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Winter Weather Definitions

November can be one of the snowier months of the year for Denver and surrounding areas. We have not had any winter weather watches or warnings as of yet this snow season but they will be issued by the NWS over the coming weeks as snow is lurking in the near future. Now is a great time to review what the difference is between watches, warnings and advisories. Below are the definitions from the NWS in Boulder for criteria for areas east of the Continental Divide in Colorado:

WATCHES AND WARNINGS

SNOW

A **WINTER STORM WATCH** is issued when hazardous winter storm conditions are possible within the next 3 to 4 days, but the timing, intensity, or occurrence may still be uncertain.

A **BLIZZARD WATCH** is issued when blizzard conditions are possible in the next 12 to 36 hours.

In contrast...winter weather **WARNINGS** are issued when potentially life-threatening winter weather events are likely to occur.

A **WINTER STORM WARNING** is issued for the occurrence of heavy snow or any combination of heavy snow and other events. Other events include such things as blowing snow or very cold wind chill temperatures.

WARNING CRITERIA for HEAVY SNOW is defined by the following amounts.

IN THE MOUNTAINS...8 inches of snow in 12 hours, or 12 inches or more in 24 hours.

ON THE PLAINS...6 inches in 12 hours, or 8 inches or more in 24 hours.

A **BLIZZARD WARNING** is issued for the *plains* when the following conditions are expected to occur for at least 3 hours:

- **Sustained winds of 35 mph or greater**
- **considerable falling and/or drifting snow**
- **with visibilities frequently less than 1/4 mile**

A **BLIZZARD WARNING** is issued in the *mountains and foothills* for the conditions above, but with winds in excess of 50 mph at the higher elevations.

WIND

A **HIGH WIND WARNING** is issued for the following conditions:

MOUNTAINS and FOOTHILLS

- **sustained winds of 50 mph or more for at least 1 hour...or gusts of at least 75 mph for any duration.**

LOWER ELEVATIONS

- **sustained winds of 40 mph or more for at least 1 hour...or gusts of at least 58 mph for any duration.**

A **HIGH WIND WATCH** is issued when high wind conditions are expected to develop in the next 12 to 36 hours.

A **WIND CHILL WARNING** will be issued for the following wind chill temperatures...when combined with sustained winds of at least 10 mph.

MOUNTAINS...minus 35 degrees Fahrenheit or colder

LOWER ELEVATIONS...minus 25 degrees Fahrenheit or colder

A **WIND CHILL WATCH** is issued when wind chill warning criteria are possible in the next 12 to 36 hours.

A **DUST STORM WARNING** will be issued for the following conditions:

Visibility reduced to 1/4 mile or less in blowing dust...and sustained winds of 25 mph or greater for at least one hour.

ADVISORIES

Advisories for winter weather are issued for *potentially* hazardous conditions.

A **WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY** is issued when:

MOUNTAINS...4 to 8 inches of snow falls in 12 hours, or 6 to 12 inches in 24 hours

LOWER ELEVATIONS...3 to 6 inches of snow falls in 12 hours, or 4 to 8 inches in 24 hours

Or when the following conditions are expected:

- When falling snow is accompanied by blowing snow to cause travel problems due to lower visibilities.
- When wind blown snow will occasionally reduce visibilities and create a hazard for travelers.
- For freezing drizzle or a mix of precipitations types, such as snow and sleet, that will impact travel conditions.

A **WIND CHILL ADVISORY** is issued when the following is expected:

MOUNTAINS...wind chills between 25 below and 34 below zero

LOWER ELEVATIONS...wind chills between 18 below and 24 below zero

A **DENSE FOG ADVISORY** is issued for fog reducing visibilities to 1/4 mile or less.

WIND CHILL – A dangerous mix of cold temperatures and wind

The combination of wind and cold temperatures in winter can be deadly. The wind chill index helps you determine when dangerous conditions develop that could lead to frostbite or hypothermia. It takes into account heat loss from the human body to its surroundings during cold and windy weather. The calculation utilizes wind speed in miles per hour and temperature in degrees Fahrenheit. For example...a temperature of minus 5 degrees occurring with a 20 mph wind gives a wind chill near minus 30 degrees. This means that your body will lose heat at the same rate as it would if the air temperature were minus 30 degrees with no wind. Wind chill values near minus 25 degrees mean that frostbite can occur in as little as 15 minutes.

