

Blood studies tell plane

Canfield

...ence that deadly cyanide gas may be emitted from burning plastic used in the interiors of airplanes has been uncovered by the Cook County coroner's office.

Blood samples taken from 54 victims of two recent plane

crashes here showed 10 of the 54 contained cyanide in sufficient quantities to cause death, the office said Wednesday.

An office spokesman said that the samples were taken at the request of the Federal Aeronautics Administration, which suspects that the gas is

emitted from the burning plastic.

FAA STUDIES of the blood samples of plane-crash victims reportedly are under way to determine if it is necessary to issue warnings to plane manufacturers to seek substitute materials for the plastic.

An explanation of the FAA

crash peril:

...studies was given to him after he gave it reports on the 54 blood samples, the coroner's office's chief toxicologist, Dr. George Christopolous, said.

The 54 crash victims whose blood samples were taken included 45 killed Dec. 8 when a United Air Lines Boeing 737 jet crashed at Midway, and 9

killed Dec. 10 when a North Central Airlines DC-9 clipped the tail of a Delta Air Lines Convair 880 at O'Hare.

Dr. Christopolous said cyanide in sufficient quantities to cause death was present in the blood samples of seven of the Midway-crash victims and three victims from the crash

cyanide gas

at O'Hare.

He said the FAA told him there is evidence that pilots of planes involved in other crashes have been the victims of cyanide poisoning.

ALTHOUGH cyanide was found in the 10 Midway and O'Hare victims in sufficient quantities to cause death, the

10 died from a combination of cyanide poisoning and smoke inhalation, Dr. Christopolous said.

Dr. Christopolous made his disclosures after a toxicology report released earlier by the coroner's office showed the cause of death of the 10, whose names were not released.