

Federal Aviation Agency



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**SUBJECT : POTENTIAL HAZARD ASSOCIATED WITH USE OF CELLULOID COMPUTERS
IN FLIGHT**

1. **PURPOSE.** This circular is to advise flight crewmembers of a possible hazard to flight when using navigational computers or other equipment made of celluloid material.
2. **BACKGROUND.** An airline pilot recently reported that during a flight his navigational computer (1936-37 model) suddenly began smoking and was difficult to extinguish. Smoke was produced within thirty seconds in sufficient quantity to seriously restrict visibility in the cockpit.

The cause of ignition of the computer is not known. However, investigation of this incident revealed all navigational computers manufactured prior to 1939 were made of cellulose nitrate sheet (commonly known as celluloid), which is a highly inflammable material. Since 1940, most navigational computers and plotters have been made of rigid vinyl sheets which will not burn or smoke.

3. **RECOMMENDED ACTION.** The potential hazard associated with the use of celluloid computers, particularly in the presence of lighted cigarettes or concentrated sunrays is serious. Accordingly, all flight crewmembers are cautioned of the hazard associated with the use of computers or other equipment made of celluloid material.

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