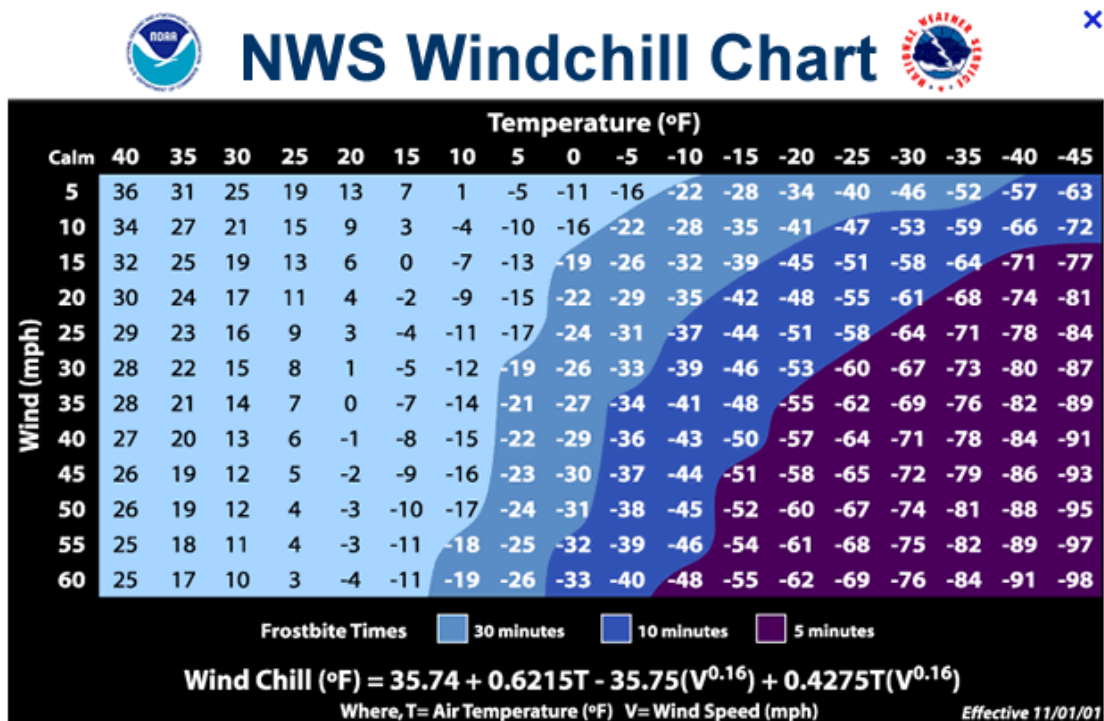
Frostbite first affects exposed body tissue where blood circulation may be limited such as your fingers...toes...nose and ears. To minimize frostbite...make sure all body parts are well covered. When frostbite starts...feeling is lost in the affected area and the frozen tissue will take on a white or pale appearance. If you suspect you are experiencing frostbite...hold the frostbitten area closely against warm skin to return blood flow and warmth to the affected area.

Hypothermia is a dangerously low body temperature and is the most common weather killer in winter. When you hear of a hiker...climber...hunter or a stranded traveler perishing from cold weather exposure...hypothermia was the cause. Most people are surprised to learn that hypothermia deaths can occur with temperatures between 30 and 50 degrees. If you or your clothing are wet...then hypothermia becomes even more likely.

Warning signs of hypothermia include uncontrollable shivering...memory loss...disorientation...slurred speech and drowsiness. Immediate medical attention should be given to victims suspected of suffering from hypothermia. If no help is available...the victim should be warmed slowly with warm liquids along with dry clothing and blankets.

The National Weather Service will issue wind chill advisories and warnings when a deadly combination of wind and cold air threaten Colorado. When cold weather threatens Colorado...follow these tips for survival...

- Stay dry...wet clothing results in much faster heat loss from your body. Wear waterproof insulated boots.
- Stay covered...wear mittens or gloves and wear a hat. At least half of your body heat is lost if your head is not covered.
- Dress layered...trapped air between loose fitting clothing helps to insulate.



