



NTSB

Federal Family Assistance Framework for Aviation Disasters

Prepared by—
The National Transportation Safety Board
Transportation Disaster Assistance Division
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Acronyms, Initialisms, and Abbreviations

Acronym, Initialism, or Abbreviation	Expanded Term
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADFAA	Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act (The Act)
AFDIL	Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory
AFMES	Armed Forces Medical Examiner System
ARFF	aircraft rescue and fire fighting
ASPR	Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response
CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Patrol
C.F.R.	Code of Federal Regulations
CGA	crew gathering area
CPCN	certificate of public convenience and necessity
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DMORT	Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team
DOD	Department of Defense
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOS	Department of State
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
DPMU	DMORT Portable Morgue Unit
DVI	Disaster Victim Identification
EMA	emergency management agency
EMO	emergency management office
EMS	emergency medical services
EOC	emergency operations center
ESF-8	Emergency Support Function-8
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FAC	Family Assistance Center
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FBI ERT	FBI Emergency Response Team
FBI VSD	FBI Victim Services Division
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FPS	Federal Protective Service
FRC	friends and relatives center
FST	family support task
HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
IATA	International Air Transport Association
IIC	Investigator in Charge
JFSOC	Joint Family Support Operations Center
MCI	mass casualty incident

MOA	memorandum of agreement
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MPCC	missing persons call center
NDMS	National Disaster Medical System
NOK	next of kin
NTSB	National Transportation Safety Board
OEM	office of emergency management
PE	personal effects
PGA	passenger gathering area
POC	point of contact
POI	person of interest
RC	reunification center
RIC	remote information center
ROC	NTSB Response Operations Center
SMS	short message system
TDA	NTSB Transportation Disaster Assistance Division
TTY	Teletypewriter
U.S.	United States
U.S.C.	United States Code
VIC	victim information center
VST	victim support task

Legislative Background and History of the National Transportation Safety Board Family Assistance Program

Family Members Speak:

Family member 1

Immediately after the crash, my family and I were looking for answers to all sorts of questions. What do we do now? What comes next? What happens down the road? Who can we turn to for answers? Of course, the first people we wanted answers from was [the airline]. Why? How? What happened to cause this? They had no answers, and even if they had, I realized it wasn't very likely they would tell us.¹

Family member 2

I decided to try to call the 800 number on the screen. I tried for two hours - it was busy. I called the airport directly, but no one would give me information. Then finally around 10:30 I got through [to] the number. I was told all information on the flight had been pulled from the computer—that they would get back to me as soon as the passenger list was released. They took my name and number and told me they would call me back. Around 1:00 a.m. I received a call from (the airline) my husband has been confirmed to be on the flight...and there had been no survivors. No, "I'm sorry," just a frank answer.²

Former Chairman of NTSB speaks:

U.S. House Subcommittee on Aviation Testimony

The family members of that accident [ValuJet 592] and almost every tragic transportation accident I have mentioned are U.S. taxpayers and our fellow human beings. They pay my salary, and they pay for the investigative work of the NTSB. Within reason and within the resources available to us, I believe we must be responsive. It is the right thing to do.

*As I attended their memorial services and met with their families, I recommitted myself to ensuring that all family members of these tragic events are treated with **respect**, with **compassion**, and with **truth**.*

Jim Hall, NTSB Chairman
(June 19, 1996)

¹ [Final Report from the Task Force on Assistance to Families of Aviation Disasters](#)

² [Final Report from the Task Force on Assistance to Families of Aviation Disasters](#)

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Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act

In 1996, the Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act (ADFAA) was enacted following several major aviation accidents in which air carriers, local responders, and federal agencies did not adequately meet the needs of the families of passengers who died in these accidents. To better address the needs of affected family members through a coordinated response, the United States (U.S.) Congress passed the ADFAA, codified in 49 United States Code (U.S.C.) §1136, §41113, and in 1997 the Foreign Air Carrier Family Support Act U.S.C. § 41313.³

Since the ADFAA was enacted, it has been amended—in 2000,⁴ 2003,⁵ and 2018⁶—to enhance the requirements to address the needs of affected family members and to improve response efforts. The Act requires air carriers to develop and maintain plans that address the needs of families of passengers involved in aircraft accidents. The law also requires that at a minimum the air carrier’s plan should include the eighteen assurances outlined in the legislation. In addition, the act tasks the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) with coordinating the family assistance operation efforts of the air carrier, local responders, and federal agencies and designating an independent nonprofit organization. The designated organization is responsible for coordinating emotional, psychological, and spiritual care and support. See [Appendix 1](#) for the full text of the federal legislation.

When does the law apply and who is considered a carrier?

The Act applies to aircraft accidents involving an air carrier or foreign air carrier, for which the NTSB is the lead investigative agency, and that results in any loss of life.⁷ The federal legislation applies to domestic carriers that hold a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)⁸ or to foreign airlines that have obtained both safety authority from the Federal

³ For the purposes of this document “ADFAA” or “The Act” refers to current versions of 49 U.S.C. 1136, 49 U.S.C. §41113 and U.S.C. §41313 as located on <https://uscode.house.gov>

⁴ “Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century.” Date:4/5/2000. <https://www.congress.gov/106/plaws/publ181/PLAW-106publ181.pdf>

⁵ “Vision 100- Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act.” Date: 12/12/2003 <https://www.congress.gov/108/plaws/publ176/PLAW-108publ176.pdf>

⁶ FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018” Date 10/5/2018. <https://www.congress.gov/115/plaws/publ254/PLAW-115publ254.pdf>.

⁷ 49 U.S.C. 1136

⁸ <https://www.transportation.gov/policy/aviation-policy/certificated-air-carriers-list>

Aviation Administration (FAA) (Part 129 Operations Specifications)⁹ and economic authority from the DOT.¹⁰

Who is Considered a Passenger?

A passenger is defined by The Act as an employee of the carrier or any other person aboard at the time of the accident, whether they held a reservation, paid for the flight, or occupied a seat, as well as any other person injured or killed in the accident, as determined appropriate by the NTSB.¹¹ These include crewmembers, airline employees, non-revenue passengers, and any ground fatalities or survivors involved in the accident.

Who is Considered a Family Member of a Passenger?

The NTSB encourages a broad and inclusive definition of the term “family member” for the purposes of family assistance, acknowledging that many individuals may be considered family, even if the law does not formally recognize their relationship. Federal family assistance legislation does not provide a specific definition for the terms “family” or “family member.” It is important to note, however, that specific legal definitions may apply and may be highly relevant to other organizations or agencies involved in the response to an aviation disaster (for example, the presiding medicolegal jurisdiction may be concerned with identifying the legal next of kin [NOK] of a decedent to direct their engagement). As such, it may be important to refer to state, federal, or tribal law to determine appropriate definitions for specific family members and be cognizant of their relevance.

For the purposes of this framework, the terms “survivor,” “families,” and “family members” refer to the various individuals or groups of individuals affected by an aviation accident; this includes passengers who survive the accident, and those whose close association with a passenger (as defined above) may be considered equivalent to that of a family relationship, regardless of biological or legal connection. These may include immediate family, extended relatives, step, and half-siblings, caregivers, those living in the same residence, spouses, life partners, and friends. Anyone providing family assistance should be prepared to provide support to, and work with, all such persons, recognizing and accepting a variety of relational definitions and family dynamics.

⁹ [14 C.F.R. §129](#)

¹⁰ <https://www.transportation.gov/policy/aviation-policy/licensing/foreign-carriers>

¹¹ [49 U.S.C. §1136\(h\)\(2\)](#)

Legislated Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the NTSB

As codified in 49 U.S.C. §1136, the NTSB is responsible for coordinating federal government resources to support local, state, and tribal governments, disaster relief organizations, and the air carrier to meet the needs of families. Specifically, the NTSB has primary federal responsibility for facilitating the recovery and identification of fatally injured passengers, designating an independent nonprofit organization to provide emotional care and support, and communicating with passengers' families about the roles of the air carrier, government agencies, and the independent nonprofit organization. The NTSB is also responsible for providing information to families regarding the investigative process and, to the maximum extent practicable, ensuring that survivors and family members are briefed on investigative findings prior to any public release of the information. To meet each of the requirements specified in the legislation, the NTSB established the Transportation Disaster Assistance (TDA) Division.

Criminal Acts and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

Title 49 U.S.C. §1136 designates the NTSB to coordinate federal assistance in response to aviation accidents. Family assistance related responsibilities transfer to the FBI if circumstances reasonably indicate that the crash may have been caused by an intentional criminal act. However, the NTSB shall assist the FBI to the maximum extent possible in assisting the families of passengers if the NTSB relinquishes investigative priority to the FBI.¹²

The Role of the NTSB's Designated Organization (American Red Cross)

To assist the families of passengers, the NTSB is required to "designate an independent nonprofit organization, with experience in disaster and post-trauma communication with families" to "have the primary responsibility for coordinating the emotional care and support of families of passengers involved in the accident."¹³ The NTSB designates the American Red Cross (Red Cross)¹⁴ to meet the requirements of the legislation when an accident occurs.

As the designated organization, the Red Cross provides psychological, emotional, and spiritual care services and staffing. Title 49 U.S.C. §1136 directs the Red Cross to connect with the families of passengers, coordinate with the disaster response team of

¹² [49 U.S.C. §1136\(j\)\(1\)](#) and [§1131\(2\)\(B\)](#)

¹³ [49 U.S.C. §1136\(a\)\(2\)](#)

¹⁴ For the purposes of this document, Red Cross refers to the American Red Cross.

the air carrier involved, provide an environment in which families or survivors may grieve in private,¹⁵ maintain contact with them periodically thereafter, and support requests for suitable memorial services if necessary and in consultation with families.

The Role of the Air Carrier

Title 49 U.S.C. §41113 and §41313 require air carriers to submit a plan to the NTSB for addressing the needs of families of passengers involved in aviation accidents. In their plan, an air carrier must address, at a minimum, eighteen assurances focused on information-sharing, logistical support, and the provision of various services identified in the applicable legislation. Title 49 U.S.C. §1136, §41113, and §41313 do not require the NTSB to review or approve submitted plans; however, carriers are expected to meet their obligations under the legislation and to abide by their submitted plan. It is important to note that the NTSB is not a regulatory agency and that the DOT is the enforcement authority over air carriers regarding their provision of family assistance in response to an aircraft accident involving their company. See [Appendix 2](#) for more guidance on air carrier plan submission.

NTSB Federal Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disasters

Shortly after the ADFAA was enacted, a Task Force for assistance to families of aviation disasters was established to meet the requirements set forth in 49 U.S.C. §1136, §41113, and §41313. The Task Force consisted of representatives from the DOT, the NTSB, the U.S. Department of State (DOS), the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Red Cross, air carrier associations, survivors, and family members. The group included people with diverse perspectives and experiences who provided invaluable insights based on their professional and personal experiences as well as the experiences of countless others who were affected by these tragedies. Their insights were consolidated into the *Final Report from the Task Force on Assistance to Families of Aviation Disasters*,¹⁶ which served as the foundation for the NTSB's Federal Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disasters (the Federal Plan).

The NTSB's Federal Plan established roles for the organizations and agencies responding to an aviation accident that meets the requirements established under 49 U.S.C. §1136. Based on the best practices presented in the task force's final report, the

¹⁵ [49 U.S.C. §1136\(c\)\(2\)](#)

¹⁶ <https://www.nts.gov/tda/TDADocuments/Task-Force-On-Assistance-To-Families-Of-Aviation-Disasters.pdf>

Federal Plan established victim support tasks (VSTs) specifically for the NTSB, the affected air carrier(s), and the Red Cross to help each entity meet their legislated requirements. In addition, the Federal Plan outlined VSTs for federal response partners who, through memorandums of agreement (MOA) or understanding (MOU) with the NTSB, have offered to provide assets in support of a major aviation accident.

Summary of Major Changes

From Plan to Framework

The Federal Framework has been revised to reflect the NTSB's pivot to focusing on the four fundamental concerns of family members and the family support tasks (FSTs) that support the collaborative interagency response to those concerns. Air carriers and response organizations are encouraged to utilize this framework to assist in development of their family assistance plan while keeping in mind that it is not intended to be a checklist. Each organization or agency responding to an aircraft disaster must be aware of and understand applicable Federal requirements. In the planning process, each organization must determine their capabilities and resources and tailor their plan to meet the needs of survivors and family members while adhering to the requirements of applicable legislation. This document can assist organizations in identifying areas of potential collaboration among stakeholders. Each organization can incorporate these principles into their family assistance operations plan while staying aligned with their mission and response objectives and remain adaptable to the evolving family assistance landscape.

The Federal Framework's focus is on response partners that either have responsibilities specified under 49 U.S.C. §1136, §41113, §41313 or those federal agencies with whom the NTSB has established active memoranda of understanding (MOU) or agreement (MOA). As the central coordinating agency, the NTSB has identified operating principles, concepts, and structures to help organize and integrate response efforts across the various mission areas of the NTSB's response partners.

Family Support Tasks

This document replaces the term VSTs with *family support tasks* (FSTs). This realignment represents a broadening of the concept of operations to be more inclusive of those affected by an accident. Although many of the tasks from the Federal Plan remain unchanged, there are several new FSTs that reflect changes in best practices since the development of the earlier document.

This revision outlines FSTs to specifically address the roles of the NTSB, the air carrier, and the Red Cross as presented in the legislation. Also included are FSTs for organizations and agencies with established partnerships with the NTSB through an MOA or MOU to provide support to the federal family assistance operation. This revision outlines these tasks by first categorizing them into four main groups related to the fundamental concerns of family members, and then sub-categorizing tasks and roles by the following entities:

- NTSB
- Air carrier
- Red Cross
- Department of State (DOS)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Department of Defense (DOD)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Federal Protective Service (FPS)

Incorporating the guidance established by the FSTs assists entities with addressing the needs of family members.

The Fundamental Concerns of Families

Although each aviation accident differs in size, scope, and complexity, there are common fundamental concerns among the family members of fatally injured passengers, survivors, and survivors' family members. Each concern is broad in scope and is common to individuals who experience an unexpected loss or injury of a loved one, whether aviation related or not. Since its inception in 1996, the NTSB TDA Division has responded to numerous transportation accidents and has developed a clearer understanding of these fundamental concerns and their importance in a family assistance operation. Although each accident response presents its own unique complexities, the four fundamental concerns listed below remain consistent and

transcend cultural and socioeconomic diversity in the immediate aftermath of an accident.

FIGURE 1. The Four Fundamental Concerns of Families

<p>Notification of Involvement</p> 	<p><i>Was my loved one involved?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Initial notification of passenger involvement ▶ Immediate and factual information about the accident
<p>Victim Accounting</p> 	<p><i>Where is my loved one?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Search and rescue efforts, tracking of injured transported to hospitals ▶ Search and recovery of fatalities ▶ Victim examination, identification, and repatriation process
<p>Information and Resources</p> 	<p><i>Where can I get help?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Basic needs, financial, and logistic support ▶ Emotional, psychological, and spiritual care ▶ Investigative updates
<p>Personal Effects</p> 	<p><i>Where are my loved one's belongings?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recovery, processing, and return of associated and unassociated personal items

The Framework is organized around these four fundamental concerns. A section is dedicated to defining each fundamental concern, specifically addressing it through relevant FSTs and identifying the responding organization’s role in alignment with the concern. Additionally, this revision incorporates the four fundamental concerns into the response partner FST list.

Response Partner Matrix

To assist in avoiding overlap and identifying potential gaps in services provided by responding agencies, this document introduces a matrix to provide a perspective regarding primary and supporting organizations that may have related roles. The matrix underscores the significance of building collaborative partnerships with such entities, particularly in the planning and preparedness efforts of plan development, to ensure a coordinated response when plans are executed and to ensure that the needs of family members are appropriately addressed.

The Response Partner Matrix, below, provides a visual representation of the intersection of the fundamental concerns of families and the existence of a role in addressing such by the associated entity listed on the left. An “✓” in an intersecting cell in the matrix indicates the presence of an FST, related to a fundamental concern, for which a particular organization has a role. As the matrix illustrates, several organizations have FSTs and overlapping roles. It is important for these organizations to work together to avoid a duplication of efforts when addressing each fundamental concern.

FIGURE 2. Response Partner Matrix

Associated Response Partners	 Notification of Involvement	 Victim Accounting	 Information and Resources	 Personal Effects
NTSB	✓	✓	✓	✓
Air Carrier	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red Cross			✓	
DOS	✓	✓	✓	✓
FBI		✓	✓	✓
DHHS		✓		✓
DOD		✓		
FEMA			✓	
FPS			✓	

Coordination and Integration with Local Response Organizations

Coordination is essential when responding to aviation accidents. Federal family assistance legislation does not specifically address the roles of local, state, tribal, or federal responding agencies or entities beyond the NTSB, the air carrier, and the Red Cross. However, it is important that all responding entities coordinate and integrate within the existing local, state, tribal, and non-governmental agencies’ emergency response operations to address the needs of family members. Local response agencies assume the same roles as they would for any mass casualty incident (MCI) or emergency event within their jurisdiction utilizing local emergency operations plans, resources, and mutual aid coordination.

To avoid duplication of efforts and resources, collaboration is imperative during the planning and response phases for a successful family assistance operation. Local jurisdiction plans may include the establishment of temporary facilities and the deployment of resources to accommodate support to survivors and family members

within their jurisdiction. The affected air carrier may also have plans established for similar facilities to fulfill their legislated obligations for family assistance. The importance of pre-accident collaboration between local agencies and air carriers during the planning phase cannot be overstated.

Although not required by legislation, consolidating support services into designated locations has been proven to be extremely beneficial. These facilities provide a structure within the response operation, ease the burden of information gathering and sharing, and provide for safe and secure methods for providing family assistance.

Friends and Relatives Centers

The fundamental concerns of families who believe they have a loved one involved in an accident begin immediately. Family members will have many questions and will likely use a variety of methods to obtain support in finding answers. Often, this includes family members traveling to the location they might expect their loved one(s) to be (for example, departure and arrival airports, hospitals, or the accident scene, if known). Friends and Relatives Centers (FRCs) provide a location where family members may receive immediate assistance in obtaining initial information about the accident and their loved one's involvement. Temporary and minimal support services including basic needs, emotional support, and health services should be provided. See [Appendix 7](#) for more information related to family assistance operations.

Passenger Gathering Area

Survivors of an accident may require or desire assistance beyond initial life-safety triage and assessment, including secondary triage, victim accounting, customs and border processing, emotional support, and information sharing. Gathering passengers involved in an accident (other than those transported to medical treatment facilities and those fatally injured) to a secure location where these services and functions can be accomplished will facilitate the provision of family assistance services to these individuals. Keeping in mind potential sensitivities between different affected passenger groups, it may be prudent to establish separate areas based on these sensitivities (for example, separating passengers and operating crew into a passenger gathering area [PGA] and a crew gathering area (CGA)). See [Appendix 7](#) for more information related to family assistance operations.

Reunification Centers

As information is obtained and cross-referenced, if family members gathered in an FRC are seeking to reunite with passengers known to be gathered in a PGA or CGA (and

vice versa), reunification of such individuals/groups should not take place in view of others gathered in those same areas. A private, separate area (reunification center [RC]) is recommended to bring together those able to be reunited with their loved ones. See [Appendix 7](#) for more information related to family assistance operations.

Family Assistance Center

When appropriate, temporary support facilities (FRCs, PGAs, and RCs) may transition to a single family assistance center (FAC) to support ongoing family assistance operations near the accident location. Ongoing family assistance needs may include the continued provision of safety, security, physiological needs (food, sleep, clothing), emotional, psychological, and spiritual care, information about the victim recovery and identification process and the investigation. See [Appendix 11](#) for more information related to the FAC.

