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Commitment to Environmental Excellence - Contrails

In Flight Emergency Fuel Release

Another common, but infrequent, procedure is the release, or venting, of fuel as a safety measure. If an in-flight emergency (IFE) is declared, a pilot will want to land the aircraft with as light a load as possible to prevent the possibility of damaging the aircraft and/or causing a fuel leak on landing. In order to lighten the fuel load a pilot can continue to fly until the fuel is burned or vent the fuel into the atmosphere. Fuel that is released, or vented, typically atomizes into a fine spray as it is released and typically evaporates before it reaches the ground. JP-8 jet fuel released at low altitudes appears as a fine mist and may not volatilize before reaching the ground surface. The release of fuel does not produce a contrail and appears more like a smoke pattern that dissipates quickly.

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