

Explanation and definition of some of the terms used in the Wokingham Weather Reports.

Average: Generally refers to the 30 year climatological average, currently 1971 to 2000. This will be next updated in 2010. For some parameters, notably wind, the climatological average is not available, and if the word average is used in the context of wind, it refers to the average for the period for which data is held, namely 1988 to present.

For sunshine, there was a change, in July 1999, in the type of instrument used to detect sunshine amount, making the climatological average based on the old instrument of little use. In general, the new instrument produces higher values in the winter half year, and lower ones in the summer half, than the old type, due to a combination of faster reaction and higher sensitivity than the old type. The average used in this case is based on a theoretical equivalent 1971 to 2000 average, drawn from comparison with the Met Office published tables of departure from climatological average sunshine in the months since 2000 for their area 'Southern England'. Users of the Wokingham Monthly Weather reports should be aware of this, and regard anomalies for sunshine published therein as a guide only, until such time has elapsed since the introduction of the new instrument that a genuine average becomes available.

Mean: The mean of the data under discussion, often the monthly mean of daily data. The mean is obtained by summation of the individual values and dividing by the number of values. The term 'daily mean' in respect of temperature is defined as '(max + min) / 2'. A true daily 24 hour (00 to 24 GMT) mean temperature is available from the Automatic Weather Station (AWS), and is currently published on page 7 of the Wokingham Monthly Weather report, on the Wokingham Weather web site, page 1. <http://www.woksat.info/www1.html>

Anomaly: When a value is given for anomaly, this will have one of the following meanings:

- a): The departure of a mean from the current climatological average.
- b): The departure of a value on a particular day from the average for that day, (this need not be a climatological average).

When the word anomaly is used in respect of temperature, any values given are in °C. In respect of rainfall or sunshine, percent. In respect of wind, mph. In respect of pressure, millibars (hpa).

Categories: Reference may be made in the reports to 'categories'. Each category has a strict statistical range, as outlined below.

Temperature: The terms cold/mild are used in the winter half year, and cool/warm in the summer half. The term 'normal' is used when the individual mean (monthly, seasonal or annual) value is within 20 % of the median of all ranked values for that month/season/year.

Mild/warm: The value lies between 10 % and 30 % below the highest value in the ranked series.

Very mild/very warm: The value lies within 10 % of the highest value in the ranked series.

Cold/cool: The value lies between 10 % and 30 % above the lowest value in the ranked series.

Very cold/very cool: The value lies within 10 % of the lowest value in the ranked series.

Sunshine: The terms for sunshine are very sunny, sunny, normal, dull and very dull.

The definition of these terms follow the same rules as for temperature.

Rainfall: The terms for rainfall are very dry, dry, normal, wet and very wet.

The definition of the term 'normal' follows the same rule as for temperature and sunshine.

Wet: The value lies between 10 % and 30% of the highest value in the ranked series.

Very wet: The value lies within 10 % of the highest value in the ranked series.

Dry: The value lies between 10 % and 30 % above the lowest value in the ranked series.

Very dry: The value lies within 10 % of the lowest value in the ranked series.

Long-term: Mention may be made in the reports to the 'long-term'. The long-term record comprises a temperature/rainfall/sunshine data series compiled from records of various weather stations in the Wokingham area in the years prior to the establishment of the weather station at Emmbrook in 1976 together with data from this station.

In the case of monthly max, min and mean temperature and of rainfall total the series starts in 1882. For temperature extremes, the highest max and lowest min go back to 1904, and lowest max and highest min to 1913.

Rank: The word rank refers to the position of a value for a particular month/season/year in the ranked series, and may be expressed relative to either the highest or lowest value in the series. The central value in the ranked series is known as the **median**. This value may be different from the average of the whole series if the population is skewed. It can also be different from the climatological average which only refers to a 30 year period.

Month: Calendar month.

Season: Spring, March to May.

Summer, June to August

Autumn, September to November

Winter, December to February.

When discussing 'winter', if a single year is given this refers to the year in which the January/February fall.

Annual or Year: The calendar year, 1st January to 31st December.

The climatological day: runs from 0900 to 0900 GMT. The max temperature and rainfall read at 0900 hours are attributed to the previous day (thrown back), as is the duration of measurable rain. The min temperature and grass min read at 0900 hours are attributed to the day of reading. Pressure read at 0900 GMT, and the monthly mean pressure is the mean of the 0900 GMT readings. Sunshine data, wind data, rainfall rate data and 24 hour data from the AWS use the normal 00-24 GMT day.

Frost: An air frost day is recorded when the minimum temperature read at 0900 GMT on that day is -0.1°C or below. A ground frost day is recorded when the grass minimum temperature read at 0900 GMT on that day is -0.1°C or lower.

Duration of air frost is defined as the number of minutes that the AWS one minute average temperature is below 0.0°C , and the day runs from midnight to midnight.

Snow: A day with snow falling is triggered if snow falls at any time in the 24 hours from midnight on that day. A day with snow lying is entered if there is at least 50% snow cover at the 0900 GMT observation.

Snow depth is the depth of undrifted snow. Snow that collects in the raingauge funnel is melted and the amount recorded as rainfall.

Hail: A day of hail is recorded if hailstones 5 mm or more in diameter are observed or recorded on the hail pad in a 24 hour period starting at midnight.

A day of small hail is recorded if hailstones less than 5 mm diameter are observed or recorded in a 24 hour period starting at midnight. The term small hail also includes various other types of ice meteor such as ice pellets, snow grains and some types of snow pellets.

Fog: A day with fog is recorded if the horizontal visibility at 0900 GMT is below 1000 m.

Thunder: A day of thunder is recorded if thunder is heard in the 24 hour period from midnight on that day. The appearance of lightning without thunder being heard does not qualify as a thunder day.

Trace of rainfall: A trace of rain, entered as 'tr' in the daily log, is recorded if rain is observed to fall but is of insufficient quantity to collect in the raingauge, or if the amount of rain in the gauge is less than 0.05 mm.

Dry spell: A dry spell is defined as a period of 5 or more consecutive dry days.

Dry day: A dry day is one with less than 0.2 mm of rainfall.

Rain day: A rain day is one with 0.2 mm or more of rainfall.

Wet day: A wet day is one having 1.0 mm or more of rainfall.