The Role of the Joint Family Support Operations Center

In the aftermath of an aviation accident that meets the criteria established under 49 U.S.C. §1136, the NTSB will establish a Joint Family Support Operations Center (JFSOC) to coordinate the family assistance operation. The JFSOC (for example, in person, virtual, or both) is a collaborative workspace where participating organizations are brought together to monitor, plan, and execute a family assistance operation, maximizing all available resources. JFSOCs are designed to address the challenges of interagency communication and the sharing of information necessary for a successful family assistance operation. For more information related to JFSOC operations and a JFSOC's relationship to the larger family assistance operation, see *Concern 3: Information and Resources*, as well as [Appendix 8](#).

JFSOC Coordination Call

Ideally, prior to deploying a response team to an aviation accident that meets the criteria established under 49 U.S.C. §1136, the NTSB TDA will organize a JFSOC coordination call with relevant responding organizations. The purpose of this call is to establish communication as soon as practicable among the NTSB, the air carrier, the Red Cross, and key family assistance operation stakeholders to gain situational awareness regarding initial family assistance efforts and the accident response in general. Although participants on the call may vary based on the nature of the accident, key stakeholders should include representatives from local, state, tribal or federal responding organizations supporting the response. Bringing these stakeholders together provides an opportunity to verify and introduce points of contact, review currently available

information, confirm applicability of federal family assistance legislation, and review the operational status for all organizations participating in the call. The call also serves as an opportunity to deconflict duplicated efforts and commitment of resources, identify subsequent action items and initiate planning for the initial JFSOC meeting. See [Appendix 8](#) for more information regarding the JFSOC coordination call.

Virtual Family Assistance Operations/Remote Information Centers

Not all family assistance operations are likely to occur within the local jurisdiction or within the confines of the physical locations mentioned above. Family members gathered at hospitals, for example, may wish to participate in informational briefings provided at an FAC, but may not want to leave the hospital. Family members may be unable or may not want to travel to the established facilities but may still wish to receive the services (such as information or emotional, psychological, and spiritual care) offered there. Remote information centers (RICs), and virtual family assistance operations should be considered by those with responsibility for the provision of family assistance services.

Response organizations should consider the specific circumstances of an accident when determining the types of facilities and services that need to be established or made available, as well as the method(s) for delivery. Consideration should also be given to the potential for needing to adjust the delivery methods based on the duration of the family assistance response.

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Fundamental Concern 1: Notification of Involvement

Overview

Initial notification of involvement is communication made to an individual that someone close to them has been involved in an accident. The ADFAA requires this notification to be provided through a plan established by the air carrier; it can be accomplished proactively by outbound calls, once a person has been confirmed to have been involved (whether or not all individuals involved have been verified, and whether or not the person's status or location is known); it can also be accomplished reactively, by responding to inquiries from family members when there is reason to believe that their loved one(s) may have been involved in the accident (for example, their name appears on a passenger list/manifest, either preliminary or confirmed).

It should be noted that notification of involvement is different from notification of death. The medicolegal jurisdiction (medical examiner or coroner) or law enforcement agency is responsible for performing death notifications which typically occur after a victim's identification has been confirmed.

The *Final Report - Task Force on Assistance to Families of Aviation Disasters*¹⁷ emphasized that the moments after an aviation accident occurs are often the most crucial for family members. The initial interaction with associated response organizations (including air carriers) directly influences family members' perception of the entire family assistance response to the accident.

Acknowledging that the information (for example, emergency contacts) an air carrier may have readily available about their passengers following an accident may be minimal and may require the commitment of significant time and resources to consolidate, this should not delay the activation of a notification process. Family members will likely attempt to establish contact with the air carrier immediately after learning of an accident. To facilitate prompt contact, in accordance with the AFDAA, air carriers are required to both publicize a reliable toll-free telephone number and to provide suitably trained staff to handle calls received from the families of the passengers.¹⁸ Air carriers should plan to effectively manage inbound and outbound calls immediately following an accident, while the passenger list/manifest reconciliation process is underway and while efforts are being made by the air carrier to gather

¹⁷ <https://www.nts.gov/tda/TDADocuments/Task-Force-On-Assistance-To-Families-Of-Aviation-Disasters.pdf>

¹⁸ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(1\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(1\)](#)

appropriate contact information for the families of their passengers. The affected air carrier should also consider other communication channels available to both the air carrier and the families of passengers. Although the toll-free telephone number is a legislated requirement, family members may attempt to engage with the air carrier through other means, including in person, email, website, social media, or other public-facing platforms.

The Act requires air carriers to have an established process in place for providing timely notification to families of passengers involved in an aircraft accident, as well as any persons affected on the ground, prior to providing any public notice of the names of passengers aboard the aircraft.¹⁹ Regardless of the method by which family members are notified of their loved one's involvement in an accident, initial notification of involvement can be extremely difficult for those receiving this news. Individuals delivering these communications, as well as those receiving inquiries about an accident should, therefore, be prepared and suitably trained in delivering this type of information. If air carriers require assistance from the Red Cross or any other suitably trained individuals when notifying family members, a mutually agreed-upon plan should be established and exercised in advance of an accident.

In addition to notifying families of passengers involved in an accident, air carriers must provide written notice to the owner of any structure or other property regarding its liability for any property damage, along with the means for obtaining compensation.²⁰

¹⁹ [49 U.S.C §41113\(b\)\(2\), \(b\)\(9\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(2\); \(c\)\(9\)](#)

²⁰ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(17\)](#) and [§41313 \(c\)\(17\)](#)

Response Partner Matrix

The following matrix highlights the roles of response partners associated with the fundamental concern of families of passengers: notification of involvement. An “✓” in an intersecting cell in the matrix indicates the presence of related FSTs for each organization.

FIGURE 3. Response Partner Matrix (Concern 1 - Notification of Involvement)

Associated Response Partners	 Notification of Involvement	 Victim Accounting	 Information and Resources	 Personal Effects
NTSB	✓	✓	✓	✓
Air Carrier	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red Cross			✓	
DOS	✓	✓	✓	✓
FBI		✓	✓	✓
DHHS		✓		✓
DOD		✓		
FEMA			✓	
FPS			✓	

Family Support Tasks (Concern 1 - Notification of Involvement)

The FSTs associated with initial notification of involvement are listed below, organized by response partner.

NTSB FSTs

- Inform the air carrier(s) involved in the aircraft accident regarding the applicability of 49 U.S.C. §41113 or 49 U.S.C. §41313.
- Inform the DOT regarding the applicability of 49 U.S.C. §41113 or 49 U.S.C. §41313.
- Request from the air carrier a copy of the passenger list/manifest, based on the best available information at the time of the request, with the names of the passengers who were aboard the accident aircraft.
- Designate and publicize the name and telephone number of a director of family support services (NTSB TDA chief or other TDA-appointed representative) to serve as a federal point of contact (POC) for the families of passengers involved in the accident and to act as a liaison between the air carrier and the families of

passengers. The NTSB's TDA division addresses family members' requests for information regarding the agency's investigation, family assistance operations, and services provided by the air carrier and the Red Cross.

- If requested, provide information on the passenger list/manifest about a specific passenger to their family, to the extent that the NTSB TDA representative considers appropriate. Advise family members of air carrier's toll-free number. Notify the air carrier POC of family contact information.
- Ensure that family members receive the air carrier's toll-free number and are made aware of support services being provided by the air carrier and the Red Cross.
- Monitor open-source media to determine when the air carrier toll-free number becomes publicly available.
 - Publicize the air carrier's toll-free number through NTSB social media platforms.
 - Call the air carrier's toll-free number to verify its operational status and to determine how information is being provided to callers seeking information.
- Maintain communication with the air carrier to remain current regarding the status of family notification (for example, number of family groups notified, number for which notification was attempted, number still pending notification). See [Appendix 10](#) for additional information.

Air Carrier FSTs

- In addition to the accident notification requirements under 49 C.F.R. §830.5,²¹ as soon as practicable, complete and submit the NTSB TDA Accident Notification Supplemental Information Worksheet (see [Appendix 5](#)) to assistance@ntsb.gov.
- Provide the NTSB and the Red Cross NTSB and/or JFSOC Liaison, immediately upon request, a copy of the passenger list/manifest, based on the best available information at the time of the request.
 - Provide subsequent versions of the passenger list/manifest to the NTSB upon request and at regular intervals as agreed upon by the air carrier and the NTSB, based on the specific circumstances of the accident. The information contained on the passenger list/manifest should be the best available information at the time the request is made or at the agreed upon intervals. See [Appendix 6](#) for additional information. Provide updated passenger list/manifests to the Red Cross NTSB and/or JFSOC Liaison (if initially requested) at the same time as those provided to the NTSB.

²¹ [49 C.F.R. §830.5](#)

- Establish a process for notifying the family members regarding the passengers' involvement in the accident.²²
- If the air carrier requires the utilization of the Red Cross or any other suitably trained individuals to initiate notification, a mutually agreed-upon plan should be established in advance and included in the carrier's plan filed with the NTSB and the DOT.
- Notify family members (in person, if practicable)²³ as soon as possible to verify whether a passenger was aboard the aircraft (even if the names of all passengers have not yet been verified).
- Establish a toll-free telephone number to allow family members to contact the air carrier directly for information regarding the carrier's assistance to family members. Consider the following:
 - Modify the normal "hold" message. Similar considerations should be made for "on-hold" soundtrack(s) for phone lines that may receive incoming calls following an accident to eliminate music, sales information, and similar non-accident-related messages. Similar considerations should be made for all public interfaces.
 - Ensure that sufficient staff are designated to manage an increase in call volume from family members immediately following an accident.
 - Ensure that the toll-free call center staff are adequately trained and prepared to work with affected family members.
 - Establish a process for efficiently gathering critical information from callers to aid in timely notification and to facilitate subsequent engagement regarding the family assistance operation and available services.
 - Gather and share contact data collected from affected family members both internally and with federal, state, tribal and local response organizations (for example, data from multiple call centers, multiple family members of the same passenger) through the JFSOC.
 - Establish a process to follow up with callers who have been identified as affected family members.
 - Determine and share information about services that will be made immediately available to affected family members in the aftermath of an accident.
 - Ensure the accessibility of information to callers with varying access and functional needs (for example, speakers of languages other than English,

²² The air carrier is under no obligation to publicly release the names of passengers; however, if the air carrier elects to do so, the air carrier should provide notification to family members prior to releasing this information. The air carrier should give family members adequate time to notify other family members prior to public release.

²³ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(3\)](#)

- those who rely on teletypewriter (TTY) technology, and those who may have difficulty in understanding or processing complex information).
- Establish a plan to decommission the toll-free number as the family assistance operation transitions from an active response to long-term assistance.
 - Publicize the toll-free number and consider using both traditional and digital media outlets to emphasize the following information:
 - The name and accident flight number of the air carrier(s) involved. Provide all partner and codeshare flight information.
 - The origination, connecting, and destination airports.
 - The toll-free number is for family members of passengers believed to be on the flight.
 - The air carrier has activated its family assistance program in response to the accident and encourage families to contact the air carrier through the toll-free number to receive additional information and support.
 - Inform families of passengers at the time of initial notification (or soon thereafter) about the involvement of the Red Cross and their available services and provide reminders throughout the operation about these services to address any needs for psychological, emotional, and spiritual care.
 - Coordinate directly with the Red Cross JFSOC liaison to address support requests for psychological, emotional, and spiritual care as they are received by the air carrier's family assistance teams or other sources and ensure that adequate facility space is available for providing these services and for accommodating support services staff.
 - Provide the DOS the information outlined in 14 C.F.R. § 243.7²⁴ if the accident meets the criteria established under 14 C.F.R. §243.11²⁵ and provide DOS representatives information about any foreign passengers to facilitate interaction with appropriate foreign embassies.
 - Establish a plan for providing media updates regarding the air carrier's family assistance operation. Consider providing information regarding:
 - Availability of the toll-free number.
 - Establishment of family assistance facilities.

²⁴ [14 C.F.R. §243.7](#)

²⁵ [14 C.F.R. §243.11](#)

- Progress of the family notification process (the number of families notified, the number of families remaining to be notified, and/or completion of the process).
- Information regarding resources available to passengers' families.

DOS FSTs

- Provide official notification to foreign governments of citizens involved in the accident. Such notifications will take place after obtaining necessary information on foreign passengers from the air carrier.
- Assist the air carrier in notifying U.S. citizens who may reside in, or who are traveling, outside the U.S. that a member of their family has been involved in an aviation accident.

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Fundamental Concern 2: Victim Accounting and Identification

Overview

Upon learning of their loved one's involvement in an accident, a family member's primary concern will shift to locating their loved one. The overall process for locating survivors and identifying fatally injured passengers is known as victim accounting. Previous NTSB guidance focused largely on all-fatal accidents (those with no surviving passengers or crew), where the presiding medicolegal jurisdiction is principally responsible for victim accounting. The NTSB's understanding of family assistance operations has evolved to reflect the current emergency management approaches for MCI response. MCIs pose a different set of victim accounting challenges because of the rapid movement of survivors away from the scene. This framework focuses on MCIs.

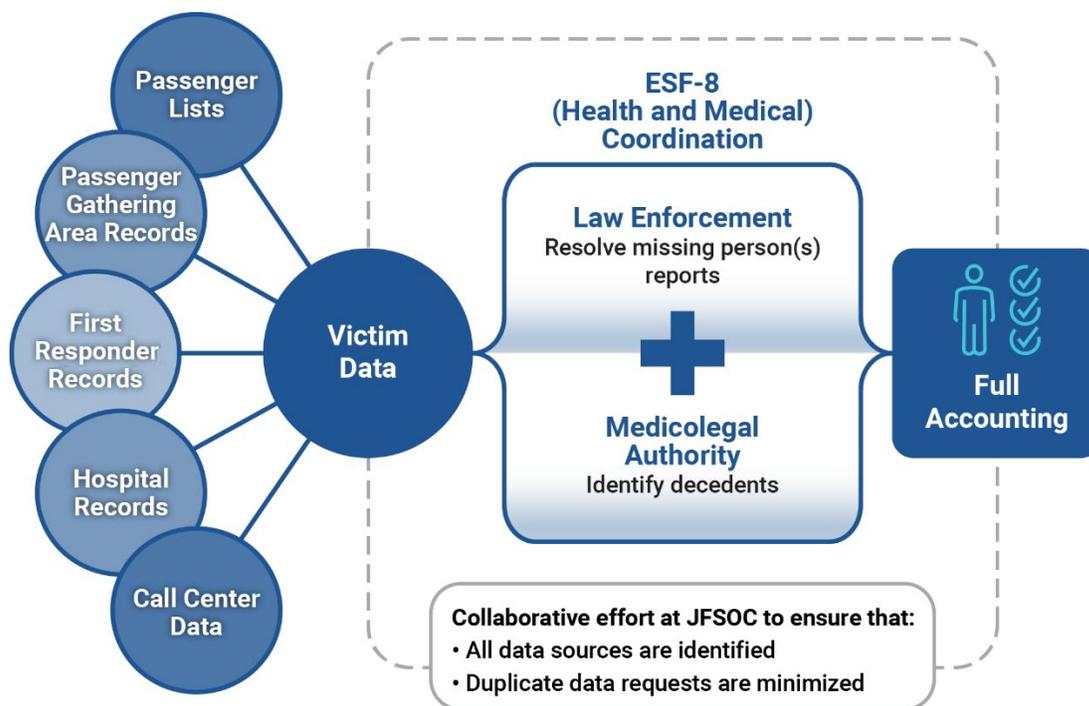
The jurisdiction where the accident occurred is ultimately responsible for accounting for all fatalities and survivors of the MCI; however, the process requires collaboration between the air carrier and the presiding public safety agencies – office of emergency management (for purposes of this document, OEM – also refers to emergency management agency [EMA], emergency management office [EMO], and airport authority/emergency management), fire department, aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF), emergency medical services (EMS), law enforcement, the medicolegal authority (medical examiner/coroner), public health authorities and hospitals that have received patients. Air carriers are essential in this process and hold critical information—the passenger list/manifest—that serves as the foundation for the victim accounting process. It is important for air carriers to develop an understanding of the mass casualty response and identify the agency(ies) that will be coordinating the victim accounting operation; develop a process to consider requests for the passenger list/manifest; and provide relevant information (number of persons aboard, names of passengers and crew, contact information for survivors and family members) to appropriate agencies.

Depending on the size and scope of the accident, the victim accounting process will have unique complexities and involve many different organizations.

Victim accounting requires the integration of data from multiple sources including, but not limited to, local law enforcement, OEM, medical examiner/coroner, emergency support function-8 (ESF-8), PGA and hospitals.²⁶

The following graphic may be useful in helping response partners to better understand the interconnectedness between themselves and other agencies in meeting the needs of survivors and family members. Timely sharing of information allows for the reunification of family members with survivors and aids in the efficient identification of the fatalities by the presiding medicolegal jurisdiction.

FIGURE 4. Victim Accounting Process



The primary outcomes of victim accounting are the reunification of survivors with their families and the recovery, identification, and return of the deceased to their families. As a result of victim accounting, family assistance response agencies can offer equal access to information and services to all survivors and family members.

²⁶ Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) group governmental and certain private sector capabilities into an organizational structure to provide support, resources, program implementation, and services needed to save lives, protect property and the environment, restore essential services and critical infrastructure, and help victims and communities return to normal following domestic incidents. ESF-8 is the public health and medical services position.

The Role of the NTSB

The NTSB has the responsibility to coordinate with the air carrier, Red Cross, and federal agencies to integrate within the broader local family assistance response effort. To meet this responsibility, the NTSB works with the local jurisdiction to determine the relevant responding agencies, their specific roles in the response, and if one exists, the central coordinating agency responsible for the overall victim accounting process.

To help navigate the local jurisdiction's response to an aircraft accident, the NTSB will coordinate with the air carrier to gather information as previously described in *Concern 1: Initial Notification of Involvement*. The NTSB will contact first response agencies as soon as practicable following notification of an aircraft accident to gain situational awareness including determining which agency(ies) are involved in the victim accounting process and connecting them with the air carrier and the Red Cross, if they have not previously been in contact. Given the size and scope of a response, the local jurisdiction may rely on support from the NTSB and other federal agencies, while the air carrier and the Red Cross rely upon the information gathered through collaboration with the local response community.

The NTSB has the primary responsibility for facilitating the recovery and identification of fatally injured passengers involved in an aircraft accident.²⁷ To fulfill this obligation, the NTSB establishes contact with the presiding medicolegal authority after notification of an aviation accident to discuss the size, scope, and characteristics of the accident, the capabilities and resources of the local jurisdiction, and the availability of federal support. To ensure adequate resources for the presiding medicolegal authority to fulfill their responsibilities, the NTSB maintains agreements with the FBI, the DHHS, and the DOD to support the identification operation. As part of a collaborative effort, when assistance is needed, the NTSB also helps integrate federal resources into existing state and local mass fatality response teams. Additionally, the NTSB may serve in an advisory role to the presiding medicolegal authority, sharing practical experiences gained by responding to numerous mass casualty and mass fatality accidents.

The Role of the Air Carrier

The air carrier has a key role in the victim accounting effort: reconciling and disseminating the passenger list/manifest. As described above, the passenger list/manifest is integral both in determining the identities of passengers aboard and in providing information for family members seeking to confirm their loved one was

²⁷ [49 U.S.C. §1136](#)

involved in the accident. Upon request, the air carrier must provide a copy of the passenger list/manifest to the NTSB, whether or not the names have been verified.²⁸ The air carrier should develop procedures for addressing requests from the local response community for the passenger list/manifest in support of victim accounting efforts. The air carrier may contact the NTSB TDA during the response phase to discuss requests they receive for the passenger list/manifest. For additional guidance, please review *NTSB's Guidance for Passenger List/Manifest Distribution & Control* ([Appendix 6](#)).

