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Wednesday, 11/29/06

Jet trails just water vapor, not sprayed chemicals, experts say

By ANNE PAINE
Staff Writer

Blue skies have been turning white this month as airplane traffic crisscrosses the sky. The trails that jets leave behind grow, creating thin, cirrus-style clouds that aviation officials say result from water vapor from engine exhausts and in the air turning to ice crystals.

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At least two Nashvillians aren't convinced. They subscribe to a concept that chemicals are being sprayed from planes.

"Why are there times that you don't see them at all?" said Scott Webb. "That's regardless of weather."

Lynn Lowrance, spokeswoman for the Metro Nashville Airport Authority, said it is, in fact, a matter of the weather.

The jet trails — called contrails — can disappear quickly, she said.

When the air is moist and it's colder, the trails can spread in a chain reaction as water vapor turns into ice particles. Feathery clouds result.

"They don't pose any health risk," Lowrance said.

Scott and Guy Avery, a local running coach, disagree, pointing to articles and talk on the Internet alleging that the government is spraying chemicals from planes, perhaps for experimentation.

"Chemtrails," as they're called on Web sites, have been a topic for several years, with unmarked military planes often accused of releasing them.

Representatives of Fort Campbell, which only has helicopters, the Tennessee Air National Guard, which has 10 marked propeller planes here, and a U.S. Air Force spokesman in Washington, D.C., said this week they do no such releases.

A NASA researcher said contrails are a cause for concern, but it's not related to chemicals.

A study has shown that the thin, cirrus clouds that plane exhausts can trigger are trapping heat next to the earth, said Pat Minnis, a NASA senior research scientist in Hampton, Va., and a Vanderbilt University graduate.

As air traffic increases, cirrus cloud coverage over the U.S. is rising by 1 percent a decade,



Jet trails, such as these above Nashville's Union Station, spread across the sky, causing worry among some residents. (ANNE PAINE / THE TENNESSEAN)

Contact Anne Paine at 259-8071 or apaine@tennessean.com.

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Minnis said.

"A single plane can produce a rather large cloud," he said.

After 9/11, when all but a few planes were grounded, scientists had a chance to see that one lone military plane's contrail extended over Ohio and Pennsylvania, he said.

The icy cloud eventually covered about 6,170 square miles.

While NASA papers indicate that the impact on temperature of plane-produced clouds is significant, not everyone agrees, Minnis said.

"Whether or not it's a global climate problem, we'll see," he said.

More research is going on to try to determine that. •



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Why would you mention this unless something needed to be defended?

Was this a 3rd-grade journalism project?

I've seen the jet trails and the photo in this story does not do them justice at all. On the days that this is happening, the trails are much thicker and much more obvious and this has been going on in very warm weather, so this 'official' weather explanation does not hold weight.

Who cares about the theories about WHY it is being done, that ought not take away from the fact is that it IS being done. There is a WHY, but obviously that is not going to be readily revealed. Recent events ought to tell anyone that there is always a WHY.

Something is very, very different. On the same days that the repeated criss-cross patterns are being laid up there, commercial airplanes have been flying their normal routes with only the typical vapour trails, so the weather explanation does not hold weight. Sounds like an official hand-me-down answer to deflect questioning. Sounds real familiar, but it does not take a genius to read between the lines.

I love how 9/11 is conveniently placed in there. Too funny.

Unless plane technology all changed suddenly in the last 3 months, something is very different in the Nashville skies. Watch for yourself as it is being done, although I hope it will stop.

At least the question is being asked. Unfortunately, most good web information is much more accurate and neutral than anything that will ever be provided by the Tennessean, especially on a controversial subject.

More questions need to be asked about this. People need to question the 'official' word a little more. Too many people do not even question poor explanations.

Bravo for running the story. Too bad Gannett spun it their way with zero respect for reader intelligence. Our media coverage remains lame and completely incompetent. Definitely get your real information elsewhere.

I hope this will stop what is going on. I want to know our air is somewhat clean.

Posted: Wed Nov 29, 2006 7:41 am

Hey frank brown I agree, the comments are the best part of the paper 😊 I hope that running coach is not a paid teacher in a Tennessee school, does anyone know?

Posted: Wed Nov 29, 2006 6:53 am

The idea that the government is spraying stuff in the atmosphere is a bit near going over the edge. Think about it for a minute, how would they be able to control where it is going. Yeah, they can see where the wind is blowing but that changes all the time without warning.

To say contrails are totally harmless is a lie. The contrails are the result of hot exhaust. Exhaust is hot gases and what is left of burnt fuel. We all know what that is like down here on the ground, what makes you think it is any cleaner up there.

Posted: Wed Nov 29, 2006 6:47 am

I read the internet Tennessean comments for entertainment...A lot of spooky illinformed, illogical and seemingly uneducated people out there. Thanks MDuncan for your intelligent comments

Posted: Wed Nov 29, 2006 6:47 am

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