11.3 degrees.
3. The -14 degrees was a record low for the month of December.  
The -12 reading was the second lowest.
4. There were 9 below zero readings which was a record.  
The previous record was 2.
5. There were 5 consecutive mornings with below zero readings.  
This was a record, not only for December, but for any month.
6. There were 11 consecutive days when the temp. didn't rise above 32 Degrees F.
7. There were 11 mornings that had record-breaking low temps for the date.  
Nine days had mean temperatures that were record-breakers for the date.  
There were five days in which the minimum high temperatures broke records.
8. The 15.5 inches of snow was the most snow for December since 1966.
9. There was snow on the ground from the eighth to the end of the month.
10. This December produced a white Christmas.  
This was the first white Christmas since 1969.  
Other Christmases might have had a skiff of snow which I didn't consider as

being a true white Christmas.

11. The cold, snowy weather caused all kinds of problems.

The local school system cancelled school for a number of days.

The road people used up most of their money for snow-removal.

Many country roads were very slippery for a long period of time from icy conditions from packed snow.

Frigid temperatures prevented melting.

At Christmas, many parties Banquets, and school programs had to be cancelled.

12 This was certainly a December to be remembered.

This was the coldest December in my 43 years of record-keeping on temps.

First known white Thanksgiving and Christmas in Washington;

Most consecutive days with December snow cover in Washington (22 days with  $\geq 0.1$ " and 20 days with  $\geq 1.0$ ", and 11 days with  $\geq 3.0$ ");

Most snow in Washington (9.0 inches) since 1973 when 11.0 inches fell;

First above normal November and December snowfall at DC.4 since 1967;

Temperature in Washington below 32 °F on all but 3 days;

Temperature at National Airport completely below freezing on 12 days, including a stretch of 252 hours (11 pm on Dec. 15 to 11 am on Dec. 26);

Several record low daily minimum and maximum temperatures at Dulles and Baltimore—Washington Airports, including the earliest sub—zero reading at IAD during the winter season ( $-2^{\circ}\text{F}$  on Dec. 19).