Additionally, the air carrier can assist the local response community with reunifying family members with passengers once the victim accounting process has determined the location and status of each surviving passenger involved. The information compiled by the air carrier through various public interfaces, including the required toll-free telephone number, will help connect the responsible local, state, tribal, and federal agencies with the families of passengers seeking information regarding the location of, and reunification with, survivors.

The Role of the Medicolegal Authority

The term *medicolegal authority* used in this document includes any medical examiner, coroner, justice of the peace, or other official who oversees the death investigation following an accident. The presiding medicolegal authority is responsible for the recovery, identification, death notification, and disposition of fatalities. The recovery process typically includes the search, detection, documentation, collection, transportation, and storage of human remains. While recovery operations are ongoing, the medicolegal authority will begin interviewing family members to gather antemortem data including the collection of DNA reference samples from biological family members. Additionally, the medicolegal authority will collect postmortem data from the remains.

Positive identification requires comparison of antemortem records and samples with similar information collected from the remains. Following positive identification, the medicolegal authority will perform official death notifications to the legal NOK or utilize law enforcement. The NOK will decide on burial or disposition arrangements requiring further coordination among the medicolegal authority, the air carrier's service provider for transportation of human remains, and the families' designated funeral homes. Aviation accidents resulting in fragmentation of human remains adds additional operational complexity. The medicolegal authority will determine the need for reassociation of human remains - bringing together the disassociated remains of

²⁸ [49 U.S.C. §1136](#), [§41113\(b\)\(4\)](#), and [§41313\(c\)\(4\)](#)

fatalities. When reassociation is necessary, the medicolegal authority may need to make additional notifications to the NOK, depending on their notification preferences. Human remains that are unidentified at the conclusion of the identification process, known as *group remains*, also require disposition. Prior to disposition of any group remains, the medicolegal authority should consult with the families.

Medicolegal authorities throughout the U.S. vary greatly in available resources (such as staff and facility size) and capabilities. Some may be able to manage the response to an aviation accident with existing staff and facilities while others, may require assistance. To ensure adequate resources for the presiding medicolegal authority to accomplish their responsibilities, the NTSB will work with the medicolegal authority to determine the need for additional federal resources to support identification of the fatalities and to integrate the federal resources into existing local and state mass fatality response operations.

Response Partner Matrix

The following matrix highlights the roles of response partners associated with the fundamental concern of families of passengers: victim accounting. An "✓" in an intersecting cell in the matrix indicates the presence of related FSTs for each organization.

FIGURE 5. Response Partner Matrix (Concern 2 - Victim Accounting)

Associated Response Partners	 Notification of Involvement	 Victim Accounting	 Information and Resources	 Personal Effects
NTSB	✓	✓	✓	✓
Air Carrier	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red Cross			✓	
DOS	✓	✓	✓	✓
FBI		✓	✓	✓
DHHS		✓		✓
DOD		✓		
FEMA			✓	
FPS			✓	

Family Support Tasks (Concern 2 - Victim Accounting and Identification)

The FSTs associated with victim accounting are listed below, organized by response partner.

NTSB FSTs

- Encourage response organizations to share information about the whereabouts of fatalities and the whereabouts and welfare of survivors with the air carrier, the Red Cross, and the NTSB as part of the victim accounting process.
- Request from the air carrier a copy of the passenger list/manifest, based on the best available information at the time of the request, with the names of the passengers aboard the aircraft involved in the accident.
- Provide family members with contact information for local law enforcement and/or the presiding medicolegal authority to answer questions and concerns regarding victim accounting, identification processes and reunification efforts.

- Coordinate with the air carrier and local jurisdiction to help determine the appropriate agency(ies) to receive passenger list/manifest data when multiple requests are made to the air carrier.
- Facilitate the federal response in the recovery and identification of fatally injured passengers involved in the aircraft accident.
- Provide an NTSB toll-free number and email address to families of passengers for them to obtain information on the accident investigation and the victim identification and recovery process.
- Discuss with the presiding medicolegal authority the capabilities and resources of their office staff for conducting fatality identification based on the size and scale of the accident, including possible coordination with the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) for DNA identification.
- Notify the DHHS to initiate the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) and the appropriate DMORT personnel, supplies, and equipment to assist in the management of fatality identification, as needed.
- Facilitate coordination between DOS and the presiding medicolegal authority to support fatality recovery and identification efforts for foreign passengers, as applicable.
- Inform the presiding medicolegal authority about the role of the Red Cross and the support services available to families, to include coordinating efforts for memorial services associated with individuals or group remains interment and psychological, emotional, and spiritual care.

Air Carrier FSTs

- Ensure the provision of an adequate number of private rooms or space in the FAC for families of passengers to meet with the presiding medicolegal authority or designee, for the authority to obtain antemortem information and/or the collection of DNA reference samples. These rooms can also be used for other family assistance support services when the medicolegal authority has completed their process.
- Inform the presiding medicolegal authority about the air carrier's assistance that is available to families of passengers related to the disposition of human remains. If assistance is being provided via a service provider, ensure that connections are made between the family and the service provider.
- Provide the NTSB, and the Red Cross NTSB and/or JFSOC Liaison upon request, a copy of the passenger list/manifest, based on the best available information at the time of the request.
 - Provide subsequent versions of the passenger list/manifest to the NTSB upon request and at regular intervals as agreed upon by the air carrier and the NTSB, based on the specific circumstances of the accident. The information contained on the passenger list/manifest should be the best

available information at the time the request is made or at the agreed upon intervals. See [Appendix 6](#) for additional information. Provide updated passenger list/manifests to the Red Cross NTSB and/or JFSOC Liaison (if initially requested) at the same time as those provided to the NTSB.

- Develop procedures to consider and respond to additional requests for the passenger list/manifest from the local response community. See [Appendix 6](#) for distribution guidance.
- Ensure the publicized toll-free telephone number remains operable with sufficient capacity to handle the anticipated call volume to collect contact information of family members of passengers.
- Coordinate adequate private spaces or rooms within the FAC, or other suitable location, for the presiding medicolegal authority, the Red Cross, and other family assistance operation organizations to communicate privately with families of passengers. These spaces should be equipped with sufficient technology to allow for virtual meetings (for example, conference calls and web-based video conferences).
- Consult with the family of each fatally injured passenger in coordination with the medicolegal authority about available resources related to the disposition of human remains.
- Inform families of passengers at the time of initial notification (or soon thereafter) about the involvement of the Red Cross and their available services and provide reminders throughout the operation about these services to address any needs for psychological, emotional, and spiritual care.
- Coordinate directly with the Red Cross JFSOC liaison to address support requests for psychological, emotional, and spiritual care as they are received by the air carrier family assistance teams or other sources and ensure that adequate facility space is available to provide these services and to accommodate support services staff.
- Coordinate with the Red Cross spiritual care staff to address family member requests for memorial services.

DOS FSTs

- Assist the presiding medicolegal authority in acquiring the necessary information to facilitate the identification of foreign national fatalities and to complete death certificates.
- Assist in obtaining dental and medical records and DNA reference samples from families of fatalities of foreign nationals.

FBI FSTs

- Provide the NTSB, upon request, an FBI Evidence Response Team (ERT), and other FBI Laboratory assets to assist with fatality documentation and identification as directed by the presiding medicolegal authority.

DHHS FSTs

- Provide the resources of the NDMS, DMORT, the Victim Information Center (VIC) team, and other fatality management personnel, supplies, and equipment to assist the presiding medicolegal authority and the NTSB with the examination and identification of fatalities.
- Provide, if necessary, a Disaster Portable Morgue Unit (DPMU) and the necessary personnel, equipment, and supplies to augment the capabilities of the presiding medicolegal authority.
- Follow the *DMORT Standard Operating Procedures for National Transportation Safety Board Activations*.
- Assign the necessary DMORT personnel, based on necessary skills and existing capabilities, to assist the presiding medicolegal authority with fatality identification and mortuary services.
- Monitor the status of all incoming antemortem records, including dental, medical, and DNA data, to ensure that all records have been received. Take steps to obtain the missing records and radiographs.
- Use a specially trained VIC team to interview families of passengers, both on- and off-site, regarding antemortem identification and disposition of human remains.
- Coordinate with the presiding medicolegal authority to integrate qualified personnel into the morgue operation.
- Assist the presiding medicolegal authority in notifying families of passengers of positive identification, including an explanation of how identification was determined, if necessary.
- Ensure the accuracy of the chain of custody by reviewing documentation and human remains prior to their release to the designated funeral director.
- Assist the presiding medicolegal authority with the reassociation of human remains following the identification process.
- Provide the NTSB with contact information for the NOK, gathered from the antemortem interview.
- Employ a standard antemortem questionnaire and disposition-of-remains form that can be adapted to meet local medical examiner and state requirements. The form will be used to obtain directions from the lawfully authorized NOK regarding their wishes for human remains that may later be identified as those of their family member. **Note:** Information collected from families of passengers is strictly

confidential and is ultimately under the control of the presiding medicolegal authority.

DOD FSTs

- Provide the use of a military installation, such as the Charles C. Carson Center for Mortuary Affairs located at Dover Air Force Base, in support of mortuary operations, if requested.
- Provide resources from AFMES and AFDIL to assist in the identification effort and to conduct appropriate DNA comparison testing on specimens submitted by the presiding medicolegal authority. **Note:** AFMES and AFDIL personnel may travel to the accident location to assist with victim identification.
- Provide available medical and dental records and DNA reference samples of fatalities who may have antemortem records from prior or current military service.

Fundamental Concern 3: Information and Resources

Overview

Immediately following an aircraft accident, families of passengers may seek answers to many questions. The *Final Report from the Task Force on Assistance to Families of Aviation Disasters*²⁹ describes the confusion that followed for many family members upon learning of an accident and their need to know the next steps in the process. Questions like, “What do we do now? What comes next? What happens long-term? To whom can we turn for answers?” were common among the survivors and the families of passengers involved.

In the immediate aftermath of an aircraft accident, it is challenging both to determine what resources are available and ensure that the families of passengers are aware of these resources and how to access them. A major function of the JFSOC is to bring together the responding organizations to discuss roles, capabilities, and available resources to address the evolving needs of the families in a coordinated manner. See [Appendix 8](#) for additional information about the functions of the JFSOC and these roles, capabilities, and resources.

Depending on the circumstances of the accident, the associated response, and the resources available, various means of delivery may be used to provide services to family members. As a part of the local jurisdiction’s response plan, an FRC, PGA, or RC may be established in the immediate aftermath along with activation of local disaster relief organizations (like their local Red Cross chapter) to provide immediate support until another facility can be established to address needs in the longer term. If possible, the air carrier should engage with local jurisdictions in the planning phase to develop awareness of their response plans. This may not always be possible, but at the very least, the air carrier should be aware that the jurisdiction may have a family assistance plan in place and may be activating a response. The air carrier should attempt to establish contact with the jurisdiction to coordinate efforts, which can be facilitated during the JFSOC coordination call and subsequent meetings. Additionally, the Red Cross should inform the NTSB and air carrier during these coordination efforts of any local response activation or involvement on behalf of the local jurisdiction. See [Appendix 8](#) for more information.

²⁹ <https://www.nts.gov/tda/TDADocuments/Task-Force-On-Assistance-To-Families-Of-Aviation-Disasters.pdf>

The air carrier should coordinate with the Red Cross to ensure that adequate space is available to provide necessary services and staff and to ensure that families have privacy. In some situations, services may be delivered virtually if a physical center is not necessary or possible. Virtual delivery may also be used to aid family members traveling to the accident location and those who may be unable or who may decide not to travel to the accident location or visit the physical FAC (for example, families who wish to remain at a hospital with their injured loved one[s]).

Response Partner Matrix

The following matrix highlights the roles of response partners associated with the fundamental concern of families of passengers: information and resources. An “✓” in an intersecting cell in the matrix indicates the presence of related FSTs for each organization.

FIGURE 5. Response Partner Matrix (Concern 3 - Information and Resources)

Associated Response Partners	 Notification of Involvement	 Victim Accounting	 Information and Resources	 Personal Effects
NTSB	✓	✓	✓	✓
Air Carrier	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red Cross			✓	
DOS	✓	✓	✓	✓
FBI		✓	✓	✓
DHHS		✓		✓
DOD		✓		
FEMA			✓	
FPS			✓	

Family Support Tasks (Concern 3 - Information and Resources)

The FSTs associated with the provision of information and resources are listed below, organized by response partner.

NTSB FSTs

- Designate the Red Cross as the organization with the primary responsibility for coordinating emotional care and support for the families of passengers involved

in an accident. Notify the Red Cross National Headquarters of the aircraft accident and their designation in accordance with 49 U.S.C. §1136.

- Organize and facilitate a JFSOC coordination call with the air carrier, the Red Cross, and other supporting federal, state, tribal, and local agencies as needed to become aware of the family assistance operation and response status.
- Coordinate and initiate requests for federal family assistance assets using MOAs/MOUs as determined necessary.
- Coordinate family assistance efforts with local response organizations and individuals, including the medical examiner, law enforcement, OEM, hospitals, and other responding organizations.
- Coordinate with DHS and FPS to provide law enforcement and security services at any federally leased, owned, or occupied facility, property, investigation site, operational area, asset, or other location owned, occupied, or secured by the federal government during the course of an NTSB investigation, hearing, meeting, or study, including facilities used for FACs, FRCs, and JFSOC operations and for press briefings, telecasts, and other functions.
- Coordinate through the NTSB Media Relations Division regarding family assistance efforts.
- Designate and publicize the name and telephone number of a director of family support services (NTSB TDA chief or other TDA-appointed representative) to serve as a federal POC for the families of passengers involved in the accident and to act as a liaison between the air carrier and the families of passengers. The NTSB's TDA Division addresses family members' requests for information regarding the agency's investigation, family assistance operations, and services provided by the air carrier and the Red Cross.
- Establish and maintain contact with families of passengers to keep them informed about support services, the accident investigation, and other accident investigation related concerns including relevant NTSB public hearings and meetings.
- Establish a JFSOC based upon available space in or near the FAC. Invite representatives of the air carrier's family assistance response team, the Red Cross liaisons and other response organizations (for example, medicolegal authority, hospital association, ESF-8 representative, etc.).
- Integrate the NTSB, the air carrier, the Red Cross, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the travel and logistical support needs of the families of passengers are being addressed, giving special consideration to security, the quality of hotel rooms and facilities, privacy, and access and functional needs.
- Organize and facilitate family briefings to ensure that the families of passengers are provided information to the maximum extent practicable prior to any NTSB

public briefing, about the accident, its causes, and any other findings from the NTSB's investigation.

- If the accident location remains under the control of the NTSB, assess the potential of a site visit for families of passengers. Accident scenes under the control of law enforcement officers require collaboration among the responsible agency, NTSB, air carrier, the Red Cross, and other support agencies. Management of the site visit should be coordinated through the JFSOC. See [Appendix 16](#) for site visit considerations.
- Determine whether a 30-day extension is required for the Red Cross as the designated organization to ensure access to services by families of passengers beyond 30 days after the accident has occurred.³⁰
- Within 45 days of the accident, monitor for and responds accordingly to any unsolicited communications from attorneys received by families of passengers.³¹
- Coordinate with the FBI Victim Services Division (VSD) on the provision of federal family assistance activities if the investigation determines that the accident is the result of an intentional criminal act.
- Inform families of passengers of NTSB public hearings and meetings pertaining to the investigation and provide information about attendance at the event.
- Ensure that briefings are made available simultaneously by electronic means for survivors/family members that are not able to attend briefings in person.
- Upon request, facilitate the sharing of contact information among survivors and/or family members.
- Coordinate an on-scene and post-response family assistance assurance review with the air carrier and the Red Cross to review the family assistance operation and legislative requirements and to identify challenges and lessons learned, with the goal of enhancing operating plans and procedures in the future.

Air Carrier FSTs

- Provide the DOS the information outlined in 14 C.F.R. § 243.7³² if the accident meets the criteria established under 14 C.F.R. §243.11³³ and provide the DOS representatives information about any foreign passengers to facilitate interaction with appropriate foreign embassies.

³⁰ [49 U.S.C. §1136\(g\)\(3\)](#)

³¹ [49 U.S.C. §1136\(g\)\(2\)](#)

³² <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-14/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-243/section-243.7>

³³ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-14/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-243?toc=1>

- Submit a plan to the NTSB and the DOT for addressing the needs of the families of passengers involved in an aircraft accident resulting in any loss of life.³⁴ See [Appendix 2](#) for submission guidance.
- Commit sufficient resources to carry out the filed plan to address the needs of passengers' families.³⁵
- Designate a representative of the security division to collaborate with the DHS FPS (with whom the NTSB has an MOU) and other law enforcement agencies (for example, local and state) to conduct a threat assessment to determine the necessary level of security.
- Provide adequate training to employees and agents (for example, gate, customer support, and reservations) to meet the needs of survivors and family members following an accident. Training topics should include, but are not limited to:
 - Federal transportation accident family assistance legislation.
 - The air carrier's roles and available resources.
 - The role of response partners, including the Red Cross.
 - The employee's and agent's specific role.
 - Psychological first aid, crisis response, and interpersonal communication and stress management.
- Secure private facilities at departure, arrival, connecting airports, and hubs, as needed, in coordination with the airport authority(ies) for use as family assistance facilities. Families of passengers may elect to gather at these locations while in transit to the accident location. Facilities established to support family assistance operations should be compliant with the ADA.³⁶
- Work with the local jurisdiction to secure a facility to serve as the FAC, considering size, services available, security, privacy, and proximity to the key elements of the family assistance operation. Make alternate accommodations to provide information and offer resources to families of passengers when a physical FAC is not established, or individuals elect not to travel to the primary FAC. Facilities established to support alternate accommodations should be ADA compliant.
- Ensure the accessibility of information to callers with varying access and functional needs (for example, speakers of languages other than English, those who rely on TTY technology, and those who may have difficulty in understanding or processing complex information).
- Establish a plan to decommission the toll-free number as the family assistance operation transitions from an active response to long-term assistance.

³⁴ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(a\)](#) and [§41313\(b\)](#)

³⁵ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(14\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(13\)](#)

³⁶ [42 U.S.C. §12102](#)

- Make provisions for a JFSOC to include meeting space, separate workspace, communication technologies, and logistical support for local, state, tribal, and federal response partners. If available, separate workspace may be made available for the NTSB and the Red Cross on a full- or part-time basis as needed.
- Designate an air carrier senior representative (see [Appendix 8](#)) who will serve as the representative to the NTSB's designated director of family support services. This person will oversee the air carrier's family assistance operation and may need to:
 - Travel to various locations, such as the accident location, healthcare facilities, medicolegal facilities, JFSOC, and FAC.
 - Address questions regarding the air carrier's Emergency Response Plan (for example, service providers, available resources, and limits to family assistance support).
 - Participate in, or coordinate the participation of, an alternative spokesperson for family briefings.
- Designate an air carrier family assistance coordinator who will serve as the primary POC regarding the air carrier's day-to-day family assistance operations. Depending upon the unique nature of the accident and the resources available from the family assistance operation partner, it may be necessary for one individual to take on multiple roles or to delegate specific tasks to other individuals within their organization. See [Appendix 8](#) for additional duties.
- Designate an air carrier JFSOC liaison, who will remain present in the JFSOC to coordinate the air carrier's ongoing family assistance operations. This person should have the authority to make decisions and commit resources³⁷ on behalf of the air carrier. See [Appendix 8](#) for additional duties.
- Assign a primary POC to the Red Cross JFSOC liaison to ensure that requests from families of passengers or survivors received by the air carrier for emotional, spiritual, and psychological care services or referrals are addressed, regardless of where the families or survivors are located. See [Appendix 8](#) for additional duties.
- Coordinate directly with the Red Cross JFSOC liaison to address support requests for psychological, emotional, and spiritual care as they are received by the air carrier's family assistance teams or other sources and ensure that adequate facility space is available for providing these services and for accommodating support services staff.
- Inform families of passengers at the time of initial notification (or soon thereafter) about the involvement of the Red Cross and their available services and provide reminders throughout the operation about these services to address any needs for psychological, emotional, and spiritual care.

