

Iced Pitot Tubes on Vertical Fin 84th FIS, Castle AFB, CA



By Joe Sylvia

Aug 3, 2013

In Sep of 1974 or 1975, four F-106's [of the [84th FIS, Castle AFB, CA](#)] took off and joined up in formation. Somewhere they hit a Temperature Gradient and the A/C was covered with ice. The Pilot in rear of the formation called to the Lead and said he had a flight control problem. The Lead told the one next to him to follow him back to Castle. He said I got the same problem. Suddenly they all realized they had the same problem. They broke formation and headed back.

What happened was the ice covered the Pitot Heads on the Vertical Fin which provides air pressure to the Artificial Feel System. The ice blocked the air flow so they lost the Artificial Feel. However, on the way back the Feel returned. I asked the Lead Pilot--- who was a Navy exchange Pilot--- what happened and he said the Canopy was covered with ice instantly. Obviously, the rest of the A/C was also covered with ice but he could not see it. However, with the loss of the Artificial Feel System proves they were all covered.

The Aircraft had an Ice Detector in the engine intake but it never functioned because all this took place on the exterior. If it did work they never would have lost the Feel System.

Our QC Officer Lt. Col. Tex Fulk asked---what could they do if this happened again. I told him to go to Manual "ON" on the Anti-Icing Switch. He briefed all the Pilots and believe it or not the same thing happened nearly a year later. What was amazing this one happened on approach to Castle and he lost his Artificial Feel System. He remembered the briefing and selected Manual "ON". This heated the Pitot Heads and the Feel System came back On.

I never heard of this happening anywhere else!

--- Joe Sylvia [3 Aug 2013]