The information above was taken from the NWS Boulder web page and can be found at the link below along with other helpful tips for staying safe this winter. http://www.crh.noaa.gov/bou/?n=winter_statements

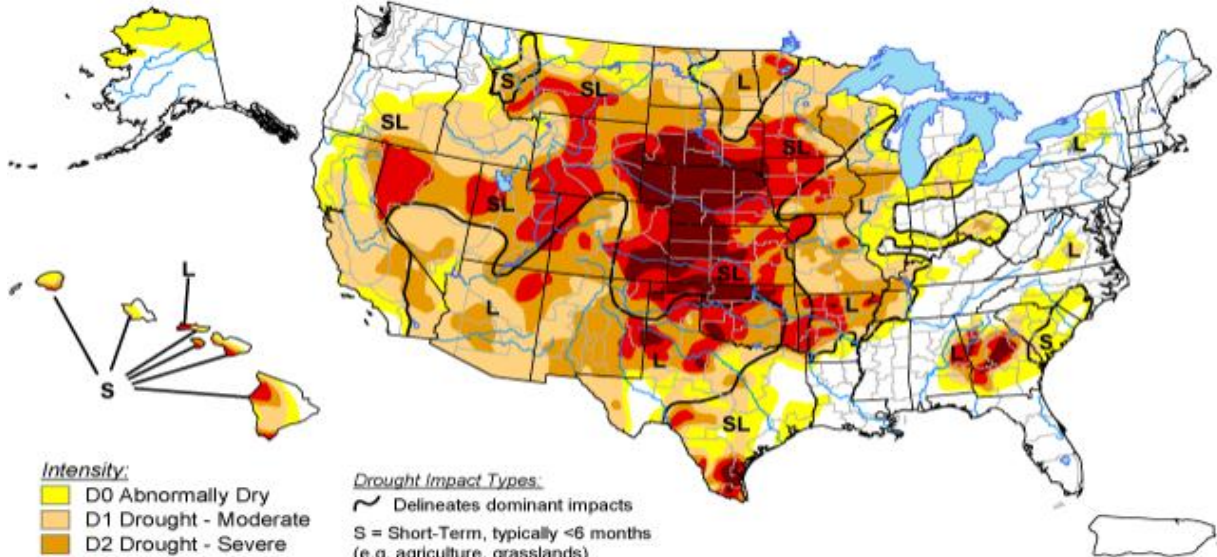
Drought Update

The central part of the US continues to be under extreme to exceptional drought. There has been some improvement as of late from the Palmer Divide northward along the I-25 corridor but moderate to severe drought remains.

U.S. Drought Monitor

October 30, 2012

Valid 7 a.m. EDT



Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

Drought Impact Types:

- Delineates dominant impacts
- S = Short-Term, typically <6 months (e.g. agriculture, grasslands)
- L = Long-Term, typically >6 months (e.g. hydrology, ecology)

