



National Transportation Safety Board

Overview of the NTSB and Role in RR Accidents

History

- Created in 1967 as an independent agency within the USDOT
- Independent Safety Board Act of 1974
 - Fully independent agency
 - Investigate transportation accidents
 - Determine probable cause
 - Develop recommendations
- Aviation Disaster Family Assistance of 1996
- Rail Passenger Disaster Family Assistance Act of 2008

The Board

- Chairman
- Vice Chairman
- Three other Board Members

Nominated by the President

Confirmed by the Senate

Members are not
investigators



NTSB Mission

*Independently
Advancing
Transportation
Safety*

- Fact based investigations
- Single focus is safety
- Not liability or blame
- Determine probable cause
- Make recommendations

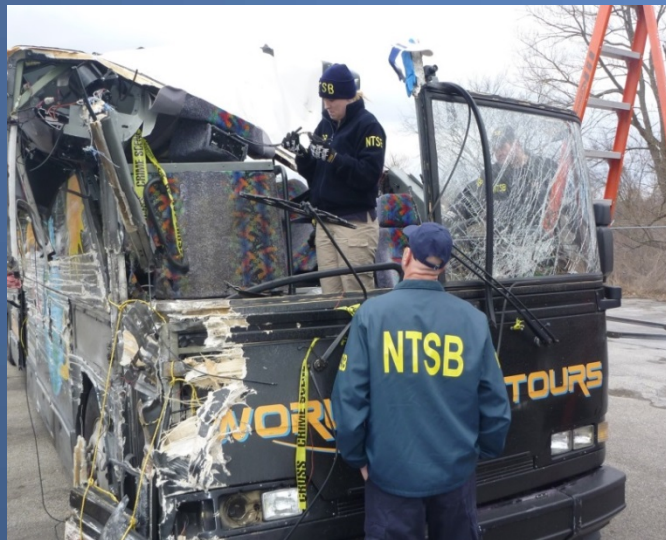
Accident Investigation

Accident investigation is the primary tool used by the NTSB to develop recommendations for safety improvements



Investigative Offices

- Office of Aviation Safety
- Office of Highway Safety
- Office of Marine Safety



Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations

- Railroad Division
- Human Performance Division
- Pipeline and HazMat Division



Office of Research and Engineering

Provides technical support to railroad investigative teams:

- Materials Lab
- Recorders Lab
- Simulations and animations
- Safety studies and statistics



Other Supporting Staff

The level of support varies with the complexity of the accident. The team may include:

- Member's Special Assistant
- Public Affairs – media liaison
- Government Affairs – local elected officials
- TDA – family and other loved ones
- CIO – information systems
- General Counsel – legal matters

Launching Investigation Teams

Data that informs NTSB launch decision:

- NRC report
- Direct notification
- Media reports
- Duty officer follow ups



Factors Considered in Launch Decision

Launching a team is a combined management and Board Chairman decision:

- Passenger train
- Fatalities
- Significant injuries
- Potential issues
- Staff resources
- Public interest



Launch Decision

- Duty officer and Chief(s) brief Director
- “Top Hat” Telecom with senior leadership and Chairman
- Final decision is made
- Investigative team is assembled
- Member/no Member is determined
- Support team is assembled
- RR operator is informed

Priority of Board Investigations

- NTSB investigations have priority over other Federal investigations
- Close cooperation with Federal agencies (such as FRA and EPA) who may conduct concurrent investigations
- Exception – NTSB has an MOU with the FBI for criminal events



Investigative Hearings

- Are held in a public forum to gather additional facts about an accident
- The Board Members serve as the Board of Inquiry
- NTSB technical staff serve as the Technical Panel
- Parties to the hearing are people and organizations that can provide special or technical knowledge

Final Accident Report

- A draft report is prepared by the investigation staff
- The report is generally prepared within 12 to 24 months after an accident
- Some reports are presented to the Board at a public meeting
- Board Members vote to adopt the report as presented or with modifications

Additional NTSB Reports

Special Investigations

- Focus on a specific safety issue
- May involve multiple accidents
- Determine the facts, conditions, and circumstances about the issue

Safety Studies

- Evaluate the effectiveness of government and industry transportation safety programs
- Examine policy issues, system safety, and management effectiveness



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Questions?