

A CHANGE OF CLIMATE



Climatic Information for Those Planning a Move to Another Area

A move is sometimes planned for retirement or health purposes; for example, a person may have a physical impairment aggravated by local weather conditions. Thus, information about the type of weather likely to be encountered in the new area can be useful in this decision-making process.

Obviously, one way to learn about the climate in a particular area is to spend some time in the area. Ideally, such visits should be made at different times of the year to ensure exposure to the entire range of weather conditions common to that locality. Another way of obtaining information about the climate of an area is to secure publications or other material prepared by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which contain summaries of weather elements over a period of years. This information is available in a variety of forms, for both individual stations and groups of stations within the United States and world wide.

In seeking an "ideal" climate, people frequently ask whether a move to a different area would be beneficial to their health. Although there is some evidence to support the idea that weather conditions influence human diseases, the effects of daily weather changes on the physiology and pathology of man are extremely difficult to ascertain. Some reasons for this are: (1) specific weather conditions do not affect every individual to the same degree, (2) all factors related to illnesses are not equal, and (3) weather observations taken at a single location do not precisely describe the actual atmospheric conditions at all points in an area. Human comfort is a complex function involving many weather elements; however, neither their individual nor collective influence is always readily apparent. Some combinations of weather may have a pronounced psychological (or physiological) effect on some individuals and little or no effect on others.

Since each person is affected in an individual way by his environment, probably no group could agree on an "ideal" climate. Certain climates may be more healthful than others for some people, but it would be difficult to determine which element or combination of elements contributes most. If one were to specify the type of climate he prefers (in terms of temperature, wind, cloud cover, sunshine, rainfall, humidity, pressure, etc.), it might then be possible to make a comparison between those same elements reported in the vicinity of the proposed retirement site. To assist in making

comparison of climate at various locations, there are both published and unpublished climatological information available from NOAA.

The following sources of information have been found useful by many persons; prices and availability can be obtained by directing inquiries to the Director, National Climatic Data Center, Federal Building, Asheville, NC 28801.

Local Climatological Data issued monthly and annually for each of approximately 285 National Weather Service Stations. Each monthly issue contains daily and monthly temperature data including cooling and heating degree days, relative humidity, dew point, precipitation (including snowfall), pressure, wind, sunshine and sky cover data. The annual issue summarizes the monthly data for the station. It also contains a narrative description of the climate for the station; a table of Normals, Means, and Extremes; and tables listing by month and year (or season) data for average temperature, total precipitation, total snowfall, and heating and cooling degree days for a number of years.

Climates of the States issued for every state or combination of states. Each issue contains Normals, Means and Extremes tables for selected National Weather Service and cooperative stations in the state, and a narrative summary describing the climatological features of the state.

Comparative Climatic Data contains 16 tables of long-term monthly and annual averages and extremes of selected meteorological elements. Data for temperature, precipitation, wind, sunshine, cloudiness, and relative humidity are presented for approximately 285 stations. The stations are listed alphabetically by state so that values for the same element may be easily compared for different locations by use of a single table.

Climates of the World, a 28-page brochure containing temperature and precipitation data for approximately 800 stations throughout the world. Also includes brief descriptions of the climate of each continent and maps showing the worldwide distribution of temperature and precipitation.

Selected Climatic Maps of the United States. An abbreviated version (8 1/2 inch X 11 inch) of the Climatic Atlas consisting of 32 maps. Designed primarily for quick reference, it includes climatic information on temperature, precipitation, sunshine, solar radiation, heating and cooling degree days, freeze data, and other selected data. Most maps are annual or for the months of January and July only.

Unpublished Summaries. These are summaries of specific weather elements, or combinations of elements, for particular locations. They often represent the nearest location to the point of interest for which summarized data are available. Copies of these summaries can be provided for the cost of reproduction.