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

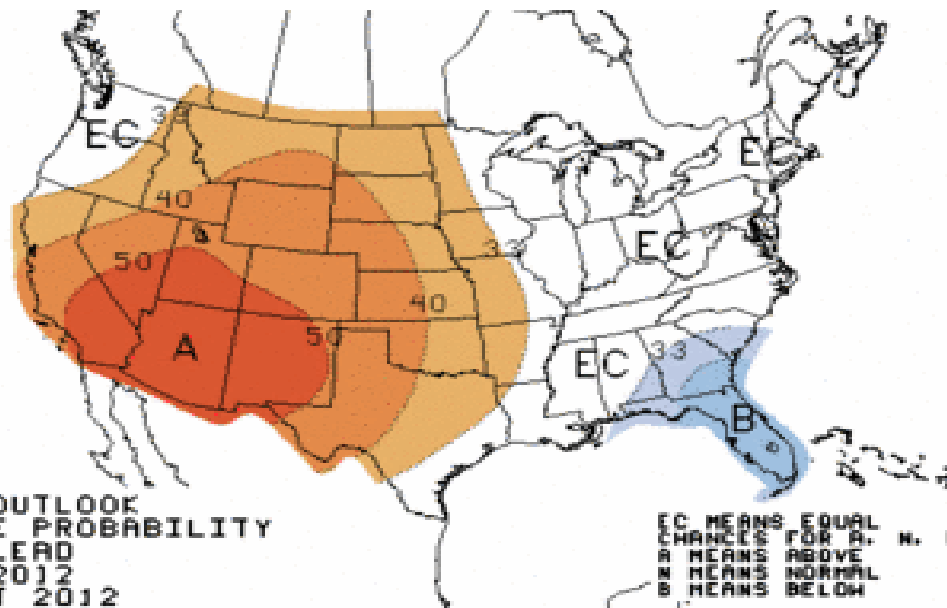


Released Thursday, November 1, 2012

Author: Michael Brewer/L. Love-Brotak, NOAA/NESDIS/NCDC

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

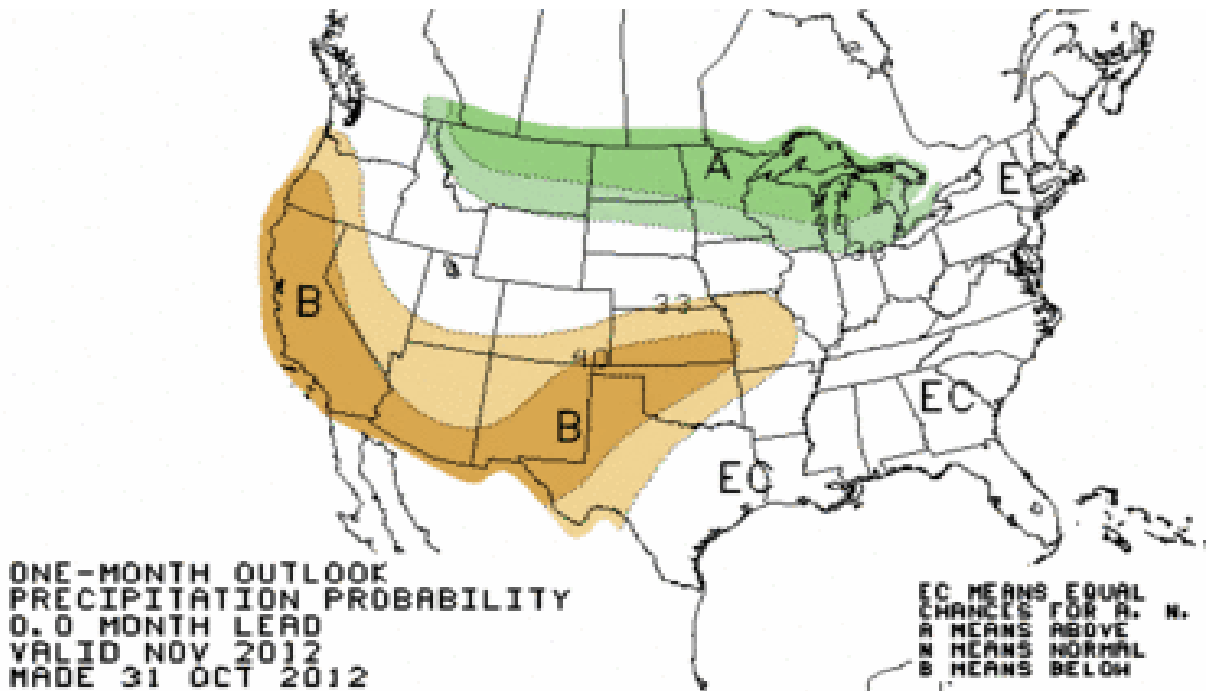
The map below shows forecasted temperature deviances for November 2012. Above normal temperatures are expected over the state with the warmest weather compared to average over the SW portion of Colorado.



