

**DCA Frequencies:**

|                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| ATIS:               | 132.65          |
| Approach:           | 119.85 / 124.7  |
| Departure:          | 118.95 / 125.65 |
| Final Approach:     | 124.7 / 118.3   |
| Tower:              | 119.1           |
| Ground:             | 121.7           |
| Clearance Delivery: | 128.25          |
| Helicopter:         | 120.75          |

**All locations described below are designated spots for DCA airport. Do not go to any other place. There is no point of going anywhere else because all traffic can be seen/photographed from these fine spots. Please respect those simple rules so other spotters can enjoy DCA for years to come.**

**Location No.1 – Gravelly Point** must be one of the most famous spotting places in the United States. From here you can see the famous River Visual Approach to Runway 19. Also, from this location you can pretty much see every single movement at the airport. If Runway 19 is in use you can take pictures of arriving traffic.

Park Police and Airport Police regularly visit the parking lot. Most of the time you won't be bothered, but be ready to be questioned and have an identification document with you all the time.

**Camera:** 150mm lens is more than enough to take picture of every arriving aircraft.

**Times:** This place like any other photography locations at DCA is good from 12 noon until dark. If they are using runway 19 you can shoot in the morning (summer) but only airplanes taxiing and turning to the runway.

**Parking:** On the weekend GP tends to have very heavy volume of people, and it's very hard to find a parking space. When parking is full, Police will come and barricade the entrance. The best advice is to arrive early.

**Amenities:** If you are planning on spending more than a few hours at GP, bring water and food. There are no vendors selling refreshments. Gravelly Point is equipped with three portable toilets.

**Directions:** To get to Gravelly Point from any location you will have to pass the airport. Continue on George Washington Parkway North, pass the airport and continue straight. GP is located approximately 1 mile north of the terminal building. If you miss the exit you will have to make a loop again. Also you can get to GP using public transportation (kind of). Take Metro's Yellow or Blue line and exit at Ronald Reagan National Airport station. Walk to the terminal, go to lower level, and exit the building at US Airways baggage claim. Walking time from the terminal to GP should be no more than 10 minutes.

**Location No.2 – Balcony at the end of Terminal C** From this place you can take pictures of airplanes landing on runway 19 and 15 and also departures from runway 1. This spot gives you general overview of US Airways Express ramp and several US Airways gates.

**Camera:** You will need at least 400mm lens (or 300mm digital) for this spot (to get aircraft on the runway 19, or departing from runway 1). Keep in mind that in summer month's heat haze can be a problem.

**Times:** This place is good for photography after 1pm.

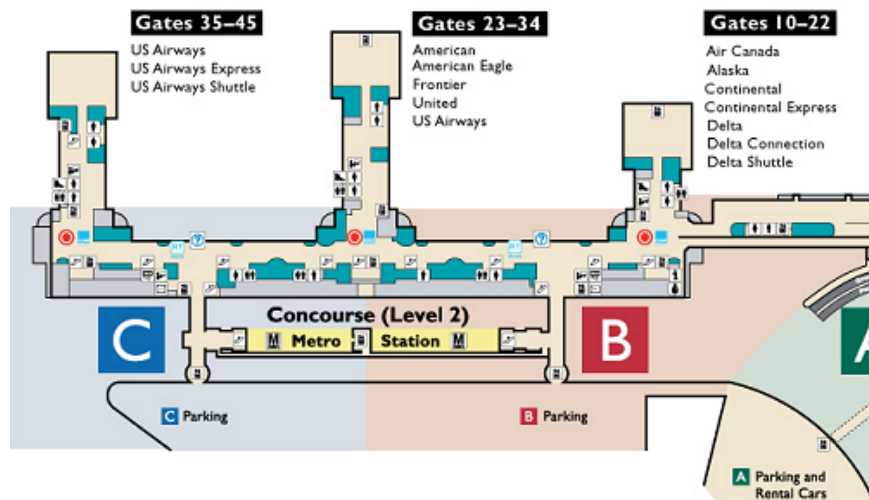
**Parking:** Use the parking garage (Hourly/Daily B/C) located in front of the terminal building.

**Amenities:** You are very close to the terminal where there are several restaurants and convenience shops.

**Directions:** To get to this place just walk towards US Airways check-in counters, and at the end of the terminal exit the building. You will see small area resembling garden with few benches. Once again, you might be questioned by Airport Police, but don't worry, if you are taking pictures or registration spotting you are not doing anything illegal.



**Location No.3 – Terminal B/C.** This place is good for photographers and spotters. It's located in the middle of Terminal B/C (before the security checkpoint). Look for Delta and American gates (AA gates should be on your left and DL gates on your right). The area has chairs right next to the windows. Pick your spot and enjoy spotting and photography. If you are planning on spending some time at this location you should inform Airport Police about your presence (Police officers patrol the terminal building all the time). Don't be afraid of Police officers, they won't bite you. DCA and IAD airports have some of the nicest people working for the Police department.



**Camera:** You will need at about 300mm for this spot (to get aircraft on the runway 19, or departing from runway 1) and normal to wide-angle for aircraft pulling into the gates. Keep in mind that in summer month's heat haze can be a problem.