³⁷ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(14\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(13\)](#)

- Review with the NTSB, the Red Cross, and other relevant stakeholders the travel and logistical support needs (for example, video, software, or other technological needs) of the families of passengers, giving special consideration to security, the quality of hotel rooms and facilities, privacy, equitable access, and functional needs.
- As part of broader FAC security, establish a badging system that uniquely identifies families of passengers for access within family assistance facilities. Considerations should be made regarding badging requirements for individuals who have a need to access family assistance facilities.
- Coordinate through the JFSOC badging requirements for support personnel; if necessary, consider development of a unique badging system to ensure proper identification and to allow access for other supporting agencies. In unique cases, the NTSB, in coordination with the air carrier, will decide on the layout and design of the badge(s).
- Coordinate adequate private spaces or rooms within the FAC, or other suitable location, for the presiding medicolegal authority, the Red Cross, and other family assistance operation organizations to communicate privately with families of passengers. These spaces should be equipped with sufficient technology to allow for virtual meetings (for example, conference calls and web-based video conferences).
- Provide a dedicated area in the FAC, or other suitable location, for the Red Cross to establish as an area for families and survivors to grieve privately.³⁸
- Provide a dedicated area in the FAC, or other suitable location, for the Red Cross to establish on-site temporary respite care for families who arrive with minors.
- Provide physical care and logistical support including, but not limited to, transportation, lodging, meals, security, communications, and incidental expenditures, to families of passengers who desire to travel to the accident location.³⁹ This may include the following:
 - Informing and making available air carrier personnel at departure, connecting, and arrival airports to offer assistance.
 - Informing gate agents and flight crews that families of passengers are aboard.
 - Seeking assistance from other carriers with a larger presence at airports or transportation hubs where family members will be transiting.
 - When possible, tell family members about other available services (for example, the Red Cross) at first contact with the family.

³⁸ [49 U.S.C. §1136\(c\)\(2\)](#)

³⁹ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(11\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(11\)](#)

- Advise the NTSB and the Red Cross if family members have expressed that they would prefer not to engage directly with air carrier representatives so that alternative means of offering information and services are made available.
- Designate a contact person(s) to support families of passengers while they remain in the accident location. If possible, this person(s) should continue to be the air carrier interface with the family until the family returns to their residence, or until the conclusion of the on-site family assistance operation.
 - If the family has not previously received official notification, notify them of their loved one's involvement in the accident at an appropriate time as soon as possible after the family arrives in the accident location.
 - For family members not present in the accident location, establish a contact for remote support to ensure the delivery of daily updates during the on-site family assistance operation. Communicate any changes to the support structure between on-site/immediate support and long-term support to the TDA JFSOC liaison as soon as possible.
- Monitor the needs of injured passengers and their family members at each medical treatment facility through ongoing coordination with the Red Cross JFSOC liaison and other agency JFSOC liaisons to ensure access to information and resources.
- Ensure equal treatment of the families of revenue passengers, non-revenue passengers, and any other victim of the accident (including ground victims).⁴⁰
- Participate in the preparation and logistical coordination of an accident site visit for families of passengers if an accident site visit is determined appropriate by the NTSB.
- If appropriate and requested by the families of passengers, support the Red Cross in facilitating a memorial service for any future burial of unidentified human remains through coordination with the families, the local medicolegal authority, and other relevant local organizations.
- Consult with families of passengers about any air carrier-sponsored monument, including any inscriptions.
- Ensure that the transmission of any NTSB-conducted public hearing, or comparable proceeding, occurring at a location more than 80 miles from the accident location, is available to families of passengers at a location open to the public at both the origin city and destination city of the accident flight.
- Consult with the NTSB and the DOS on the provision of assistance to U.S. citizens within the United States in the event of an accident occurring outside of the United States that involves any loss of life.

⁴⁰ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(9\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(9\)](#)

- Coordinate directly with the FBI VSD regarding the provision of family assistance if the event is determined to be an intentional criminal act and the NTSB relinquishes investigative priority to the FBI.
- Provide reasonable compensation to the Red Cross for services they have provided if requested by the Red Cross National Headquarters.⁴¹
- Participate in the NTSB-coordinated family assistance assurances reviews, both on-scene and post-response, to review the family assistance operation and legislative requirements, resolve problems, and update operating plans and procedures.
- Provide physical care and logistical support including, but not limited to, transportation, lodging, meals, security, communications and incidental expenditures to families of passengers who desire to travel to the accident location.⁴² This may include the following:
 - Informing and making available air carrier personnel at departure, connecting, and arrival airports to offer assistance.
 - Informing gate agents and flight crews that families of passengers are aboard.
 - Seeking assistance from other carriers with a larger presence at airports or transportation hubs where family members will be transiting.
 - When possible, tell family members about other available services (for example, the Red Cross) at first contact with the family.
- Commit sufficient resources to carry out the filed plan to address the needs of the passengers' families.⁴³

Red Cross FSTs

- Designate an NTSB liaison familiar with federal family assistance legislation, the NTSB-Red Cross MOU, and the roles and responsibilities of the Red Cross, the NTSB, and the air carrier to support the regional or local Red Cross leadership team assigned to serve as the functional lead for emotional, spiritual, and psychological care services in accordance with the legislation.
- Assign a JFSOC liaison who will remain present in the JFSOC to coordinate ongoing family assistance operations on behalf of the Red Cross with the authority to make decisions on behalf of the organization. The liaison is responsible for participating in daily JFSOC status meetings, providing operational updates and the status of daily activities and services, disseminating information within their organization as appropriate, and maintaining up-to-date information regarding available Red Cross or other disaster relief organization staffing and services

⁴¹ [49 U.S.C §41113\(b\)\(11\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(11\)](#)

⁴² [49 U.S.C §41113\(b\)\(12\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(12\)](#)

⁴³ [49 U.S.C §41113\(b\)\(13\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(13\)](#)

within the FAC and any alternate locations (for example, hospitals).
See [Appendix 10](#) for the JFSOC status report form.

- Ensure that Red Cross staff and volunteers, and any other personnel approved by the Red Cross to provide support services, are familiar with the roles and responsibilities of the NTSB, the air carrier, the Red Cross, and other federal partners during a federal family assistance operation.
- Review with the air carrier, the NTSB, and other stakeholders the travel and logistical support being provided to the families of passengers by the air carrier, to provide subject matter expertise related to the access and functional needs of family members and survivors, to ensure needs are being adequately addressed.
- Coordinate with the air carrier liaison assigned to the Red Cross to address any requests from families of passengers or survivors for emotional, spiritual and/or psychological care services or referrals, regardless of their locations (for example, an FAC, hotel, hospitals, other medical treatment facilities, home).
- Assign Red Cross disaster mental health staff or volunteers to coordinate with local disaster relief organizations or agencies to address on-site emotional and psychological care requests during the JFSOC coordination phase.
- Assign Red Cross spiritual care staff or volunteers or coordinate with local disaster relief organizations or agencies to provide on-site spiritual care at the FAC, or other suitable location.
- Coordinate staffing activities with the air carrier to ensure the badging of support personnel providing emotional, spiritual, and psychological care services at the FAC, or other suitable location is adequate. If necessary, consider developing a unique badging system to ensure proper identification and allow access for other disaster relief organizations approved by the Red Cross.
- Coordinate with the air carrier to establish a dedicated area in the FAC, or other suitable location, for families and survivors to grieve privately⁴⁴ and provide appropriate staff, as necessary.
- Coordinate with the air carrier to establish a secure location within the FAC, or other suitable location, for on-site temporary respite care for survivors or families of passengers who arrive with minors, if determined necessary by the air carrier, the Red Cross, and the NTSB, and provide appropriate staff.
- Coordinate with the air carrier to identify adequate private spaces or rooms with technology and telephonic capabilities within the FAC, or other suitable location, necessary for providing on-scene, remote or virtual psychological, emotional, and spiritual care support to survivors and/or families of passengers.
- Manage spontaneous unaffiliated volunteers, as necessary.

⁴⁴ [49 U.S.C. §1136\(c\)\(2\)](#)

- Manage unsolicited donations through partnerships with local community entities experienced in donation management, as necessary.
- For resources other than psychological, emotional, and spiritual care support, coordinate with the air carrier to identify the availability for additional resources needed.
- Employ an accounting system to accurately record cost data in specific cost categories in case the Red Cross National Headquarters later requests reimbursement for their response from the air carrier.
- Facilitate a memorial service for any future burial of unidentified human remains through consultation with the families, the local medicolegal authority, the air carrier, and other relevant local organizations, when appropriate. Should these services occur outside of the JFSOC operational period, coordinate directly with the air carrier's identified individual(s) for ongoing support. Notify the NTSB TDA Red Cross coordinator of event date and time. See [Appendix 8](#) for more information.
- Participate in the preparation and logistical coordination of an accident site visit for survivors or families of passengers if an accident site visit is determined appropriate by the NTSB. Coordinate with the NTSB and the air carrier to ensure that staffing for psychological, emotional, and spiritual support is sufficient for the event.
- Participate in the NTSB-coordinated assurances reviews, both on-scene and post-response, to review the family assistance operation and legislative requirements, resolve problem areas, and update operating plans and procedures.
- Upon request, provide psychological, emotional, and spiritual care staff to public locations where any NTSB-conducted public hearing and meetings, or comparable proceeding, are being held or transmitted.
- Coordinate directly with the FBI VSD if an event is determined to be an intentional criminal act and the NTSB relinquishes investigative priority to the FBI. Coordinate directly with the FBI VSD to determine their ongoing involvement in the response under agreements the Red Cross has or makes with the FBI VSD.

DOS FSTs

- Assign a representative to the JFSOC to coordinate DOS-related issues, including obtaining records (dental and medical) and DNA reference samples from the families of foreign nationals, upon request. See [Appendix 8](#) for JFSOC information.
- Provide logistical and communications support in establishing contact with foreign authorities and individuals abroad to aid the air carrier, the Red Cross, and the NTSB in fulfilling their legislated duties, if possible.

- Provide adequate personnel to assist the federal family assistance operation for accidents involving significant numbers of foreign nationals, particularly for those accidents involving international flights.
- Provide interpretation and/or translation services (via DOS staff or a contracted provider) as needed to facilitate communications with the families of passengers and all interested parties, during family briefings.
- Assist foreign air carrier employees and families of foreign nationals (both fatalities and survivors) with entry into the U.S., extending or granting of visas to eligible applicants, as determined necessary.
- Respond to requests of the families of passengers for information and assistance, as appropriate.

FBI FSTs

- If the FBI is asked to support the local response community with family assistance services, assign a JFSOC liaison to coordinate with the NTSB, the air carrier, and the Red Cross to ensure integration into the federal family assistance operation.
- If the aviation accident is determined to be an intentional criminal act, assume responsibility for the investigation from the NTSB; the FBI VSD will assume federal family assistance activities, including the following:
 - Coordinate with the NTSB TDA to ensure an effective transfer of the federal family assistance operation to reduce any additional distress to families of passengers during the transition.
 - Coordinate with the air carrier and the Red Cross regarding any ongoing responsibilities or roles they have for a federal criminal investigation.

FEMA FSTs

- Assign a JFSOC liaison to coordinate with federal, state, and local officials concerning emergency management-related issues, if requested by the NTSB. See [Appendix 8](#) for more JFSOC information.
- Provide personnel and communication assets to facilitate communication from the accident location to the NTSB Response Operations Center (ROC), if requested by the NTSB.
- Provide personnel to assist in public information dissemination, including assistance in establishing and staffing external media support centers at the accident location, wreckage hangar, locations associated with the family assistance operation, airport(s) and other areas that may attract media interest, if requested by the NTSB.

FPS FSTs

- Coordinate with the NTSB to determine security vulnerabilities and countermeasure requirements for location(s) associated with the NTSB investigation (for example, the accident location, those associated with the family assistance operation, and those for media briefings).
- Conduct building and facility security risk assessments, upon request from the NTSB; provide a threat assessment and recommendations for ensuring the security of designated locations.
- Ensure that sufficient certified, trained, and equipped uniformed personnel are provided as deemed appropriate by the threat assessment, for each designated location.
- Provide protection for designated NTSB Board Members and NTSB staff during the response.
- Provide an FPS-operated mobile command vehicle to afford interoperable communications and a secure environment for use by NTSB staff.
- Assume responsibility for investigations associated with FPS activities at NTSB-designated locations as required, and share current intelligence with the NTSB, as permitted by law, regulation, or order, at the affected location.

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Fundamental Concern 4: Personal Effects

Overview

The disposition of personal effects (PE) is a fundamental concern of the families of passengers involved in an aircraft accident. For this framework, PE are defined as items worn or carried with a person at the time of travel, including carry-on luggage or checked baggage (including pets) but not items shipped as cargo. PE often hold sentimental or financial value and may be of particular interest to the families of passengers involved in an accident.

Based upon the experiences shared by the families of passengers from previous accidents, the *Final Report from the Task Force on Assistance to Families of Aviation Disasters*⁴⁵ acknowledged the need for sensitivity and transparency in the recovery and management of PE immediately following an accident. In some cases, PE had been deemed irrelevant by the response community because they were badly damaged or were not easy to identify. In other cases, many similar or non-descript items that would have been difficult to trace back to a specific passenger were discarded or destroyed. Despite these difficulties, family members expressed a strong desire to have items returned to them because of their potential sentimental value, regardless of their condition.

⁴⁵ <https://www.nts.gov/tda/TDADocuments/Task-Force-On-Assistance-To-Families-Of-Aviation-Disasters.pdf>

Response Partner Matrix

The following matrix highlights the roles of response partners associated with the fundamental concern of families of passengers: personal effects (PE). An “✓” in an intersecting cell in the matrix indicates the presence of related FSTs for each organization.

FIGURE 6. Response Partner Matrix (Concern 4 - Personal Effects)

Associated Response Partners	 Notification of Involvement	 Victim Accounting	 Information and Resources	 Personal Effects
NTSB	✓	✓	✓	✓
Air Carrier	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red Cross			✓	
DOS	✓	✓	✓	✓
FBI		✓	✓	✓
DHHS		✓		✓
DOD		✓		
FEMA			✓	
FPS			✓	

Family Support Tasks (Concern 4 - Personal Effects)

The FSTs associated with PE are listed below, organized by response partner.

NTSB FSTs

- Ensure that the affected air carrier is aware of its role and responsibilities regarding the PE management obligations outlined in federal legislation.
- Via JFSOC meetings, support the coordination of PE management by response partners. See [Appendix 8](#) for JFSOC information.
- Ensure that families of passengers are informed about PE recovery, processing, claim, and disposition. **Note:** For PE retained for an accident investigation or a criminal investigation, securing and returning these items is typically the responsibility of the investigative agency. The NTSB will coordinate the return of PE it has retained for an accident investigation.

- Determine the evidentiary value of PE, retain relevant items, and release non-evidentiary PE to the appropriate organization, communicating with the families of passengers regarding the investigative process and the return of PE taken into NTSB custody.
- Coordinate the transition of PE management to the FBI if the event has been determined to be a criminal act.

Air Carrier FSTs

- Ensure that a plan is in place to address the management of PE within the control of the air carrier. See [Appendix 17](#) for more information. The air carrier may consider using a third party that has experience in managing PE associated with MCIs.
- Ensure that families of passengers are informed about the PE management process, the condition in which items may be returned (cleaned, repaired, as-is with the caveat that items be safe to handle), including any future disposal process for unclaimed items.⁴⁶
 - Return any possession, if requested by the family of a passenger, within the control of the air carrier (regardless of its condition), unless the possession is needed for the accident investigation or a criminal investigation.⁴⁷
 - Retain any unclaimed possession of a passenger within the control of the air carrier for at least 18 months.⁴⁸
- Consult with survivors and family members regarding the disposition of remains of fatally injured carry-on or checked pets.
- Consult with the NTSB regarding the air carrier's role in the return process of any PE in the custody of the NTSB.
- Consult with other entities that may have a role in the management of PE (for example, medicolegal authority, local, state, tribal, or federal law enforcement, insurance companies, hospitals) to determine the air carrier's role in the return process of any PE in the custody of those entities.
- Provide updates regarding the PE management process during daily JFSOC meetings and post-accident response discussions. Specific information to share includes the role of a third-party, progress and complications with the returns process, and the status of unclaimed or unwanted items 18 months following the accident. See [Appendix 8](#) and [Appendix 10](#) for additional information.

⁴⁶ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(5\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(5\)](#)

⁴⁷ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(6\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(6\)](#)

⁴⁸ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(7\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(7\)](#)

- Notify family members both before and after any planned disposal of unclaimed PE within the control of the air carrier that will occur after the required 18-month retention period lapses.

DOS FSTs

- Coordinate with the necessary foreign mission(s) to facilitate consulate and customs services for the return of PE to the country of destination, as applicable.

FBI FSTs

- Coordinate with the NTSB regarding the transition of PE management if the event is determined to be a criminal event.
- Coordinate with the air carrier regarding their role in the return of PE if the event is determined to be a criminal event.

DHHS FSTs

- Coordinate with the presiding medicolegal authority regarding the management of PE physically associated with human remains.

Appendix 1 - Federal Family Assistance Legislation

Title 49 U.S.C. §1136

Assistance to families of passengers involved in aircraft accidents

- (a) IN GENERAL. - As soon as practicable after being notified of an aircraft accident involving an air carrier or foreign air carrier, resulting in any loss of life, and for which the National Transportation Safety Board will serve as the lead investigative agency, the Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board shall—
- (1) designate and publicize the name and phone number of a director of family support services who shall be an employee of the Board and shall be responsible for acting as a point of contact within the Federal Government for the families of passengers involved in the accident and a liaison between the air carrier or foreign air carrier and the families; and
 - (2) designate an independent nonprofit organization, with experience in disasters and post trauma communication with families, which shall have primary responsibility for coordinating the emotional care and support of the families of passengers involved in the accident.
- (b) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD. - The Board shall have primary Federal responsibility for facilitating the recovery and identification of fatally injured passengers involved in an accident described in subsection (a).
- (c) RESPONSIBILITIES OF DESIGNATED ORGANIZATION. - The organization designated for an accident under subsection (a)(2) shall have the following responsibilities with respect to the families of passengers involved in the accident:
- (1) To provide mental health and counseling services, in coordination with the disaster response team of the air carrier or foreign air carrier involved.
 - (2) To take such actions as may be necessary to provide an environment in which the families may grieve in private.
 - (3) To meet with the families who have traveled to the location of the accident, to contact the families unable to travel to such location, and to contact all affected families periodically thereafter until such time as the organization, in consultation with the director of family support services designated for the accident under subsection (a)(1), determines that further assistance is no longer needed.
 - (4) To communicate with the families as to the roles of the organization, government agencies, and the air carrier or foreign air carrier involved with respect to the accident and the post-accident activities.
 - (5) To arrange a suitable memorial service, in consultation with the families.