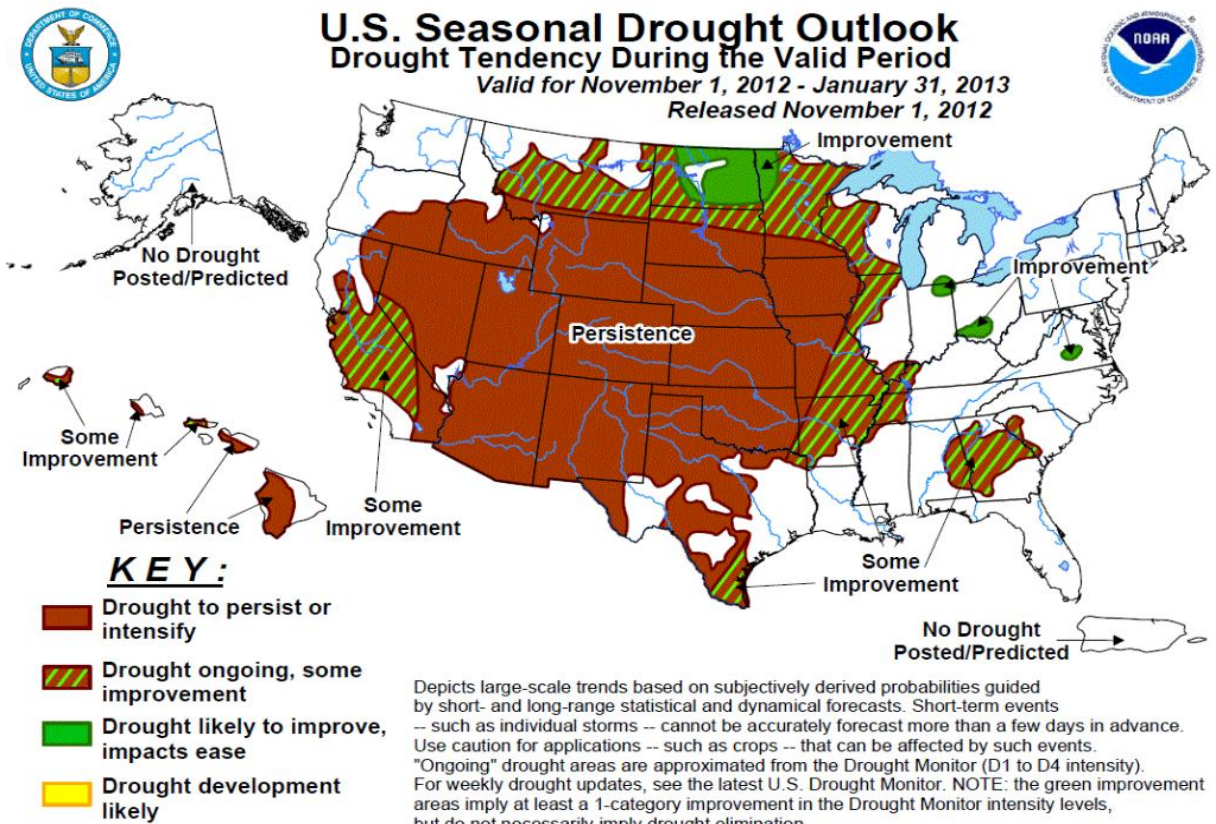
ONE-MONTH OUTLOOK
TEMPERATURE PROBABILITY
0.0 MONTH LEAD
VALID NOV 2012
MADE 31 OCT 2012

EC MEANS EQUAL
CHANCES FOR A, N,
A MEANS ABOVE
N MEANS NORMAL
B MEANS BELOW

The map below shows forecasted precipitation deviances for November 2012. Near normal precipitation is expected over northern areas of Colorado with below normal precipitation more likely over the southern half of the state.



With only near normal precipitation expected drought conditions will persist over Colorado. The northern portions of the US are expected to see the greatest improvement in drought conditions.



October Summary

October of 2012 started off warm with readings in the 80s the 2nd and 3rd of the month. It would not take long for colder air to impact the Front Range with the season's first snowfall on the 5th. 0.4" of snow was reported at DIA with higher amounts scattered over southern and western portions of the Denver suburbs. Towards the middle of the month there were a few days with active weather which resulted in rainfall for lower elevations. Around 0.5" of moisture was reported. Another more significant snow occurred on the 24-25th with additional snows on the 26th which tallied 5.1" of snow at DIA and over 0.5" of moisture. Temperatures fell into the 20s for a number of nights with a high of only 32 degrees on the 25th. For the month above normal precipitation and snowfall was tallied and temperatures were actually below normal for a change. 1.22" of moisture was measured which is 0.20" above normal. Average snowfall in October is 4.0" and with 5.5" reported for the month we made up for September and are now 0.2" above normal snow for the snow season so far. Average high temperatures were 62.2 degrees which was about 3 degrees cooler than normal. Average low temperatures were 35.9 degrees about 1 degree below normal. The monthly mean temperature of 49.0 was about 2 degrees cooler than normal. There were 10 days during the month with sunny skies, 14 days with partly cloudy skies and 7 days with cloudy skies. The average monthly relative humidity was 48%.

