

Pennsylvania's Climate

THE COCORAHS 'STATE CLIMATES' SERIES

Pennsylvania: Where It Can Rain on Everyone's Parade ...

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One of the four commonwealths in the nation, the Keystone State is known for its consistency of precipitation. In fact, prior to the mid 1990's, the central third of Pennsylvania had one of the lowest variabilities in annual precipitation in the nation – meaning that the 40 inches of rain that fell each year did so with a high degree of reliability. It is very rare for any reporting station to go for an entire month without rain, but lately it is not surprising to find a station reporting more than 7 inches in a month. Hurricane Irene rewrote the record books in the Delaware Valley as more than 20 inches of rain was tallied for the month of August 2011. Normally, there is only a small summer maximum in rainfall amounts, but if you picked any month, about three and a third inches of liquid precipitation would be the most common average amount. Of course, not all of the precipitation falls as rain! In fact, during February 2010, more than 117 inches of snow fell in the Laurel Highlands (east of Pittsburgh) establishing a new monthly record that had stood since 1890. While under review again, the state arguably holds the world record for rainfall in a three-hour period, with 28.70 inches falling on July 18, 1942 in Smethport near the headwaters of the Allegheny River. The regularity of this state's rainfall makes it verdant, but it also means that many a parade, picnic, and baseball game have been rained out!

To learn more about the climate of Pennsylvania visit the Pennsylvania State Climatologist's website:
http://climate.met.psu.edu/www_prod/