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Airplanes and icing! When an airplane begins to stagger, ice has formed on the wings and possibly elsewhere. The plane has been flying in moisture-laden air with temperature not far below the freezing point, and the lift of wings has been affected. About 65 % of the lift is due to the negative pressure (or partial vacuum) on the upper surface of the wings. But when ice forms, the shape of this surface is flattened or so modified that the sustaining power is diminished. Icing is due to two conditions: First, an airplane flying through very cold air becomes so cold that when it encounters water droplets they readily freeze to the wings; second, ice is formed when flying through air containing subcooled water droplets.