October Stats

TEMPERATURE (IN DEGREES F)

AVERAGE MAX	62.2	NORMAL 65.3	DEPARTURE -3.1
AVERAGE MIN	35.9	NORMAL 36.6	DEPARTURE -0.7
MONTHLY MEAN	49.0	NORMAL 50.9	DEPARTURE -1.9
HIGHEST	83	on the 3 rd	
LOWEST	24	on the 27 th	

DAYS WITH MAX 90 OR ABOVE	0	NORMAL	0
DAYS WITH MAX 32 OR BELOW	1	NORMAL	0
DAYS WITH MIN 32 OR BELOW	11	NORMAL	9
DAYS WITH MIN ZERO OR BELOW	0	NORMAL	0

TEMPERATURE RECORDS

No temperature records tied or broken.

HEATING DEGREE DAYS

MONTHLY TOTAL	488	NORMAL 440	DEPARTURE 48
SEASONAL TOTAL	557	NORMAL 581	DEPARTURE -24

COOLING DEGREE DAYS

MONTHLY TOTAL	1	NORMAL 5	DEPARTURE -4
YEARLY TOTAL	1236	NORMAL 769	DEPARTURE 467

PRECIPITATION (IN INCHES)

MONTHLY TOTAL	1.22	NORMAL 1.02	DEPARTURE 0.20
YEARLY TOTAL	9.57	NORMAL 13.27	DEPARTURE -3.70
GREATEST IN 24 HOURS	0.60" on 10/25 to 10/26		
DAYS WITH MEASURABLE PRECIP.	5		

SNOWFALL (IN INCHES)

MONTHLY TOTAL	5.5	NORMAL 4.0	DEPARTURE 1.5
SEASONAL TOTAL	5.5	NORMAL 5.3	DEPARTURE 0.2
GREATEST IN 24 HOURS	4.1" on 10/24 to 10/25		
GREATEST DEPTH	NA		

WIND (IN MILES PER HOUR)

AVERAGE SPEED	9.2mph
PEAK WIND GUST	46mph from the SW

MISCELLANEOUS WEATHER

NUMBER OF DAYS WITH THUNDERSTORM	3	NORMAL	4
NUMBER OF DAYS WITH HEAVY FOG	3	NORMAL	1
NUMBER OF DAYS WITH HAIL	0		
NUMBER OF SUNNY DAYS	10		
NUMBER OF PARTLY CLOUDY DAYS	14		
NUMBER OF CLOUDY DAYS	7		
AVERAGE RELATIVE HUMIDITY	48%		

November Preview

November of 2012 is starting out rather mild and dry. Changes in the weather will occur over the 10-12th with a rather active middle and late part of the month expected. There will likely be 3-4 storms of varying intensity during the month producing near normal snowfall and precipitation. Snowfall amounts over the years in Denver has ranged from no snow at all in 1949 to as much as 42.6" in 1946. The average snowfall for November is 8.7" and ranks second behind March as the one of the snowiest months of the year. Average precipitation for the month is 0.61" which equates to around a 15" snow to 1" of water ratio. On average temperatures remain in the 50s for highs with overnight lows in the mid 20s. Temperatures can warm into the upper 70s to around 80 at their highest and the warmer readings are usually in the first week of the month. The season's first arctic air mass can intrude from the north sending temperatures below zero. On average there is at least one day during the month with a low temperature below zero. There is typically 64% of available sunshine during the month which is actually one of the more cloudy months of the year.

DENVER'S OCTOBER CLIMATOLOGICALLY NORMAL (NORMAL PERIOD 1981-2010 DIA Data)

TEMPERATURE

AVERAGE HIGH	52.1
AVERAGE LOW	24.5
MONTHLY MEAN	38.3
DAYS WITH HIGH 90 OR ABOVE	0
DAYS WITH HIGH 32 OR BELOW	3
DAYS WITH LOW 32 OR BELOW	23
DAYS WITH LOWS ZERO OR BELOW	1

PRECIPITATION

MONTHLY MEAN	0.61"
DAYS WITH MEASURABLE PRECIPITATION	5
AVERAGE SNOWFALL IN INCHES	8.7"
DAYS WITH 1.0 INCH OF SNOW OR MORE	3

MISCELLANEOUS AVERAGES

HEATING DEGREE DAYS	801
COOLING DEGREE DAYS	0
WIND SPEED (MPH)	8.2
WIND DIRECTION	South
DAYS WITH THUNDERSTORMS	0
DAYS WITH DENSE FOG	1
PERCENT OF SUNSHINE POSSIBLE	64%