- (d) PASSENGER LISTS. -
- (1) REQUESTS FOR PASSENGER LISTS. -
- (A) REQUESTS BY DIRECTOR OF FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES.-It shall be the responsibility of the director of family support services designated for an accident under subsection (a)(1) to request, as soon as practicable, from the air carrier or foreign air carrier involved in the accident a list, which is based on the best available information at the time of the request, of the names of the passengers that were aboard the aircraft involved in the accident.
- (B) REQUESTS BY DESIGNATED ORGANIZATION. - The organization designated for an accident under subsection (a)(2) may request from the air carrier or foreign air carrier involved in the accident a list described in subparagraph (A).
- (2) USE OF INFORMATION. - The director of family support services and the organization may not release to any person information on a list obtained under paragraph (1) but may provide information on the list about a passenger to the family of the passenger to the extent that the director of family support services or the organization considers appropriate.
- (e) CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD. - In the course of its investigation of an accident described in subsection (a), the Board shall, to the maximum extent practicable, ensure that the families of passengers involved in the accident-
- (1) are briefed, prior to any public briefing, about the accident, its causes, and any other findings from the investigation; and
- (2) are individually informed of and allowed to attend any public hearings and meetings of the Board about the accident.
- (f) USE OF AIR CARRIER RESOURCES. - To the extent practicable, the organization designated for an accident under subsection (a)(2) shall coordinate its activities with the air carrier or foreign air carrier involved in the accident so that the resources of the carrier can be used to the greatest extent possible to carry out the organization's responsibilities under this section.
- (g) PROHIBITED ACTIONS. -
- (1) ACTIONS TO IMPEDE THE BOARD. - No person (including a State or political subdivision) may impede the ability of the Board (including the director of family support services designated for an accident under subsection (a)(1)), or an organization designated for an accident under subsection (a)(2), to carry out its responsibilities under this section or the ability of the families of passengers involved in the accident to have contact with one another.
- (2) UNSOLICITED COMMUNICATIONS. - In the event of an accident involving an air carrier providing interstate or foreign air transportation and in the event of an accident involving a foreign air carrier that occurs within the United States, no unsolicited communication concerning a potential action for personal injury or wrongful

death may be made by an attorney (including any associate, agent, employee, or other representative of an attorney) or any potential party to the litigation to an individual injured in the accident, or to a relative of an individual involved in the accident, before the 45th day following the date of the accident.

- (3) PROHIBITION ON ACTIONS TO PREVENT MENTAL HEALTH AND COUNSELING SERVICES. - No State or political subdivision thereof may prevent the employees, agents, or volunteers of an organization designated for an accident under subsection (a)(2) from providing mental health and counseling services under subsection (c)(1) in the 30-day period beginning on the date of the accident. The director of family support services designated for the accident under subsection (a)(1) may extend such period for not to exceed an additional 30 days if the director determines that the extension is necessary to meet the needs of the families and if State and local authorities are notified of the determination.
- (h) DEFINITIONS. - In this section, the following definitions apply:
- (1) AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT. - The term "aircraft accident" means any aviation disaster, regardless of its cause or suspected cause, for which the National Transportation Safety Board is the lead investigative agency.
- (2) PASSENGER. - The term "passenger" includes-
- (A) an employee of an air carrier or foreign air carrier aboard an aircraft;
- (B) any other person aboard the aircraft without regard to whether the person paid for the transportation, occupied a seat, or held a reservation for the flight; and
- (C) any other person injured or killed in the aircraft accident, as determined appropriate by the Board.
- (i) STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION. - Nothing in this section may be construed as limiting the actions that an air carrier may take, or the obligations that an air carrier may have, in providing assistance to the families of passengers involved in an aircraft accident.
- (j) RELINQUISHMENT OF INVESTIGATIVE PRIORITY. -
- (1) GENERAL RULE. - This section (other than subsection (g)) shall not apply to an aircraft accident if the Board has relinquished investigative priority under section 1131(a)(2)(B) and the Federal agency to which the Board relinquished investigative priority is willing and able to provide assistance to the victims and families of the passengers involved in the accident.
- (2) BOARD ASSISTANCE. - If this section does not apply to an aircraft accident because the Board has relinquished investigative priority with respect to the accident, the Board shall assist, to the maximum extent possible, the agency to which the Board has relinquished investigative priority in assisting families with respect to the accident.

(Added [Pub. L. 104-264, title VII, §702\(a\)\(1\), Oct. 9, 1996, 110 Stat. 3265](#) ; amended [Pub. L. 106-181, title IV, §401\(a\)\(1\), \(b\)-\(d\), Apr. 5, 2000, 114 Stat. 129](#) ; [Pub. L. 108-168, §3\(a\), Dec. 6, 2003, 117 Stat. 2033](#) ; [Pub. L. 115-254, div. C, §1109\(c\), Oct. 5, 2018, 132 Stat. 3434](#) .)

Editorial Notes

Amendments

2018-Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 115-254, §1109(c)(1), in introductory provisions, substituted "aircraft accident involving an air carrier or foreign air carrier, resulting in any loss of life, and for which the National Transportation Safety Board will serve as the lead investigative agency" for "aircraft accident within the United States involving an air carrier or foreign air carrier and resulting in a major loss of life".

Subsec. (h)(1). Pub. L. 115-254, §1109(c)(2)(A), amended par. (1) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: "The term 'aircraft accident' means any aviation disaster regardless of its cause or suspected cause."

Subsec. (h)(2)(C). Pub. L. 115-254, §1109(c)(2)(B), added subpar. (C).

2003-Subsec. (j). Pub. L. 108-168 added subsec. (j).

2000-Subsec. (g)(2). Pub. L. 106-181, §401(a)(1), substituted "transportation and in the event of an accident involving a foreign air carrier that occurs within the United States," for "transportation," , inserted "(including any associate, agent, employee, or other representative of an attorney)" after "attorney", and substituted "45th day" for "30th day".

Subsec. (g)(3). Pub. L. 106-181, §401(b), added par. (3).

Subsec. (h)(2). Pub. L. 106-181, §401(c), amended heading and text generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: "The term 'passenger' includes an employee of an air carrier aboard an aircraft."

Subsec. (i). Pub. L. 106-181, §401(d), added subsec. (i).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

Effective Date of 2000 Amendment

Amendment by Pub. L. 106-181 applicable only to fiscal years beginning after Sept. 30, 1999, see section 3 of Pub. L. 106-181, set out as a note under [section 106 of this title](#).

Effective Date

Except as otherwise specifically provided, section applicable only to fiscal years beginning after Sept. 30, 1996, and not to be construed as affecting funds made available for a fiscal year ending before Oct. 1, 1996, see section 3 of Pub. L. 104-264, set out as an Effective Date of 1996 Amendment note under [section 106 of this title](#).

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Title 49 U.S.C. §41113

Plans to address needs of families of passengers involved in aircraft accidents

- (a) SUBMISSION OF PLAN.- Each air carrier holding a certificate of public convenience and necessity under [section 41102 of this title](#) shall submit to the Secretary and the Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board a plan for addressing the needs of the families of passengers involved in any aircraft accident involving an aircraft of the air carrier and resulting in any loss of life.
- (b) CONTENTS OF PLAN.- A plan to be submitted by an air carrier under subsection (a) shall include, at a minimum, the following:
- (1) A plan for publicizing a reliable, toll-free telephone number, and for providing staff, to handle calls from the families of the passengers.
 - (2) A process for notifying the families of the passengers, before providing any public notice of the names of the passengers, either by utilizing the services of the organization designated for the accident under [section 1136\(a\)\(2\) of this title](#) or the services of other suitably trained individuals.
 - (3) An assurance that the notice described in paragraph (2) will be provided to the family of a passenger as soon as the air carrier has verified that the passenger was aboard the aircraft (whether or not the names of all of the passengers have been verified) and, to the extent practicable, in person.
 - (4) An assurance that the air carrier will provide to the director of family support services designated for the accident under [section 1136\(a\)\(1\) of this title](#), and to the organization designated for the accident under [section 1136\(a\)\(2\) of this title](#), immediately upon request, a list (which is based on the best available information at the time of the request) of the names of the passengers aboard the aircraft (whether or not such names have been verified), and will periodically update the list.
 - (5) An assurance that the family of each passenger will be consulted about the disposition of all remains and personal effects of the passenger within the control of the air carrier.
 - (6) An assurance that if requested by the family of a passenger, any possession of the passenger within the control of the air carrier (regardless of its condition) will be returned to the family unless the possession is needed for the accident investigation or any criminal investigation.
 - (7) An assurance that any unclaimed possession of a passenger within the control of the air carrier will be retained by the air carrier for at least 18 months.
 - (8) An assurance that the family of each passenger will be consulted about construction by the air carrier of any monument to the passengers, including any inscription on the monument.

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- (9) An assurance that the treatment of the families of nonrevenue passengers (and any other victim of the accident, including any victim on the ground) will be the same as the treatment of the families of revenue passengers.
 - (10) An assurance that the air carrier will work with any organization designated under [section 1136\(a\)\(2\) of this title](#) on an ongoing basis to ensure that families of passengers receive an appropriate level of services and assistance following each accident.
 - (11) An assurance that the air carrier will provide reasonable compensation to any organization designated under [section 1136\(a\)\(2\) of this title](#) for services provided by the organization.
 - (12) An assurance that the air carrier will assist the family of a passenger in traveling to the location of the accident and provide for the physical care of the family while the family is staying at such location.
 - (13) An assurance that the air carrier will commit sufficient resources to carry out the plan.
 - (14) An assurance that, upon request of the family of a passenger, the air carrier will inform the family of whether the passenger's name appeared on a preliminary passenger manifest for the flight involved in the accident.
 - (15) An assurance that the air carrier will provide adequate training to the employees and agents of the carrier to meet the needs of survivors and family members following an accident.
 - (16) An assurance that the air carrier, in the event that the air carrier volunteers assistance to United States citizens within the United States with respect to an aircraft accident outside the United States involving any loss of life, will consult with the Board and the Department of State on the provision of the assistance.
 - (17) (A) An assurance that, in the case of an accident that results in any damage to a manmade structure or other property on the ground that is not government-owned, the air carrier will promptly provide notice, in writing, to the extent practicable, directly to the owner of the structure or other property about liability for any property damage and means for obtaining compensation.
(B) At a minimum, the written notice shall advise an owner (i) to contact the insurer of the property as the authoritative source for information about coverage and compensation; (ii) to not rely on unofficial information offered by air carrier representatives about compensation by the air carrier for accident-site property damage; and (iii) to obtain photographic or other detailed evidence of property damage as soon as possible after the accident, consistent with restrictions on access to the accident site.
 - (18) An assurance that, in the case of an accident in which the National Transportation Safety Board conducts a public hearing or comparable proceeding at a location greater than 80 miles from the accident site, the air carrier will ensure that the proceeding is made available simultaneously by electronic means at a location
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open to the public at both the origin city and destination city of the air carrier's flight if that city is located in the United States.

- (c) CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENT.-The Secretary may not approve an application for a certificate of public convenience and necessity under [section 41102 of this title](#) unless the applicant has included as part of such application a plan that meets the requirements of subsection (b).
- (d) LIMITATION ON LIABILITY.-An air carrier shall not be liable for damages in any action brought in a Federal or State court arising out of the performance of the air carrier in preparing or providing a passenger list, or in providing information concerning a preliminary passenger manifest, pursuant to a plan submitted by the air carrier under subsection (b), unless such liability was caused by conduct of the air carrier which was grossly negligent or which constituted intentional misconduct.
- (e) AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT AND PASSENGER DEFINED.-In this section, the terms "aircraft accident" and "passenger" have the meanings such terms have in [section 1136 of this title](#).
- (f) STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION-. - Nothing in this section may be construed as limiting the actions that an air carrier may take, or the obligations that an air carrier may have, in providing assistance to the families of passengers involved in an aircraft accident.

(Added [Pub. L. 104-264, title VII, §703\(a\), Oct. 9, 1996, 110 Stat. 3267](#) ; amended [Pub. L. 106-181, title IV, §402\(a\)\(1\)-\(3\), \(5\)-\(c\), Apr. 5, 2000, 114 Stat. 129 , 130](#); [Pub. L. 108-176, title VIII, §809\(a\), Dec. 12, 2003, 117 Stat. 2588](#) ; [Pub. L. 115-254, div. C, §1109\(a\), Oct. 5, 2018, 132 Stat. 3434 .](#))

Editorial Notes

Amendments

2018-Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 115-254, §1109(a)(1), substituted "any loss of life" for "a major loss of life."

Subsec. (b)(9). Pub. L. 115-254, §1109(a)(2)(A), substituted "(and any other victim of the accident, including any victim on the ground)" for "(and any other victim of the accident)".

Subsec. (b)(16). Pub. L. 115-254, §1109(a)(2)(B), substituted "any loss of life" for "major loss of life."

Subsec. (b)(17)(A). Pub. L. 115-254, §1109(a)(2)(C), substituted "any damage" for "significant damage."

2003-Subsec. (b)(16). Pub. L. 108-176, §809(a)(1), struck out "the air carrier" after "major loss of life."

Subsec. (b)(17), (18). Pub. L. 108-176, §809(a)(2), added pars. (17) and (18).

2000-Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 106-181, §402(a)(5)(A), substituted "Each air carrier" for "Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this section, each air carrier."

Subsec. (b)(14) to (16). Pub. L. 106-181, §402(a)(1)-(3), added pars. (14) to (16).

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 106-181, §402(a)(5)(B), substituted "The Secretary" for "After the date that is 6 months after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary."

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 106-181, §402(b), inserted ", or in providing information concerning a preliminary passenger manifest," before "pursuant to a plan."

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 106-181, §402(c), added subsec. (f).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

Effective Date of 2003 Amendment

Amendment by Pub. L. 108-176 applicable only to fiscal years beginning after Sept. 30, 2003, except as otherwise specifically provided, see section 3 of Pub. L. 108-176, set out as a note under [section 106 of this title](#).

Effective Date of 2000 Amendment

Amendment by section 402(a)(5)(B) to (c) of Pub. L. 106-181 applicable only to fiscal years beginning after Sept. 30, 1999, see section 3 of Pub. L. 106-181, set out as a note under [section 106 of this title](#).

[Pub. L. 106-181, title IV, §402\(a\)\(4\), Apr. 5, 2000, 114 Stat. 130](#), provided that: "The amendments made by paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) [amending this section] shall take effect on the 180th day following the date of the enactment of this Act [Apr. 5, 2000]. On or before such 180th day, each air carrier holding a certificate of public convenience and necessity under [section 41102 of title 49, United States Code](#), shall submit to the Secretary [of Transportation] and the Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board an updated plan under section 41113 of such title that meets the requirements of the amendments made by paragraphs (1), (2), and (3)."

Effective Date

Except as otherwise specifically provided, section applicable only to fiscal years beginning after Sept. 30, 1996, and not to be construed as affecting funds made available for a fiscal year ending before Oct. 1, 1996, see section 3 of Pub. L. 104-264, set out as an Effective Date of 1996 Amendment note under [section 106 of this title](#).

Update Plans

[Pub. L. 108-176, title VIII, §809\(c\), Dec. 12, 2003, 117 Stat. 2589](#) , provided that: "Air carriers and foreign air carriers shall update their plans under [sections 41113 and 41313 of title 49, United States Code](#), respectively, to reflect the amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) of this section [amending this section and [section 41313 of this title](#)] not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act [Dec. 12, 2003]."

Establishment of Task Force

[Pub. L. 104-264, title VII, §704, Oct. 9, 1996, 110 Stat. 3268](#) , provided that:

- "(a) Establishment.-The Secretary of Transportation, in cooperation with the National Transportation Safety Board, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the American Red Cross, air carriers, and families which have been involved in aircraft accidents shall establish a task force consisting of representatives of such entities and families, representatives of air carrier employees, and representatives of such other entities as the Secretary considers appropriate.
- "(b) Guidelines and Recommendations.-The task force established pursuant to subsection (a) shall develop-
- "(1) guidelines to assist air carriers in responding to aircraft accidents;
 - "(2) recommendations on methods to ensure that attorneys and representatives of media organizations do not intrude on the privacy of families of passengers involved in an aircraft accident;
 - "(3) recommendations on methods to ensure that the families of passengers involved in an aircraft accident who are not citizens of the United States receive appropriate assistance;
 - "(4) recommendations on methods to ensure that State mental health licensing laws do not act to prevent out-of-state mental health workers from working at the site of an aircraft accident or other related sites;
 - "(5) recommendations on the extent to which military experts and facilities can be used to aid in the identification of the remains of passengers involved in an aircraft accident; and
 - "(6) recommendations on methods to improve the timeliness of the notification provided by air carriers to the families of passengers involved in an aircraft accident, including-

"(A) an analysis of the steps that air carriers would have to take to ensure that an accurate list of passengers on board the aircraft would be available within 1 hour of the accident and an analysis of such steps to ensure that such list would be available within 3 hours of the accident;

"(B) an analysis of the added costs to air carriers and travel agents that would result if air carriers were required to take the steps described in subparagraph (A);

"(C) an analysis of any inconvenience to passengers, including flight delays, that would result if air carriers were required to take the steps described in subparagraph (A); and

"(D) an analysis of the implications for personal privacy that would result if air carriers were required to take the steps described in subparagraph (A).

"(c) Report.-Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Oct. 9, 1996], the Secretary shall transmit to Congress a report containing the model plan and recommendations developed by the task force under subsection (b)."

Limitation on Statutory Construction

[Pub. L. 104-264, title VII, §705, Oct. 9, 1996, 110 Stat. 3269](#) , provided that: "Nothing in this title [enacting this section and [section 1136 of this title](#), amending [section 1155 of this title](#), and enacting provisions set out as notes under this section and [section 40101 of this title](#)] or any amendment made by this title may be construed as limiting the actions that an air carrier may take, or the obligations that an air carrier may have, in providing assistance to the families of passengers involved in an aircraft accident."

Title 49 U.S.C. §41313

Plans to address needs of families of passengers involved in foreign air carrier accidents

(a) DEFINITIONS.-In this section, the following definitions apply:

- (1) AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT.-The term "aircraft accident" means any aviation disaster, regardless of its cause or suspected cause, that occurs within the United States; and
- (2) PASSENGER.-The term "passenger" has the meaning given such term by section 1136.

(b) SUBMISSION OF PLANS.-A foreign air carrier providing foreign air transportation under this chapter shall transmit to the Secretary of Transportation and the Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board a plan for addressing the needs of the families of passengers involved in an aircraft accident that involves an aircraft under the control of the foreign air carrier and results in any loss of life.

(c) CONTENTS OF PLANS.-To the extent permitted by foreign law which was in effect on the date of the enactment of this section, a plan submitted by a foreign air carrier under subsection (b) shall include the following:

- (1) TELEPHONE NUMBER.-A plan for publicizing a reliable, toll-free telephone number and staff to take calls to such number from families of passengers involved in an aircraft accident that involves an aircraft under the control of the foreign air carrier and results in any loss of life.
- (2) NOTIFICATION OF FAMILIES.-A process for notifying, in person to the extent practicable, the families of passengers involved in an aircraft accident that involves an aircraft under the control of the foreign air carrier and results in any loss of life before providing any public notice of the names of such passengers. Such notice shall be provided by using the services of-
 - (A) the organization designated for the accident under section 1136(a)(2); or
 - (B) other suitably trained individuals.
- (3) NOTICE PROVIDED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.-An assurance that the notice required by paragraph (2) shall be provided as soon as practicable after the foreign air carrier has verified the identity of a passenger on the foreign aircraft, whether or not the names of all of the passengers have been verified.
- (4) LIST OF PASSENGERS.-An assurance that the foreign air carrier shall provide, immediately upon request, and update a list (based on the best available information at the time of the request) of the names of the passengers aboard the aircraft (whether or not such names have been verified), to-
 - (A) the director of family support services designated for the accident under section 1136(a)(1); and
 - (B) the organization designated for the accident under section 1136(a)(2).