**Times:** (see above)

**Parking:** Use the parking garage (Hourly/Daily B/C) located in front of the terminal building.

**Amenities:** You are in the terminal where there are several restaurants and convenience shops.

**Location No.4 - Balcony at the end of Terminal B.** Same rules apply to this location as to Location No. 2 (see above) – but that place is located on the opposite side of Terminal building. It's located at the beginning of Terminal B. Exactly the same garden-like area. Good for photography in the afternoon, and excellent vantage point for arrivals on runway 01, 04 and 33.

From this place you are overlooking Continental gates. This place is little bit better than Location No.2 because from here you can see arrivals that use Terminal A.

**Camera:** You will need at least 250mm lens to get most of the stuff that taxi in front of you and 400mm + for runway 1 action.

**Times:** This place is good for photography after 1pm.

**Parking:** Use the parking garage (Hourly/Daily B/C) located in front of the terminal building.

**Amenities:** You are very near the terminal where there are several restaurants and convenience shops.

**Directions:** To get to this place just walk towards Continental and Delta check-in counters, and at the end of the terminal exit the building. You will see small area resembling garden with few benches. Once again, you might be questioned by Airport Police, but don't worry, if you are taking pictures or registration spotting you are not doing anything illegal.

**Location No.5 – Marina.** The Marina is good for north arrivals (runway 1). Be aware that spotters are often asked to move on from the boat docking area and even from the restaurant.

**Camera:** You will need at least 400mm lens (or 300mm if you are shooting digital). If they are using runway 19 for departures, you can get nice photos with the US Capitol building or DC Monument in the background. The marina is located too far for registration spotters.

**Times:** (see above)

**Parking:** Use the free parking for the Marina.

**Amenities:** This area has two restaurants, gift shop, vending machines and bathroom facilities. You can grab cheap (but good) food, have a beer and enjoy entire afternoon spotting/photographing.

**Directions:** To get to this location you have to drive (3 minutes) or walk for about 25 minutes from the terminal. To get there take George Washington Parkway South towards Mt. Vernon. This place is located about 2-3 miles south of the terminal building. Drive on GW Parkway and take left exit to Marina Dr. Park your car in designated space and walk towards boat docks or restaurant

## SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

During north operations Runway 1 is the primary runway with some of the regional traffic using Runway 33. During south operations, Runway 19 is the primary runway with some regional traffic using Runway 15 or 22. Bizjet traffic at DCA is minimal at this point due to TSA and FAA restrictions for flights landing in airports within Washington ADIZ.

## Spotting Guide to Washington Reagan National Airport – DCA

### *Airlines Serving DCA:*

| <b>AIRLINE</b>           | <b>EQUIPMENT</b>                  | <b>FLIGHTS</b>          |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| American Airlines        | M80, 73H, 752                     | Multiple daily arrivals |
| American Eagle           | ER3, ERD, ER4, CR7                | Multiple daily arrivals |
| Air Canada               | E70, E90                          | 10 daily flights        |
| Air Canada Jazz          | CRJ                               |                         |
| AirTran Airways          | 712, 73W                          | 6 daily flights         |
| Alaska Airlines          | 73H, 73W                          | 3 daily flights         |
| Continental Airlines     | 733, 735, 73W, 73H                | Multiple daily arrivals |
| Continental Express      | ER3, ER4                          | Multiple daily arrivals |
| CO Connection (BTA, CJC) | ER4, DH4                          | Multiple daily arrivals |
| Delta Air Lines          | M88, 738, 752                     | Multiple daily arrivals |
| Delta Connection         | CRJ, CR7, CR9, E70                | Multiple daily arrivals |
| FedEx                    | 757                               | 1 daily flight          |
| Frontier                 | 320                               | 3 daily flights         |
| Midwest Airlines         | E70, E90                          | Multiple daily arrivals |
| Northwest Airlines       | DC9, 319, 320, 752                | Multiple daily arrivals |
| Pinnacle                 | CRJ                               | Multiple daily arrivals |
| Mesaba                   | CR9                               | Multiple daily arrivals |
| Spirit Airlines          | 319                               | 3 daily arrivals        |
| United Airlines          | 319, 320, 752                     | Multiple daily arrivals |
| US Airways               | 319, 320, 321, 733, 734, 752, E90 | Multiple daily arrivals |
| US Airways Express       | ER4, E70, E75, SF3, CRJ, DH8      | Multiple daily arrivals |

### *Aircraft based or frequently seen at DCA:*

| <b>OPERATOR</b> | <b>EQUIPMENT</b>   | <b>FLIGHTS</b>  |
|-----------------|--------------------|---|
| US Coast Guard  | G-V, CL-604, HH-65 | G-V is based at DCA. Multiple ACY based HH-65s rotate as well |
| FAA             | G-V, 560XL, etc    | Multiple FAA aircraft visit DCA often                         |
| NASA            | G-III              | NASA's Gulfstreams visit DCA often                            |

### **Credits**

This guide was written and edited by Washington Baltimore Spotters Group members Rafal Szczeppek, Blend Oatipi and Sunil Gupta