EXTREMES

RECORD HIGH	80 on 11/08/2006
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RECORD LOW
 WARMEST
 COLDEST
 WETTEST
 DRIEST
 SNOWIEST
 LEAST SNOWIEST

-18 on 11/29/1877
 50.9 degrees in 1949
 22.0 degrees in 1880
 3.21" in 1946
 TR in 1949, 1901, 1899
 42.6" in 1946
 0.0" in 1949

Sunrise/Sunset (July - December Denver area)

	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	
	SR - SS	SR - SS	SR - SS	SR - SS	SR - SS	SR - SS	
01	0534-0831	0558-0812	0627-0731	0655-0642	0728-0556	0701-0434	01
02	0535-0831	0559-0811	0628-0729	0656-0640	0729-0555	0702-0434	02
03	0535-0830	0600-0810	0629-0727	0657-0639	0730-0554	0703-0434	03
04	0536-0830	0601-0809	0630-0726	0658-0637	0632-0453	0704-0434	04
05	0537-0830	0602-0808	0631-0724	0659-0635	0633-0452	0705-0434	05
06	0537-0830	0603-0807	0632-0723	0700-0634	0634-0451	0706-0434	06
07	0538-0830	0603-0806	0633-0721	0701-0632	0635-0450	0707-0434	07
08	0538-0829	0604-0804	0634-0719	0702-0631	0636-0449	0708-0434	08
09	0539-0829	0605-0803	0634-0718	0703-0629	0637-0448	0709-0434	09
10	0540-0828	0606-0802	0635-0716	0704-0628	0638-0447	0709-0434	10
11	0540-0828	0607-0801	0636-0714	0705-0626	0640-0446	0710-0434	11
12	0541-0828	0608-0759	0637-0713	0706-0624	0641-0445	0711-0434	12
13	0542-0827	0609-0758	0638-0711	0707-0623	0642-0444	0712-0435	13
14	0543-0827	0610-0757	0639-0710	0709-0621	0643-0443	0712-0435	14
15	0543-0826	0611-0755	0640-0708	0710-0620	0644-0442	0713-0435	15
16	0544-0825	0612-0754	0641-0706	0711-0618	0645-0442	0714-0435	16
17	0545-0825	0613-0753	0642-0705	0712-0617	0646-0441	0714-0436	17
18	0546-0824	0614-0751	0643-0703	0713-0616	0648-0440	0715-0436	18
19	0547-0824	0615-0750	0644-0701	0714-0614	0649-0440	0716-0437	19
20	0547-0823	0616-0749	0645-0700	0715-0613	0650-0439	0716-0437	20
21	0548-0822	0617-0747	0646-0658	0716-0611	0651-0438	0717-0438	21
22	0549-0821	0618-0746	0647-0656	0717-0610	0652-0438	0717-0438	22
23	0550-0821	0619-0744	0648-0655	0718-0609	0653-0437	0718-0439	23
24	0551-0820	0620-0743	0649-0653	0719-0607	0654-0437	0718-0439	24
25	0552-0819	0620-0741	0650-0651	0720-0606	0655-0436	0718-0440	25
26	0552-0818	0621-0740	0651-0650	0721-0605	0656-0436	0719-0441	26
27	0553-0817	0622-0738	0652-0648	0723-0603	0657-0436	0719-0441	27
28	0554-0816	0623-0737	0652-0647	0724-0602	0658-0435	0719-0442	28
29	0555-0815	0624-0735	0653-0645	0725-0600	0659-0435	0719-0443	29
30	0556-0814	0625-0734	0654-0643	0726-0558	0700-0435	0720-0443	30
31	0557-0813	0626-0732		0727-0557		0720-0444	31

Snowfall

Oct 2012 to Apr 2013

City	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Total
Aurora (Central)	4.7							4.7
Brighton	5.6							5.6
Broomfield	5.9							5.9
Castle Rock	4.0							4.0
Colo Sprgs Airport	Trace							Trace
Denver DIA	5.5							5.5
Denver Downtown	4.8							4.8
Golden	5.8							5.8
Fort Collins	4.5							4.5
Highlands Ranch	4.9							4.9
Lakewood	4.9							4.9
Littleton	4.5							4.5
Parker	3.8							3.8
Sedalia - Hwy 67	4.0							4.0
Thornton	6.2							6.2
Westminster	5.2							5.2
Wheatridge	4.4							4.4

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