- (5) CONSULTATION REGARDING DISPOSITION OF REMAINS AND EFFECTS.-An assurance that the family of each passenger will be consulted about the disposition of any remains and personal effects of the passenger that are within the control of the foreign air carrier.
- (6) RETURN OF POSSESSIONS.-An assurance that, if requested by the family of a passenger, any possession (regardless of its condition) of that passenger that is within the control of the foreign air carrier will be returned to the family unless the possession is needed for the accident investigation or a criminal investigation.
- (7) UNCLAIMED POSSESSIONS RETAINED.-An assurance that any unclaimed possession of a passenger within the control of the foreign air carrier will be retained by the foreign air carrier for not less than 18 months after the date of the accident.
- (8) MONUMENTS.-An assurance that the family of each passenger will be consulted about construction by the foreign air carrier of any monument to the passengers built in the United States, including any inscription on the monument.
- (9) EQUAL TREATMENT OF PASSENGERS.-An assurance that the treatment of the families of nonrevenue passengers (and any other victim of the accident, including any victim on the ground) will be the same as the treatment of the families of revenue passengers.
- (10) SERVICE AND ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES OF PASSENGERS.-An assurance that the foreign air carrier will work with any organization designated under section 1136(a)(2) on an ongoing basis to ensure that families of passengers receive an appropriate level of services and assistance following an accident.
- (11) COMPENSATION TO SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS.-An assurance that the foreign air carrier will provide reasonable compensation to any organization designated under section 1136(a)(2) for services and assistance provided by the organization.
- (12) TRAVEL AND CARE EXPENSES.-An assurance that the foreign air carrier will assist the family of any passenger in traveling to the location of the accident and provide for the physical care of the family while the family is staying at such location.
- (13) RESOURCES FOR PLAN.-An assurance that the foreign air carrier will commit sufficient resources to carry out the plan.
- (14) SUBSTITUTE MEASURES.-If a foreign air carrier does not wish to comply with paragraph (10), (11), or (12), a description of proposed adequate substitute measures for the requirements of each paragraph with which the foreign air carrier does not wish to comply.
- (15) TRAINING OF EMPLOYEES AND AGENTS.-An assurance that the foreign air carrier will provide adequate training to the employees and agents of the carrier to meet the needs of survivors and family members following an accident.
- (16) CONSULTATION ON CARRIER RESPONSE NOT COVERED BY PLAN.-An assurance that, in the event that the foreign air carrier volunteers assistance to United States citizens within the United States with respect to an aircraft accident outside the United

States involving any loss of life, will consult 1 with the Board and the Department of State on the provision of the assistance.

(17) NOTICE CONCERNING LIABILITY FOR MANMADE STRUCTURES.-

- (A) IN GENERAL.-An assurance that, in the case of an accident that results in any damage to a manmade structure or other property on the ground that is not government-owned, the foreign air carrier will promptly provide notice, in writing, to the extent practicable, directly to the owner of the structure or other property about liability for any property damage and means for obtaining compensation.
- (B) MINIMUM CONTENTS.-At a minimum, the written notice shall advise an owner (i) to contact the insurer of the property as the authoritative source for information about coverage and compensation; (ii) to not rely on unofficial information offered by foreign air carrier representatives about compensation by the foreign air carrier for accident-site property damage; and (iii) to obtain photographic or other detailed evidence of property damage as soon as possible after the accident, consistent with restrictions on access to the accident site.

(18) SIMULTANEOUS ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION OF NTSB HEARING.-An assurance that, in the case of an accident in which the National Transportation Safety Board conducts a public hearing or comparable proceeding at a location greater than 80 miles from the accident site, the foreign air carrier will ensure that the proceeding is made available simultaneously by electronic means at a location open to the public at both the origin city and destination city of the foreign air carrier's flight if that city is located in the United States.

- (d) PERMIT AND EXEMPTION REQUIREMENT.-The Secretary shall not approve an application for a permit under section 41302 unless the applicant has included as part of the application or request for exemption a plan that meets the requirements of subsection (c).
- (e) LIMITATION ON LIABILITY.-A foreign air carrier shall not be liable for damages in any action brought in a Federal or State court arising out of the performance of the foreign air carrier in preparing or providing a passenger list pursuant to a plan submitted by the foreign air carrier under subsection (c), unless the liability was caused by conduct of the foreign air carrier which was grossly negligent or which constituted intentional misconduct.

(Added [Pub. L. 105-148, §1\(a\), Dec. 16, 1997, 111 Stat. 2681](#) ; amended [Pub. L. 106-181, title IV, §403\(a\)-\(c\)\(1\), Apr. 5, 2000, 114 Stat. 130](#) ; [Pub. L. 108-176, title VIII, §809\(b\), Dec. 12, 2003, 117 Stat. 2589](#) ; [Pub. L. 115-254, div. B, title V, §539\(d\), div. C, §1109\(b\), Oct. 5, 2018, 132 Stat. 3370 , 3434.](#))

*Editorial Notes***References in Text**

The date of the enactment of this section, referred to in subsec. (c), is the date of enactment of Pub. L. 105-148, which was approved Dec. 16, 1997.

Amendments

2018-Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 115-254, §1109(b)(1), substituted "any loss of life" for "a major loss of life."

Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 115-254, §1109(b)(2)(A), substituted "any loss of life" for "a significant loss of life."

Subsec. (c)(2). Pub. L. 115-254, §1109(b)(2)(B), substituted "any loss of life" for "a significant loss of life" in introductory provisions.

Subsec. (c)(9). Pub. L. 115-254, §1109(b)(2)(C), amended par. (9) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: "An assurance that the treatment of the families of nonrevenue passengers will be the same as the treatment of the families of revenue passengers."

Subsec. (c)(16). Pub. L. 115-254, §1109(b)(2)(D), substituted "any loss of life" for "major loss of life" and "will consult" for "the foreign air carrier will consult."

Pub. L. 115-254, §539(d), substituted "An assurance that" for "An assurance that the foreign air carrier."

Subsec. (c)(17)(A). Pub. L. 115-254, §1109(b)(2)(E), substituted "any damage" for "significant damage."

2003-Subsec. (c)(17), (18). Pub. L. 108-176 added pars. (17) and (18).

2000-Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 106-181, §403(a), amended heading and text of par. (2) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: "The term 'passenger' includes an employee of a foreign air carrier or air carrier aboard an aircraft."

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 106-181, §403(b), substituted "major" for "significant".

Subsec. (c)(15), (16). Pub. L. 106-181, §403(c)(1), added pars. (15) and (16).

*Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries***Effective Date of 2003 Amendment**

Amendment by Pub. L. 108-176 applicable only to fiscal years beginning after Sept. 30, 2003, except as otherwise specifically provided, see section 3 of Pub. L. 108-176, set out as a note under [section 106 of this title](#).

Effective Date of 2000 Amendment

Amendment by section 403(a) and (b) of Pub. L. 106-181 applicable only to fiscal years beginning after Sept. 30, 1999, see section 3 of Pub. L. 106-181, set out as a note under [section 106 of this title](#).

[Pub. L. 106-181, title IV, §403\(c\)\(2\), Apr. 5, 2000, 114 Stat. 131](#) , provided that: "The amendment made by paragraph (1) [amending this section] shall take effect on the 180th day following the date of the enactment of this Act [Apr. 5, 2000]. On or before such 180th day, each foreign air carrier providing foreign air transportation under [chapter 413 of title 49, United States Code](#), shall submit to the Secretary [of Transportation] and the Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board an updated plan under section 41313 of such title that meets the requirements of the amendment made by paragraph (1)."

Effective Date

[Pub. L. 105-148, §1\(c\), Dec. 16, 1997, 111 Stat. 2683](#) , provided that: "The amendments made by this section [enacting this section] shall take effect on the 180th day following the date of the enactment of this Act [Dec. 16, 1997]."

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Appendix 2 – Air Carrier Assurance Submission Guidance DOT and NTSB Family Assistance Plan Filings⁴⁹

The ADFAA and the Foreign Air Carrier Family Support Act of 1997 require that air carriers with a DOT Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) and foreign air carriers with a foreign air carrier permit submit to the Secretary of the DOT and the chair of the NTSB through the TDA Division a plan for addressing the needs of the families of passengers involved in and any other victims affected by an aircraft accident involving an aircraft of the air carrier and resulting in any loss of life. The contents of the plan should address, at a minimum, how the air carrier will comply with the 18 assurances identified in the above-mentioned family assistance acts.

The guide below was developed to assist air carriers in reviewing their plans on file with the DOT, in submitting a new plan, and in updating existing plans. Also attached is guidance for submitting a copy of the family assistance plan to the NTSB TDA and providing additional information for emergency contact information.

DOT Submissions

- I. DOT Air Carrier Assurances can be found online at–
 - a. <http://www.regulations.gov>
 - i. For Foreign Air Carrier Plans, enter in the search box:
DOT-OST-1998-3304
 - ii. For U.S. Domestic Air Carrier Plans, enter in the search box:
DOT-OST-1996-1960
- II. To file a new air carrier assurance plan or update an existing plan with the DOT, select only one of the following methods:
 - a. Submit On-line:
 - i. Foreign Air Carrier: <https://www.regulations.gov/document/DOT-OST-1998-3304-0300>
 - ii. Domestic Air Carrier: <https://www.regulations.gov/document/DOT-OST-1996-1960-0001>
 - iii. Click on the blue “Comment” button under the U.S. DOT/OST - Title area.
 - iv. In the comment box, enter the name of the air carrier.

⁴⁹ This document is also available at https://www.nts.gov/tda/TDADocuments/TDA_Airline-Submission-Guidance_8.23.pdf

- v. In the “What is your comment about?” area, select “Supporting/Supplemental Materials” from the dropdown.
 - vi. Under “Attach Files,” you may “drag and drop files or select “Browse” to attach assurance plan.
 - vii. Email Address
 - 1. Input your email address.
 - 2. Select check box if you would like to receive email confirmation of submission.
 - viii. reCAPTCHA
 - 1. Select checkbox “I’m not a robot.”
 - ix. Click “Submit Comment” button.
- b. Submit by Mail:
- i. Provide a cover letter with the correct docket number reference (see sample cover letter).
 - 1. Include the name of the air carrier.
 - 2. State whether the filing is the first for the air carrier or is an update to an existing plan already on file.

Mailing Address:

- 3. Docket Operations Facility
 Air Carrier Docket Number Reference: _____
 U.S. Department of Transportation
 West Building Ground Floor, Rm. W12-140
 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
 Washington, DC 20590

NTSB TDA Submissions

- I. NTSB TDA maintains copies of air carrier family assistance plans for the NTSB.
- II. Air carriers should include a 24-hour emergency response contact number with plans submitted to the NTSB TDA.
 - a. This is a telephone number the NTSB can use to communicate with an air carrier for confirmation or notification of an aviation disaster at any time of the day.
- III. For Foreign Air Carrier plans submitted to NTSB TDA, foreign air carriers should include a cover letter indicating the use of substitute measures and a description of these measures in accordance with the Foreign Air Carrier Family Support Act of 1997.
- IV. To file a new air carrier assurance plan or update an existing plan on file with the NTSB, select *one* of the following methods:

- a. Submit by Email
 - i. assistance@ntsb.gov
 - b. Submit by Fax
 - i. (202) 459-9402
 - c. Submit by Mail
 - i. National Transportation Safety Board
Attn: Air Carrier Liaison
Transportation Disaster Assistance Division
Air Carrier Docket Number Reference: _____
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, S.W.
Washington, DC 20594
- V. Air carriers should update existing plans and/or cover letters on file with the NTSB when any of the following occur:
- a. A change in the air carrier's 24-Hour Emergency Contact Number or dispatch/operations center number.
 - b. A change in the air carrier's name on the FAA operating certificate or a change in the business name of the air carrier.
 - c. A change in the air carrier's operator or business partner agreement (doing business as).
 - d. A change or update in family assistance services provided under an agreement associated with the operator's codeshare alliance/partnership or when making a change to a new or different service provider.
 - e. A change in substitute measures by foreign carriers.
 - f. Revision of the ADFAA or the Foreign Air Carrier Family Support Act of 1997 by the DOT.

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Appendix 3 – TDA Air Carrier Contact Listing⁵⁰



Air Carrier:
IATA Code:
Air Carrier Primary Mailing Address:
Air Carrier Operations Center (24/7 Dispatch) Phone:
Air Carrier ICAO Callsign:
Operations Type (for example, 121):
Air Carrier's FAA Certificate Management Office (POI's city, state):
Air Carrier Main Website:
Air Carrier Senior Executive Name (for example, chief executive officer, president):
Air Carrier Director of Safety Name (14 C.F.R. 119 position):
Code Share Partners:
Name of Family Assistance Program (such as CARE, SAT):
Air Carrier Primary TDA POC:
Air Carrier Primary TDA POC Title:
Air Carrier Primary Cell Phone:
Air Carrier Primary Desk Phone:
Air Carrier Primary Email:

⁵⁰ Fillable form available at https://www.nts.gov/tda/TDADocuments/TDA_Airline-Contact-Listing-Form_8.23.pdf

Alternate Emergency Response/ Family Assistance
POCs

List any individuals who will act on behalf of the primary POC in their absence or who will be coordinating air carrier emergency response.

Up to 5 alternate POCs may be entered.

Alternate 1

Air Carrier Alternate POC:

Air Carrier Alternate Title:

Air Carrier Alternate Phone:

Air Carrier Alternate Email:

Alternate 2

Air Carrier Alternate POC:

Air Carrier Alternate Title:

Air Carrier Alternate Phone:

Air Carrier Alternate Email:

Alternate 3

Air Carrier Alternate POC:

Air Carrier Alternate Title:

Air Carrier Alternate Phone:

Air Carrier Alternate Email:

Alternate 4

Air Carrier Alternate POC:

Air Carrier Alternate Title:

Air Carrier Alternate Phone:

Air Carrier Alternate Email:

Alternate 5

Air Carrier Alternate POC:

Air Carrier Alternate Title:

Air Carrier Alternate Phone:

Air Carrier Alternate Email:

Submit form to NTSB TDA at assistance@ntsb.gov

Appendix 4 - Air Carrier Accident Notification Flow

The following steps provide air carriers guidance for reporting aviation accidents resulting in fatalities that occur within the United States, its territories, or its possessions. The process describes the recommended steps to follow when the air carrier will be activating their family assistance program.

STEP 1: Notify the NTSB immediately of a fatal aviation accident in accordance with 49 C.F.R. 830.5. (Executed by air carrier operations center or safety department.)

1. CALL NTSB RESPONSE OPERATIONS CENTER (ROC): 202-314-6290
2. Provide the following information (49 C.F.R. 830.6) to the ROC watch officer:
 - a. Type, nationality, and registration marks of the aircraft.
 - b. Names of owner and operator (air carrier name) of the aircraft.
 - c. Name of pilot in command (number of crew).
 - d. Date and time of the accident.
 - e. Last point of departure and point of intended landing of the aircraft.
 - f. Accident location (Position of the aircraft with reference to some easily defined geographical point).
 - g. Number of persons aboard, number of fatalities, and number seriously injured.
 - h. Nature of the accident, weather conditions, and the extent of damage to the aircraft, as known.
 - i. A description of any hazardous material aboard (including explosives, radioactive materials, or other dangerous articles carried).
3. Provide an air carrier primary point of contact and phone number for follow-up.

STEP 2: Notify NTSB TDA of the air carrier's activation of their family assistance plan:

1. Call NTSB Response Operations Center (ROC): 202-314-6290.
2. Ask for the TDA duty officer.
3. Provide the following information:
 - a. Place (or general vicinity) of accident, number of passengers and crew (based on preliminary departure information), and number of injuries and fatalities (if known).
 - b. Flight number, origination, connection points, destination, passenger demographics (nationalities, large groups, etc. [if known]), whether the flight was domestic or international, and

whether the flight was a codeshare.

- c. Name and telephone number of the person/persons in charge of the air carrier's humanitarian response, passenger manifest reconciliation, and family notification process.
- d. Name, telephone number, and location of the facility designated as the FAC and JFSOC.

STEP 3: Complete the "NTSB TDA Accident Notification Supplemental Information Worksheet." (see [Appendix 5](#)):

1. https://www.nts.gov/tda/TDADocuments/TDA_Airline-Supplemental-Form_8.23.pdf

Email worksheet to TDA: assistance@nts.gov.

STEP 4: Upon request, provide the NTSB TDA chief or Designated TDA Representative the most current reconciled copy of the passenger & crew list/manifest:

1. Send the passenger list/manifest via email to both of the following addresses:
 - a. roc@nts.gov
 - b. assistance@nts.gov
2. Include the subject line: "URGENT MANIFEST URGENT (FWD to TDA)".
3. Passenger list/manifest(s) should be submitted in an Excel format.
4. The file should include the date, time, and a submission version number.
5. The following information should be included (when available):
 - a. Passenger name (last name, first name, middle name)
 - b. Seat assignment
 - c. Passenger category (such as passenger, crew member, non-revenue)
 - d. Passenger contact information
 - e. Passenger date of birth
 - f. Special assistance codes (for example, wheelchair required)
 - g. Gender
 - h. Nationality
 - i. Emergency contact information

STEP 5: The NTSB TDA chief or designated TDA representative will establish a JFSOC coordination call with the TDA duty officer, TDA air carrier liaison, the air carrier, the Red Cross, and available local, state, tribal or federal responding agencies/entities.

1. Contact the TDA duty officer or TDA air carrier liaison
2. Conference call agenda items:
 - a. Status of emergency response and family assistance plan activation.
 - b. Air carrier's publicized toll-free telephone number.

- c. FRC locations and status.
- d. FAC location(s) and activation status.
- e. Air carrier's go-team status.
- f. Status of notification of passengers' family members.
- g. Air carrier's family assistance/ emergency response point(s) of contact.
- h. Air carrier's family assistance coordinator.
- i. Manifest updates and crew/passenger accountability.
- j. Additional information as needed.

NTSB TDA CONTACT INFORMATION:

Direct:
202-314-6185
assistance@ntsb.gov

Through the NTSB ROC:
202-314-6290
roc@ntsb.gov

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Appendix 5 - TDA Accident Notification Supplemental Information Form⁵¹

<p>DISCLAIMER: The information requested on this worksheet will be used by the NTSB and our federal partners during the initial launch phase of an NTSB accident investigation. Completing this worksheet is voluntary; however, air carriers must still comply with notification and reporting requirements in accordance with 49 C.F.R. 830.</p>					
<p>Instructions: Please complete the following survey with as much information as possible. This information should be submitted to the TDA Division within 1-2 hours after the air carrier makes the official accident notification to the NTSB Response Operations Center. For questions, please call TDA at 202-314-6185.</p>					
<p>AIR CARRIER ACCIDENT INFORMATION</p>					
<p>Certificated Air Carrier Operator:</p>					
<p>Airline Flight Operated As: (For example, Northwest Airlines)</p>				<p>Flight Number</p>	
<p>Accident Site location: (for example, city & state, airport)</p>				<p>Time of Accident:</p>	
<p>Total Number of Persons on Board</p>					
<p>PASSENGERS INFORMATION</p>					
<p>Adults:</p>		<p>Infants (lap only):</p>		<p>Non-Rev:</p>	<p>Total Paxs:</p>
<p>CREW INFORMATION</p>					
<p># of Flight Crew: (incl. jumpseat)</p>		<p># of Cabin/In-Flight Crew:</p>		<p>Total Crew:</p>	
<p>ADDITIONAL DETAILS</p>					
<p>HazMat onboard? Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Unknown <input type="radio"/></p>			<p>List Special Groups onboard (for example, VIPs, SSR student groups)</p>		
<p>Aircraft Fatalities: Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Unknown <input type="radio"/></p>			<p>Ground Fatalities: Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Unknown <input type="radio"/></p>		
<p>Number of Aircraft Fatalities (if known) <input type="text"/></p>			<p>Number of Ground Fatalities (if known): <input type="text"/></p>		
<p>Is there ground structure damage? Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/></p>					
<p>Additional Details (office buildings, residences, shopping mall, other): <input type="text"/></p>					
<p>Flight Pairing Route:</p>		<p>Departure:</p>		<p>Arrival:</p>	
<p>Aircraft Type:</p>		<p>Aircraft Registration:</p>			
<p>Toll-free Family Assistance Phone #:</p>			<p>Carrier EOC Phone #</p>		
<p>FRC Location(s):</p>					
<p>FAC Planned Location (if known):</p>					
<p>Nearest Commercial Airport (to accident location):</p>					
<p>List of Codeshare agreements (for this flight):</p>					
<p>Air Carrier POC Name, Title & Direct Phone Number:</p>					
<p>Send completed form to assistance@ntsb.gov</p>					

⁵¹ Fillable form available at https://www.nts.gov/tda/TDADocuments/TDA_Airline-Supplemental-Form_8.23.pdf

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Appendix 6 - NTSB Guidance for Passenger List/Manifest Distribution & Control⁵²

The National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) understanding of passenger list/manifest distribution and control has changed to reflect the current emergency management approaches for mass casualty incident (MCI) response. Previous NTSB guidance focused largely on all-fatal accidents (i.e., no surviving passengers or crew), where the presiding medical examiner or coroner is principally responsible for victim accounting.

