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## What happens to ice falling from planes?

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/magazine/8141195.stm>

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**In a freak accident a man in Bristol has been hit by a lump of ice falling from a plane. What happens to the ice that forms on aircraft?**

It is the stuff of a **spoof news report** - an injury *sustained from* ice hurtling to earth after breaking off a plane.

Bristol pensioner David Gammon is badly bruised after a grapefruit-sized ice block fell from the sky and into his lap. He was in his garden, under the flight path of Bristol International airport.

The airport has found no **proof** the ice came from any of its planes, and its air traffic controllers calculate it could have fallen from another plane flying within a five mile radius.

In such incidents, the ice **typically** forms from water leaking from the ventilation system, says Richard Taylor, of the Civil Aviation Authority. Unlike in The Day Today sketch where a woman is **lanced** by a falling urine icicle, toilet waste is **rarely to blame**.

"The **misconception** is that a toilet has been flushed and the remnants, when falling to earth, have frozen," says Mr Taylor. Hence the name "blue ice", so called for the chemicals added to plane toilets to **mask odour** and break down solids. But toilets are not emptied until the plane is grounded."

While a leaking plane is **not a particularly reassuring explanation**, Mr Taylor says it is water seeping out that's to blame for these ice incidents. "It leaks from the gully pipes and seeps out of the aircraft, freezing quickly."

According to the Federal Aviation Administration, modern commercial aircraft **cruise** at high altitudes and the sub-zero temperatures outside cause any liquid to freeze immediately.

The **resulting** ice then breaks off the plane, gaining speed as it falls to the ground far below. Most ice will break up on descent, says Mr Taylor.

"It is very rare, but sometimes the ice fails to thaw. As a rule it falls unnoticed and without **harming** anyone."

And for a person to be hit is extremely rare. In three million flights a year, there have been 35 cases of ice falling from planes in the UK in the past year. And in the 40 years the CAA has been recording such incidents, there have been just five cases of a person being hit.

"That really puts this circumstance into perspective," says Mr Taylor.

But there have been **numerous** reports of cars or buildings being damaged by falling ice.

In 2003 Chris Hastings was awakened by a large crash. He **emerged** from his house in Manitoba, Canada, to find a basketball-sized chunk of yellowish ice on the roof of his blue station wagon.

And two years ago in California, an ice boulder punched a hole through the wall of a recreation centre, and **shattered into fragments** said to be as large as bowling balls. The local airport said the ice may have fallen from planes flying overhead.

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## What happens to ice falling from planes?

### A.

Read the article.

Now decide whether the following statements are true or false (based on the text).

1. David Gammon was hit by a grapefruit.
2. The ice came from the toilet on an airplane.
3. Any water leaking from an airplane freezes immediately because the plane is at such a high altitude.
4. 35 people in the UK have been hit by falling ice in the last year.
5. Chris Hastings found a bowling ball sized chunk of ice in his station wagon.
6. Bristol Airport admitted that the ice fell from one of its planes.
7. "Blue ice" is so named because of the chemicals in airplane toilets.
8. Richard Taylor says most ice breaks up before reaching earth

### B.

What do you understand by the following phrases in the text? Write your own version.

- a. **spoof news report**
- b. **rarely to blame**
- c. **mask odour**
- d. **not a particularly reassuring explanation**
- e. **shattered into fragments**

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C.

Look at the words in the text that are in ***bold italics***. They are listed on the left below. Match them with a word on the right that can replace them in the text.

For example ***sustained from*** can be replaced by caused by

<b><i>sustained from</i></b>	→	caused by
<b><i>proof</i></b>		surfaced
<b><i>typically</i></b>		evidence
<b><i>lanced</i></b>		injuring
<b><i>misconception</i></b>		normally
<b><i>cruise</i></b>		copious
<b><i>resulting</i></b>		pierced
<b><i>harming</i></b>		fallacy
<b><i>numerous</i></b>		ensuing
<b><i>emerged</i></b>		travel

D.

There are ten spelling mistakes in the article.

How many can you find and how many can you correct?

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## ANSWERS

A

1. false – he was hit by a piece of ice the size of a grapefruit
2. false – toilets are not emptied until a plane has landed
3. true
4. false – only 5 in 40 years.
5. false – it was basketball sized.
6. false – they said it could have fallen from any plane within a five mile radius
7. true
8. true

B

- a) **spoof news report** - a joke item about news that pokes fun at someone/thing
- b) **rarely to blame** - very unlikely to be the cause
- c) **mask odour** - hide the smell
- d) **not a particularly reassuring explanation** - does not put your mind at rest
- e) **shattered into fragments** - broken into tiny pieces

C

For example *sustained from* can be replaced by caused by

<i>proof</i>	evidence
<i>typically</i>	normally
<i>lanced</i>	pierced
<i>misconception</i>	fallacy
<i>cruise</i>	travel
<i>resulting</i>	ensuing
<i>harming</i>	injuring
<i>numerous</i>	copious
<i>emerged</i>	surfaced

D

hertling	hurtling
flite	flight
ventalation	ventilation
comercial	commercial
imediatly	immediately
decsent	descent
unnoticed	unnoticed
extremly	extremely
dammaged	damaged
recreation	recreation