

iPhone miraculously 'survived' after falling from a height of 16,000 feet from an Alaska Airlines plane

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Back in January, a completely intact iPhone was discovered along the side of the road after falling 16,000 feet (4877 m) when a door blew off an Alaska Airlines flight. At that time, the fact that the iPhone 14 Pro Max survived such a dramatic fall was quite unbelievable.

Wall Street Journal reporter Joanna Stern was determined to find more answers.

As mentioned, the iPhone 14 Pro Max that fell from an altitude of 16,000 feet from an Alaska Airlines plane crashed and landed on the grass.

Joanna performed a series of drop tests with the iPhone 14 and Samsung Galaxy S23. Results varied between different tests, but a key test involved dropping both phones from a height of 300 feet (91.5m) without a protective case onto a grassy area.

Unexpectedly, both phones had 'no real damage' except for some dirt and grass stuck to the body.

Joanna started looking for an explanation, talking to many experts to get some scientific evidence. Why can an iPhone be safe after falling from an airplane but cannot survive falling into a bathroom toilet?

'It doesn't matter if you drop your phone from 300 feet or from space,' says Mark Rober, a former NASA mechanical engineer turned YouTuber. 'The result will be similar in both cases because of something called terminal velocity.'

Rhett Allain, associate professor of physics at Southeastern Louisiana University, explains that, due to the mass, size and shape of a smartphone, it will increase its fall speed until it reaches about 60 miles per hour. At that point, air resistance prevents it from falling any faster.

The associate professor also assured that 300 feet in the air is a sufficient altitude for all such devices, with or without protective covers, to reach their terminal velocity.

There is another physics concept to take into account: Deceleration, which usually occurs when *'bumping into something'*. Rober and Allain explain that the grass acted as a cushion for the falling object, slowing it down more slowly. Harder surfaces like asphalt - or bathroom tiles - cause much more sudden deceleration.

You can watch Joanna's full video below!

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