Mass casualty incidents pose a different set of victim accounting challenges due to the rapid movement of survivors away from the scene. Determining the whereabouts and welfare of those involved in an MCI is the responsibility of the jurisdiction in which an accident has occurred. This process requires collaboration between public safety agencies and the air carrier, who holds critical information related to the persons onboard the aircraft.

Therefore, it is important for air carriers to develop an understanding of the mass casualty response and identify the agency(ies) that will be coordinating the victim accounting operation; develop a process to consider requests for the passenger list/manifest; and provide relevant information (i.e., number of persons onboard, names of passengers and crew, contact information for survivors and family members), to appropriate agencies. This document offers guidance for air carriers and the response community regarding both the distribution of the passenger list/manifest and the importance of maintaining control of the information contained on the passenger list/manifest. This guidance does not obligate air carriers to provide the passenger list/manifest to any agency or organization beyond what is required by relevant federal, state, or local statute.

What does the family assistance legislation specifically state regarding passenger list/manifest distribution?

The family assistance legislation specifies that the NTSB and the designated organization, which is the American Red Cross (ARC), shall receive the passenger list from the air carrier involved in the accident upon request.⁵³ The NTSB and ARC are restricted from sharing the information other than with the family of a passenger, if deemed appropriate.⁵⁴

Which agencies, beyond those specified in federal legislation, might request information from the passenger list/manifest?

⁵² Revised July 16, 2019

⁵³ [49 U.S.C. §1136\(d\)](#), [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(4\)](#), and [49 U.S.C. §41313\(c\)\(4\)](#)

⁵⁴ [49 U.S.C. §1136\(d\)\(2\)](#)

The jurisdiction where the accident occurred is responsible for accounting for all fatal and non-fatal victims of the MCI. This responsibility requires collaboration between the air carrier and the presiding public safety agencies – emergency management agency, fire department, emergency medical services, law enforcement, the medical examiner/coroner, public health authorities and hospitals that have received patients. Air carriers are essential in this accounting process. They hold critical information – the passenger list/manifest- that serves as the foundation for the victim accounting process. The NTSB encourages air carriers to develop a process to consider requests for the passenger list/manifest and a mechanism to provide information from the passenger list/manifest to a local or state coordinating agency established by the presiding jurisdiction responsible for investigating missing persons, such as the emergency management agency or lead law enforcement agency located within an Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Air carriers should refer other local agencies to this coordinating agency for information contained on the passenger list/manifest. Air carriers should provide the NTSB with the names and agency affiliations of the agencies with which they shared information from the passenger list/manifest, what information was included, and the date and time the information was shared, as soon as possible after dissemination.

What information is included on the passenger list/manifest?

Carriers are obligated to provide the NTSB and ARC “a list (which is based on the best available information at the time of the request) of the names of the passengers aboard the aircraft (whether or not such names have been verified) and will periodically update the list.”⁵⁵ The term “passenger” is broadly defined to include everyone aboard the aircraft (crew, revenue, and non-revenue passengers).⁵⁶ Family assistance legislation does not provide additional detail regarding the contents of the passenger list/manifest.

As part of the family assistance operation, the NTSB will request additional information from the carrier, specifically contact information for accident survivors and family members. The NTSB will use this information to develop a contact list for communicating with survivors and family members during the family assistance operation and throughout the investigation. The NTSB expects the air carrier to share contact information expediently, but also understands that it may take time to obtain and confirm contact information for accident survivors and family members.

⁵⁵ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(4\)](#); and [49 U.S.C. §41313\(c\)\(4\)](#)

⁵⁶ [49 U.S.C. §1136\(h\)\(2\)](#)

Additional considerations for air carriers:

- This guidance does not preclude NTSB investigative requests under Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 831 for manifest-related information including, the close-out/load manifest, interim documents, final passenger list/manifest, and procedures to account for people onboard the airplane.
- Engage early with the public safety agencies involved in the victim accounting process. The NTSB Transportation Disaster Assistance Division (TDA) will support air carrier efforts to integrate into this process.
- Develop procedures to consider requests and determine if appropriate information from the passenger list/manifest should be provided to the requesting agency. It is reasonable that once the air carrier shares information from the passenger list/manifest with the coordinating agency, all other requests be redirected to that coordinating agency.
- Ensure that corporate and local (i.e., station) emergency response plans include procedures to vet requests from the response community for the passenger list/manifest and that air carrier personnel at the corporate and local levels are adequately trained to implement these procedures.
- Participate in MCI response planning efforts within geographic areas of operation to develop an understanding of the overarching response and the victim accounting process. Identify key points of contact within the response community who will serve in a leadership role during an MCI victim accounting operation and who will likely request information from the passenger list/manifest.

Considerations for the response community (i.e., local/state agencies, airports, and hospitals) directly involved in victim accounting:

- Identify a coordinating agency for the victim accounting operation that will request information from the passenger list/manifest from the air carrier. All additional local and state requests for the passenger list/manifest should be directed to that agency, which should document the name, agency affiliation and date/time the information was shared. Information needs vary depending on the phase of the operation. For example, during the immediate life safety phase, the most critical information needed by fire/EMS assets responding to the scene are the number of persons onboard the aircraft. Once accident survivors have been cleared from the scene, agencies responsible for victim accounting will require names and, ideally, contact information. It is important for requesting agencies to clearly articulate the specific information needed and their role in the response at the time of the request.

Understand that the information contained on a passenger list/manifest is sensitive because family members of those onboard the aircraft may not be aware of their loved-one's involvement in the accident. While the air carrier is responsible for notifying families of persons onboard that their loved-one is involved in the accident, the process takes time.

- Establish appropriate document control measures and ensure safeguards are in place to prevent public disclosure of the information contained on the passenger list/manifest. This information should not be released outside of agencies that have a direct operational role in the victim accounting process (i.e., public safety agencies).
- Be prepared to address questions from the air carrier regarding the role of the requesting agency in the victim accounting process, use of the data, and mechanisms to ensure that the information is not publicly disclosed.
- Share information about the whereabouts and welfare of victims with the air carrier, ARC, and the NTSB as part of the victim accounting process. The air carrier, NTSB and ARC are mandated by federal legislation to offer services and information to accident victims and their family members.

Air carriers are encouraged to contact the NTSB TDA (202-314-6185; assistance@ntsb.gov) during the preparedness phase to discuss the guidance offered in this document, and during the response phase to discuss requests for the passenger list/manifest if the carrier is unsure about the role of the requesting agency in the response.

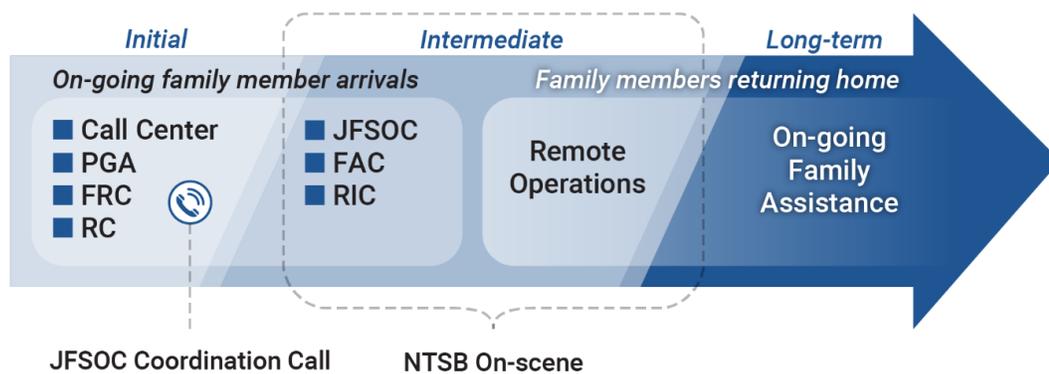
This document supplants other guidance provided by the NTSB regarding distribution of the manifest.

Appendix 7 - Family Assistance Operations Overview

The ability to connect family members to information and resources in a timely and efficient manner is key to a successful family assistance operation. An effective family assistance operation makes every effort to provide consistent and equitable resources to those affected while ensuring that the unique circumstances of survivors and family members and the accident are taken into consideration.

The following figure illustrates the three phases of an on-scene family assistance operation. Depending on the accident circumstances, the timeline may vary.

FIGURE 6. NTSB Family Assistance Operations Timeline



Pre-Launch Planning

The planning phase is extremely important to the success of the family assistance operation and is discussed throughout The Framework in various sections. This appendix focuses on the initial, intermediate, and long-term phases and elements of the on-scene family assistance operation until the transition to remote assistance operations.

Call Centers

A call center is a centralized department or group that handles inbound and outbound calls from those interested in learning of the whereabouts and wellbeing of their loved one(s). Call centers may be located either within an organization (for example, local law enforcement or air carrier) or outsourced to another company that specializes in handling these types of calls.

As soon as they become aware that an accident has occurred, family members seek an official agency to obtain information or to report a loved one missing. In response to an MCI, there may be multiple call centers that collect and provide information.

The ADFAA requires the air carrier to establish a toll-free phone number to be answered by “sufficiently trained personnel”⁵⁷ to notify family members of the involvement of their loved one in the accident. The carrier is responsible for making notifications of involvement to family members as soon as the air carrier has verified the passenger was aboard the aircraft.⁵⁸ Additionally, the carrier call center may be used to collect information from family and the public to follow up with them after verification is complete.

A missing persons call center (MPCC) may be established by the local response community to receive calls from members of the public wishing to report someone missing. Typically, missing persons reports are investigated by law enforcement personnel. The objectives of an MPCC are to collect basic information about the person reported missing, contact information for the caller, and information that will be used by law enforcement to assess the likelihood of involvement, allowing for investigative prioritization. Reconciliation of information between the air carrier call center and the MPCC is important for victim accounting. It is also critical to establish who is managing and funding the MPCC if it has been established by the local jurisdiction. The NTSB will facilitate these conversations in the JFSOC.

Family Assistance Facilities

Depending on the circumstances of the accident and response, various types of facilities may be used to meet the needs of survivors and family members during the initial and intermediate phases of a family assistance operation. Some of these facilities are established by the local jurisdiction, some are created on an as-needed basis by those in the community who quickly identify a need, and others may be executed as part of the affected air carrier’s emergency response plan. The air carrier and local jurisdiction should communicate through the EOC any established family assistance facilities and their purpose. Conversations should include who will be providing updates within the facility and what support is needed from other organizations.

⁵⁷ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(1\)](#) and [§41413\(c\)\(1\)](#)

⁵⁸ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(3\)](#) and [§41413\(c\)\(3\)](#)

Below is an overview of the types of facilities that are often incorporated into the family assistance operation following a 49 U.S.C. 1136 legislated aircraft accident. Each serves an important function related to providing survivors and families with a safe, private place to receive information and access available support services. Each facility should be compliant with the ADA.

Passenger Gathering Area

A PGA is a temporary, secure, and private facility where surviving passengers are gathered, accounted for, and secondarily triaged to determine whether they have any injuries in need of medical treatment. Those without injuries or other needs often return home or continue with their travel. There may be a need to reunify survivors with family members awaiting their arrival at a Reunification Center (RC). A separate crew gathering area (CGA) for surviving crew may also be established by the air carrier or local jurisdiction.

Friends and Relatives Center

An FRC is a temporary, secure, and private facility where family, friends, and relatives of a passenger are initially gathered. The purpose of this facility is to provide a location for family, friends, and relatives to receive initial information about the accident and their loved one's potential involvement, to provide information to assist the family assistance operation organizations in providing support services, and to provide an overview of what family members can expect moving forward. Minimal support services including basic needs, emotional support, and health services are often available here. As the family assistance operation becomes more established, the FRC is often closed or transitioned to an FAC. FRCs may also be established at satellite locations for the purposes of assisting families in remote locations (for example, those at arriving, departing, or connecting airports during travel connections).

Reunification Center

An RC is a temporary location where surviving passengers and family, friends, and relatives can be reunified following an aircraft accident. This is a location, separate from the FRC, to allow for the private reunification away from the families of passengers who may still be awaiting information about their loved one.

Joint Family Support Operations Center

The JFSOC is a central meeting location where organizations participating in the family assistance operation are brought together to monitor, plan, coordinate, and execute a coordinated response aimed at maximizing the utilization of all available resources. If possible, the location of the JFSOC should be within the FAC (if established) or nearby. As with many emergency responses, the timely communication and sharing of information will be a challenge to a successful response. To increase effectiveness, a JFSOC location should be established early in the response and include daily meetings scheduled with participating organizations to monitor ongoing family support activities and requests. See [Appendix 8](#) for additional information.

Family Assistance Center

A FAC is a secure, safe, and centralized facility established to provide ongoing support services, information, and resources to survivors and family members after the FRC and PGA are closed following an accident. The location of this facility may be determined by its proximity to the accident location, hospitals, or family assistance services being provided for the response. Air carriers are not required by 49 U.S.C. §41113 or §41313 to open a FAC, however, establishing a FAC is considered a best practice in a response to a mass fatality incident or MCI.

The FAC provides a dedicated location to ensure a coordinated family assistance operation among multiple organizations, including the air carrier, involved in supporting response efforts. In an aviation accident that meets the criteria of 49 U.S.C. 1136, only one FAC should be established. This will help ensure that the NTSB, air carrier, the Red Cross, and other support agencies are coordinating their resources and services, identifying gaps in service, and effectively providing information to survivors and families of passengers in a consistent manner. In many cases, air carriers have plans established for securing a physical FAC location and logistical set-up; however, a virtual component may also be necessary to meet the needs of those who are unable or unwilling to travel to a FAC. See [Appendix 11](#) for additional information.

Remote Information Center

RICs are additional facilities established to serve as extensions of the FAC to disseminate information to survivors and family members unable or unwilling to travel to the accident location or the FAC and to enable them to connect with services in their local areas. A RIC may be a small information center or dedicated location within a hospital (such as a family information center) or other location where information about available services and support are disseminated.

Ongoing Family Assistance and Remote Operations

As the family assistance operation moves into the long-term phase, there is typically a transition from the FAC to ongoing or remote operations. This transition most commonly takes place when fatally injured passengers have been identified and returned to families, and families return home to plan funerals, memorials, or burial rituals. The transition may occur prior to completion of the entire identification process. FAC operations may begin to wind down when family members have gained confidence in the operation, believe they will remain informed of ongoing efforts after departing, and understand how they can access further assistance or information once they have returned home.

The key to a successful transition is communicating what survivors and family members can expect from the NTSB, air carrier, and the Red Cross once the physical FAC closes. For example, the NTSB will communicate the investigative process and the next expected release of information as well as identify the TDA case manager assigned to serve as the primary POC to survivors and families for the NTSB investigation. The air carrier will provide the process for the return of PE and contact information should survivors or family members need to reach them directly. In addition, the Red Cross will provide information on how survivors and family members can access emotional support services in their community.

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Appendix 8 – Joint Family Support Operations Center Definition, Purpose & Objectives

In the aftermath of an aviation accident that meets 49 U.S.C. 1136 criteria, the NTSB establishes a JFSOC to coordinate the family assistance operation. The JFSOC is a central meeting location where participating organizations are brought together to monitor, plan, coordinate and execute a family assistance operation maximizing the utilization of all available resources. If possible, the location of the JFSOC should be within the FAC or nearby. Establishing the JFSOC within the FAC allows for continued situational awareness and monitoring of the facility to identify and address evolving needs and support for survivors and family members, along with addressing emergent issues that may arise, such as site visit planning.

The JFSOC is designed to address communication and information sharing challenges which may impede a successful response. The family assistance operation partners that typically participate in the JFSOC include but are not limited to; the NTSB, air carrier, the Red Cross, local or state government (for example, medicolegal authority, law enforcement, EOC personnel, hospital authorities, public health authorities), tribal government, and other federal agencies, as needed for the operation.

JFSOC Objectives:

- Facilitate effective communication and sharing of information among those involved in the family assistance operation,
- Monitor ongoing family support activities and track mission activities of each family assistance operation partner,
- Ensure efficient delivery of services by identifying needs, gaps, and duplication of efforts,
- Coordinate resource requests to address immediate and long-term needs, and plan for the transition from immediate to long-term service provision.

JFSOC Coordination Call

Coordination of the JFSOC begins within hours of the accident notification and confirmation of the legislated status. The NTSB TDA Chief or designated TDA representative will invite personnel listed above to participate in a JFSOC coordination call.

A key objective of the call is to open the lines of communication by bringing together the key family assistance operation partners. Additional objectives include

obtaining on-scene situational awareness and determining the date, time, location, and participants of the first on-scene JFSOC meeting.

During the JFSOC coordination call, the invited family assistance operation partners will be asked to provide their status at the time of the call, the status of their family assistance plan, and other areas of focus for their respective organization during this initial phase of the response. Although the discussion will vary based upon the nature of the accident, the family assistance response partners listed below should be prepared to discuss the following topics:

Local family assistance response partner: role and activation status of the agency, status of accident fatalities and/or survivors including injury severity, hospitals receiving survivors, patient transport updates, family assistance facilities established by local authorities and/or the air carrier (such as FRC, PGA, RC), other family assistance operations currently underway, and an agency POC for family assistance.

NTSB: applicability of the federal family assistance legislation, the composition of the NTSB launch team and home team (headquarter based) support, anticipated arrival time, base of operations, currently available accident information, the status of federal partner agencies who have been activated in support of the response, testing of the air carrier's toll-free number, points of contact for the NTSB including family assistance and media relations, and scheduling of the first JFSOC meeting in the accident location.

Air carrier: known information about the accident and the passengers/crew; family assistance team status at the departure, arrival, diversion and other major airport locations along the route; station response team status, corporate response team status, activation of mutual aid, codeshare or alliance partnerships, involvement of service providers, interface with airport authorities, passenger list/manifest status, toll-free number status, family notification status, locations and travel status of family members, foreign national involvement (including language needs) or involvement of other special populations, family assistance facility status (such as FRC, PGA, FAC, JFSOC), and air carrier points of contact for family assistance and media relations.

Red Cross: local region's activation status and initial accident response report summary, known information about accident location and local family assistance efforts. identity of Red Cross points of contact, if assigned, response plans for regional/division levels and other Red Cross services, current staff available for psychological, emotional, and spiritual care; staff on standby, known initial survivor or

family member interactions, activation of support partners or other disaster relief organizations, and other Red Cross points of contacts, as necessary, for family assistance operations.

JFSOC Facility Considerations

The JFSOC is intended as a meeting space for family assistance response partners to coordinate and direct the family assistance operation and is not for survivors or family members.

Efforts should be made to create a secure location within a FAC, if established. (Note that, the nature of the accident and public health concerns may require the use of a virtual JFSOC coordinated by the NTSB.) The air carrier should locate and secure space to accommodate the JFSOC. It should be co-located or near the family assistance operation but away from gathering spaces for survivors and family members.

