

Selected Smoke, Fire and Fumes Events in the United States, December 2010–February 2011

Event Date	Flight Phase	Airport	Classification	Event sub-classification	Aircraft	Operator
Dec. 6	Takeoff	—	Burning odor in cockpit	Unscheduled landing	Boeing 737	Continental Airlines
A burning odor was noticed in the cockpit and cabin, and at the same time hydraulic B system pressure dropped from 80 percent to 42 percent, during takeoff and climbout. The odor dissipated somewhat on approach.						
Dec. 12	Approach	—	Smoke in cockpit	Emergency and priority ATC handling	Bombardier DHC-8	Colgan Air
The aircraft crew was just released from a holding pattern when the first officer noticed smoke in the vicinity of his overhead light. The captain also saw the smoke and noticed an acrid odor. The lavatory smoke detector activated. The captain called a flight attendant and she reported that there was no visible fire, but the cabin looked foggy. The crew declared an emergency and received priority handling from air traffic control. The aircraft was landed within a few minutes. By the time the aircraft landed, the smoke and acrid odor had subsided.						
Dec. 16	Cruise	—	Light smoke and oil odor in cockpit	Emergency and diversion	Bombardier DHC-8	—
Several minutes after departure, the crew reported indications of light smoke and oil odor in the cockpit. The crew followed in-flight emergency procedures. The pilot declared an emergency and diverted to the nearest airport.						
Dec. 29	Taxi/ground hold	Detroit (DTW)	Smoke in cockpit	Passenger evacuation	Bombardier CL-600	Express Airlines
While the aircraft was parked at the gate, the auxiliary power unit (APU) performed an auto-shutdown. The flight crew smelled smoke and saw it emerging from the gaspers. The passengers were evacuated. No fire or hot spots were found. Maintenance found that the APU enclosure was soaked in oil. Further investigation revealed a ruptured oil line on the APU.						
Jan. 1	Approach	—	Smoke in cabin	Continued with approach	McDonnell Douglas MD-88	Delta Air Lines
During flight, a flight attendant noticed electrical shorting and smoke emitting from row 25. Maintenance found that a light ballast and harness had burned at row 24.						
Jan. 18	Descent	Washington National (DCA)	Smoke in cockpit and cabin	Continued with approach	Bombardier CL-600	Jetstream International
The crew reported smoke in the cockpit and cabin after turning on the APU and switching on bleeds during descent into DCA. The crew landed at DCA without further incident. Maintenance inspected the APU enclosure and the air conditioning cooling ducts. No defects were noted. Maintenance determined the source of the odor and smoke to be the APU.						
Jan. 21	Climb	Manchester, New Hampshire (MHT)	Lavatory fire warning	Return for landing	Embraer 145	Continental Express
The flight crew reported a lavatory fire warning on climb and smoke in the lavatory. The crew returned the aircraft to MHT and landed safely, with no emergency declared. Maintenance inspected the lavatory and no defects were found. The problem could not be duplicated, and the aircraft was returned to service.						
Jan. 25	Taxi/ground hold	Chicago O'Hare (ORD)	Smoke in cockpit and cabin	—	Embraer 145	Continental Express
The crew reported smoke in the cabin after deicing at the gate. Maintenance inspected the aircraft and ran the air conditioning packs and bleed system with both the APU and engines. No smoke was noted. It was suspected that deicing fluid in the APU inlet created the smoke.						
Jan. 29	Takeoff	—	Smoke in cockpit and cabin	Return for landing	Boeing 737	Continental Airlines
On the takeoff roll at about 110 kt, the cabin and cockpit began to fill with smoke. As the aircraft pitched up, smoke increased and filled the cockpit from the ceiling to the extent that the first officer's head was not visible and breathing was impaired. Smoke was coming out of the exhaust light sockets. The flight crew shut off the air conditioning packs to stop the smoke.						
Feb. 3	Cruise	—	Electrical/hot odor in cockpit	Unscheduled landing	Boeing 737	Southwest Airlines
During cruise, the crew smelled what seemed to be electrical smoke and fumes in the cockpit and cabin. The odor seemed to dissipate after the gasper/recirculation was turned off.						
Feb. 17	Takeoff	—	Burning odor in cockpit	Continued with flight	Embraer 145	American Eagle Airlines
The crew reported a burning odor in the cockpit during takeoff. The odor went away during the climb. The crew made the decision to continue to ORD. The aircraft landed without incident. The aircraft was removed from service. Maintenance replaced the flashlight assembly above a flight attendant jump seat, and the aircraft was returned to service.						
Feb. 18	Descent	Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW)	Electrical/hot odor in cockpit	Continued with descent	Boeing 737	Allegheny Airlines
During descent into DFW, the crew could smell an electrical/hot odor in the flight deck. The right side of the captain's control wheel was almost too hot to touch. The odor was determined to be coming from the right side of the control wheel. The crew pulled the circuit breaker for the panel lighting. The odor stopped, and the control wheel cooled. The flight was landed without further incident. Maintenance found that the reminder light on the right side of the control wheel had melted due to a loose terminal.						

Source: Safety Operating Systems and Inflight Warning Systems.