Space, technology, and communication access, and logistical support should be considered in the selection of the JFSOC space. To ensure the accessibility to, and involvement of, all relevant family assistance response partners, virtual or telephonic means of communication should be available in the space. If the air carrier has difficulty securing space, the NTSB will coordinate with local authorities to determine the availability of a suitable location.

JFSOC Meetings

Several types of meetings will occur within the JFSOC to facilitate active communication and information sharing across family assistance response partners. Status meetings are scheduled at least once a day, and likely more often during the initial days of a response. These meetings provide scheduled opportunities to gather decision makers from each family assistance response partner to address the current areas of focus as they relate to the fundamental concerns of family members. The daily status report checklist (see [Appendix 10](#)) provides an example of the information that will be requested and tracked throughout the family assistance operation.

Beyond the daily status meetings, topical meetings may be scheduled to coordinate and direct specific issue areas, events or requests from survivors and family members that require a significant amount of planning. Some of these include family briefing coordination, site visit planning, memorial events, assurance review(s), FAC transition and long-term support planning, and NTSB TDA departure/close out.

Family Assistance Response Partner JFSOC Liaisons

Those involved in JFSOC meetings should include senior representatives from each responding organization with a defined role in the family assistance operation. The individual participating in JFSOC meetings should have decision-making authority, or direct and immediate access to those with authority to make decisions, to allocate and access available resources as the need arises. The individual represents the interests, activities, and available resources associated with their organization.

Depending on the size and scope of the response, additional individuals may be necessary to ensure coverage within the JFSOC. Ideally, the same person(s) should serve in this capacity for the length of the family assistance operation to ensure a consistent effort by personnel who understand the complex issues of the response and to ensure the best delivery of services and information to survivors and family members.

JFSOC Roles and Associated Tasks

The following provides an overview of the roles and associated tasks as they relate to specific family assistance response partners identified under 49 U.S.C. §41113, §41313, and §1136. As previously discussed, each responding organization with a role in the family assistance operation should provide representation to the JFSOC. Depending upon the unique nature of the response and the resources available from all responding partners, it may be necessary for one individual to take on multiple roles or to delegate specific tasks to other individuals within their organization to support evolving family assistance operations.

NTSB TDA chief

- Serves as the NTSB-delegated representative for family assistance operations.
- Provides primary oversight of the NTSB family assistance operation.
- Serves as TDA spokesperson at family briefings.

NTSB JFSOC coordinator

- Liaises with the air carrier and other JFSOC liaisons.
- Manages the day-to-day activities of the JFSOC.
- Coordinates with and assigns tasks to JFSOC liaisons as the need arises.
- Facilitates the exchange of information among JFSOC participants.
- Schedules and facilitates daily and special circumstance JFSOC meetings.
- Schedules and coordinates family briefings with JFSOC liaisons.

- Prepares family briefing talking points for the NTSB in conjunction with the NTSB case manager.
- Facilitates the family briefing, introduction of speakers, and question-and-answer session.
- Ensures that critical information is kept current and available.
- Informs other JFSOC liaisons of significant developments.

NTSB case manager

- Participates in JFSOC meetings to document organizational activities, response efforts, and assignments.
- Documents relevant information for the JFSOC daily status report.
- Maintains the master list of names, contact information, and locations of JFSOC liaisons and key family assistance personnel.
- Prepares family briefing talking points for the NTSB in conjunction with the NTSB JFSOC coordinator.
- Manages family member contact information.
- Coordinates with the air carrier and the Red Cross to ensure ongoing support after the initial response concludes.

Air carrier senior representative

- Serves as the air carrier's representative to the chief of the NTSB TDA Division regarding the air carrier's family assistance response.
- Answers questions regarding the air carrier's emergency response plan, codeshare, alliance and partner organizations, service provider(s), available resources, and limits to family assistance support.
- Travels to various locations, such as the accident location, hospital, morgue, JFSOC, and FAC as necessary for the family assistance operation.
- Participates in family briefings as required or coordinates participation by an air carrier designee.
- Coordinates, prepares, and delivers the air carrier's information during family briefings. (This may also be the responsibility of the air carrier family assistance coordinator.)

Air carrier family assistance coordinator

- Serves as the representative of the air carrier regarding the day-to-day functions of the air carrier's family assistance operation.
- Prepares information to be distributed to families of passengers regarding the carrier's specific resources (for example, services, points of contact).

- Ensures that resources are available to meet the needs of families of passengers, including supply acquisition when needed.
- Coordinates, prepares, and delivers the air carrier's information during family briefings. (This may also be the responsibility of the air carrier's senior representative).
- Addresses questions related to current and future support provided by the air carrier.
- Assigns a primary POC to coordinate directly with the Red Cross JFSOC liaison to ensure that—
 - Families of passengers are aware of the family assistance services available from the Red Cross.
 - Requests for emotional, spiritual, psychological, and family care are fulfilled.
 - Adequate facility space is available for providing care.
 - Areas are established within the FAC for families of passengers to grieve privately.⁵⁹
 - Space is available for on-site respite care for families with minors, if determined necessary.
 - Appropriate support is provided to address cultural diversity and access and functional needs.
- Maintains information on—
 - Injured passengers, using information provided by local government agencies, public safety organizations, and hospitals.
 - Fatality identification efforts (numbers of those recovered, those identified, those whose next of kin (NOK) have been notified, and those whose remains have been released) using information provided by the presiding medicolegal authority.
 - Contact information for the family of each passenger.
 - The tracking of families of passengers who have been notified of passenger's involvement, number of attempted notifications, and numbers of families for which contact information is unknown; families travelling to the accident location, currently at the accident location, or at another location, and projected departures from the accident location. See [Appendix 10](#) for more information.

⁵⁹ [49 U.S.C. §1136\(c\)\(2\)](#)

Air carrier JFSOC liaison

- Remains available in the JFSOC for questions from responding agencies.
- Participates in all JFSOC daily status and special circumstance meetings and provides ongoing status updates on status of family activities. See [Appendix 10](#) for the JFSOC daily status report checklist.
- Coordinates and shares information among all JFSOC liaisons.
- Disseminates information within own organization, as appropriate.
- Maintains up-to-date information regarding the location and contact information for family assistance facilities, key organizational entities, and personnel.
- Provides ongoing updates during JFSOC meetings and ensures that the NTSB case manager is aware of any changes.
- Maintains and updates daily plans and incident action plans.

Red Cross NTSB liaison

- Serves as the Red Cross representative to the NTSB TDA chief regarding the Red Cross national family assistance response.
- Serves as a direct support to the Red Cross JFSOC liaison, staff, and volunteers assigned to the family assistance operation, ensuring awareness, and understanding of, and compliance with, the requirements under 49 U.S.C. §113660, the NTSB-Red Cross MOU, and the roles and responsibilities of the Red Cross, the NTSB, and the air carrier.
- Ensures that a cost-accounting system is in place for potential reimbursement purposes.

Red Cross JFSOC liaison

- Serves as the primary POC for the Red Cross family assistance response during JFSOC coordination and is authorized to make decisions on behalf of the organization.
- Seeks support from the Red Cross NTSB liaison, as necessary.
- Coordinates directly with the air carrier's primary POC to the Red Cross to address the following:
 - Survivor and family member requests for emotional, spiritual, psychological, and family care at the FAC or where they are located (such as hospital, home).

⁶⁰ [49 U.S.C. 1136](#)

- Adequate facility space is available for support services and staff at the FAC, if established, including a private place for families to grieve⁶¹.
- Use of air carrier resources, to the maximum extent practicable, to provide services from Red Cross staff and volunteers.
- Coordinates additional emotional, spiritual, psychological, and family care services and staffing to include partner disaster relief organization services, upon request.
- Ensures a plan to address spontaneous unaffiliated volunteers is activated, if necessary.
- Ensures that a donation management plan is established with local organizations that handle donation processing, if necessary.
- Remains available in the JFSOC for questions from responding agencies, participates in all JFSOC daily status and special circumstance meetings and provides ongoing updates on the status of family assistance activities. See [Appendix 10](#) for the JFSOC daily status report checklist.
- Coordinates and shares information among all JFSOC liaisons.
- Disseminates information within own organization, as appropriate.
- Maintains up-to-date information regarding support service requests, staffing, and daily and future plans.
- Provides ongoing updates during JFSOC meetings and ensures that the NTSB case manager is aware of any changes.
- Prepares information for distribution to survivors and families regarding Red Cross support services (such as mental health, spiritual care, respite care for minors).
- Coordinates, prepares, and delivers information regarding Red Cross support services during family briefings or delegates this task to senior staff.

Presiding medicolegal authority JFSOC liaison (as required)

- Serves as the liaison for victim recovery and identification activities at the accident location, the morgue, the antemortem interview process, and the JFSOC.
- Updates the status of victim identification, including the numbers of those recovered, those positively identified, those whose NOK have been notified, and those whose human remains have been released to their families.
- Maintains and shares contact information for family members, as determined necessary and appropriate, for the provision of family assistance resources.

⁶¹ [49 U.S.C. §1136\(c\)\(2\)](#)

- Tracks and reports on the progress of antemortem interviews and antemortem data collection.
- Tracks custody of PE until released to the air carrier for return.
- Participates in daily JFSOC status meeting(s) and briefs participating organizations on status of family support activities. See [Appendix 10](#) for the JFSOC daily status report checklist.
- Coordinates and shares information with all JFSOC liaisons.
- Disseminates information within own organization, as appropriate.
- Maintains up-to-date information regarding the location and contact information for family assistance facilities, key organizational entities, and personnel.
- Prepares information to be distributed to families of passengers regarding organization-specific resources (for example, services, points of contact).
- Coordinates, prepares, and delivers organization or agency's information during family briefings.
- Ensures that adequate staff is available to carry out family assistance tasks.

Medical treatment facility JFSOC liaison (as required)

- Serves as the liaison among the hospitals that have received passengers regarding patients' locations, numbers, and general health status.
- Assists in determining key points of contact within the hospitals to assist in the receipt of passenger and family member contact information.
- Coordinates with hospital staff to facilitate access for family members to remotely view family briefings.
- Participates in daily JFSOC status meeting(s) and briefs participating organizations about the status of family support activities.
- Coordinates and shares information with all JFSOC liaisons.
- Disseminates information within own organization, as appropriate.
- Maintains up-to-date information regarding the location and contact information for family assistance facilities, key organizational entities, and personnel.
- Provides ongoing updates during JFSOC meetings and ensures that the NTSB case manager is aware of any changes.
- Ensures that adequate staff is available to perform family assistance tasks.

DOS JFSOC liaison (as required)

- Serves as the liaison between DOS and the JFSOC regarding the needs of foreign national passengers.
- Coordinates with appropriate embassies/consulates and foreign governments to facilitate the notification of foreign national involvement in an accident and communication with the NTSB, the Red Cross, and air carrier.
- Monitors the status of foreign national fatalities and survivors within the U.S. and their families abroad, including travel status for those who choose to travel to the U.S.
- Coordinates issues involving foreign passengers and the support they will need from the DOS, the associated embassy/consulate, and other participants in the JFSOC.
- Provides advice on cultural considerations.
- Answers or redirects calls from foreign government officials.
- Serves as the sponsor for foreign consulate officials who have a need to participate in the JFSOC or to use family assistance facilities.
- Participates in daily JFSOC status meetings and briefs participating organizations about the status of family support activities. See [Appendix 10](#) for the JFSOC daily status report checklist.
- Coordinates and shares information with all JFSOC liaisons.
- Disseminates information within own organization, as appropriate.
- Provides ongoing updates during JFSOC meetings and ensures that the NTSB case manager is aware of any changes.
- Maintains a daily log of family support activities, requests, and resources available within their organization and adjusts as necessary.
- Prepares information to be distributed to families of passengers regarding organization-specific resources (for example, services, points of contact).
- Coordinates, prepares, and delivers organization or agency's information during family briefings.
- Ensures that adequate staff is available to perform family assistance tasks.

Federal partner JFSOC liaison (as required)

- Assists JFSOC participants in understanding the roles and responsibilities of their agency as they pertain to family assistance.
- Identifies assets, resources, and points of contact that can be used to support the family assistance operation in accordance with preestablished MOU/MOA.

- Participates in daily JFSOC status meetings and briefs participating organizations about the status of family support activities. See [Appendix 10](#) for the JFSOC daily status report checklist.
- Coordinates and shares information with all JFSOC liaisons.
- Disseminates information within own organization, as appropriate.
- Provides ongoing updates during JFSOC meetings and ensures that the NTSB case manager has captured any changes.
- Maintains and updates daily plans, incident action plans and future operations.
- Maintains a daily log of family support activities, requests, and resources available within their organization and adjusts as necessary.
- Prepares information to be distributed to the families of passengers regarding organization-specific resources (for example, services, points of contact).
- Coordinates, prepares, and delivers organization or agency's information during family briefings.
- Ensures that adequate staff is available to perform family assistance tasks.

State, local, tribal government JFSOC liaisons (as required)

- Assist JFSOC participants in understanding local community structure and leadership.
- Identify local assets, resources, and points of contact that can be used to support the operation.
- Assist with coordination of issues of security for the FAC, lodging facilities, hospitals, morgue, other designated sensitive areas, and the families of passengers.
- Participate in daily JFSOC status meetings and brief participating organizations about the status of family support activities. See [Appendix 10](#) for the JFSOC daily status report checklist.
- Coordinate and share information with all JFSOC liaisons.
- Disseminate information within own organization, as appropriate.
- Maintain up-to-date information regarding the location and contact information for family assistance facilities, key organizational entities, and personnel.
- Provide ongoing updates during JFSOC meetings and ensure that the NTSB case manager is aware of any changes.
- Maintain and update daily plans, incident action plans and future operations.

- Maintain a daily log including family support activities, requests, and resources available within their organization and adjust as necessary.
- Prepare information to be distributed to families of passengers regarding organization-specific resources (for example, services, points of contact).
- Coordinates, prepares, and delivers organization or agency's information during family briefings.
- Ensures that adequate staff is available to perform family assistance tasks.

Appendix 9 – JFSOC Coordination Call Agenda (Sample)

Objectives

The objectives of the JFSOC coordination call are to initiate an open line of communication among key family assistance operation stakeholders; obtain situational awareness regarding the status of the family assistance response during the initial phase; and organize the date, time, location, and participants for the first JFSOC meeting at the accident location. A JFSOC Coordination Call will be scheduled approximately 2-3 hours following notification to the air carrier and the Red Cross that the accident meets criteria established under 49 U.S.C. §1136. The NTSB chief or TDA representative will facilitate the call. Although the participants in the coordination call will vary based on the nature of the accident response, at a minimum, the following agencies will be requested to join the call:

- The NTSB
- Air carrier (partners and service providers, as needed)
- The Red Cross
- Local response agencies engaged in the family assistance operation (for example, OEM, first responders, hospitals, and healthcare coalitions, presiding medicolegal authority)
- State, tribal, and/or other federal agencies having a role in the response.

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions by response agencies including contact information:
 - a. Agency's POC during travel to accident location.
2. NTSB's legislated status determination.
3. Local response agency:
 - a. Status of accident fatalities and survivors.
 - b. Overview of injury severities.
 - c. Hospital transports: locations, numbers, points of contacts.
 - d. Current family assistance operations and involvement.
 - e. Local Chapter Red Cross status.
4. NTSB status:
 - a. Launch team composition, arrival time, lodging.
 - b. TDA launch and home team (headquarter based) status.
 - c. Air carrier toll-free number call verification reminder.
 - d. Current investigative information.

- e. Media Relations Division contact information.
 - f. Federal partner status.
5. Air carrier status:
- a. Family assistance leadership status.
 - b. Family assistance team status.
 - c. Passenger list/manifest, crew composition and status of reconciliation.
 - d. Toll-free number activation and status.
 - e. Crew and passenger status.
 - f. Family notification process status.
 - g. Facilities status (such as FRC, PGA, CGA, FAC, JFSOC).
 - h. Service provider involvement (such as PE vendor, consultants).
 - i. Media Relations Division contact information.
6. Red Cross status:
- a. National NTSB liaison POC.
 - b. JFSOC liaison assignment status.
 - c. Available local/regional support services and local response status.
 - d. Available support services on standby.
7. Review of pending requests (data, resource needs) and responsible party; identification of immediate coordination needs among participants for report during first on-scene JFSOC meeting.
8. Meeting location and time of first on-scene JFSOC meeting.

Appendix 10 - JFSOC Meeting Checklists

JFSOC Initial Meeting Checklist		
	Organization's status, points of contact and JFSOC role.	All response partners
	Number, location(s), and duties of support personnel.	All
	Overview of investigative process, timelines, site condition, and other concerns.	NTSB
	Overview of passenger/crew information (numbers, nationalities, special populations).	Air Carrier
	Status of toll-free telephone number and level of activity.	Air Carrier
	Status of passenger list requests; including who has requested copies and concerns.	Air Carrier
	Status of the family assistance operation: FRC/PGA/CGA/FAC/RIC, hospital locations, remote access to services plan; number of family members at the FRC/PGA/FAC/hospital locations (currently/daily).	Air Carrier
	Family assistance team status, involvement, and status of family assistance service provider.	Air Carrier
	Review of current FAC set-up; what rooms have been assigned and what rooms are still needed for each response partner.	Air Carrier
	Status of notification of involvement: number of family groups notified, number for which notification was attempted, number still pending notification.	Air Carrier

	Crewmember family status, location, accommodations, plan for accessing services, and other concerns.	Air Carrier
	Family member travel updates: number and locations (for example, home, family hotel, hospital[s], other) of family members in the accident location; number of family members expected to arrive within the next 24 hours, number of family members not expected to travel, and their location(s).	Air Carrier
	Number of survivors and family members provided hotel accommodations.	Air Carrier
	Number of survivor and family member requests coordinated with the Red Cross by air carrier family assistance teams.	Air Carrier
	Status of PE management process (process overview, timeline, communications plan, role of third party, complications, retention plan).	Air Carrier
	Number of requests received for support by survivors and family members and/or air carrier Family Assistance Teams at the FAC, at hospitals, and those not traveling within the last 24 hours.	Red Cross
	Total number of survivors and family members provided services.	Red Cross
	Status update on current Red Cross staffing and services being provided at accident location/FRC/FAC/ hospitals/other locations.	Red Cross
	Status update on current staffing and services provided by other partner disaster relief or support services organization(s) being provided at accident location/FRC/FAC/ hospitals/other location.	Red Cross

	Review of resource needs (additional service rooms or staff; private room for families; workspace; break area for volunteers) and availability of potential support services (respite care for minors; donation management).	Red Cross
	Status of community memorial events or services.	Red Cross
	Status and location of Red Cross region(s) involved outside the accident location.	Red Cross
	Status of response (EOC activation; types of support operations; ESF-8 activity [if applicable]; local agency involvement, and other considerations).	Local and/or State OEM
	Status of victim recovery and identification efforts.	Medicolegal
	Status of antemortem data collection, interviews, and DNA reference sample collection.	Medicolegal
	Number of families notified of positive identification.	Medicolegal
	Status of the release of human remains.	Medicolegal
	Update on assistance provided to families of foreign nationals.	DOS
	Anticipated challenges, gaps, and duplication of services during the next operational period.	All
	Summary/remarks on current daily activities.	All
	Summary/remarks on activities scheduled for the next operational period.	All
	Review of coordination activities needed prior to next JFSOC meeting.	All
	Exit strategy (estimated timeline; transition to remote support, anticipated challenges, and related issues).	All

JFSOC Daily Meeting Checklist		
	NTSB status update, investigative update, current priorities.	NTSB
	Family member travel updates: number and locations of family members in the accident location; number of family members expected to arrive within the next 24 hours, number of family members expected to depart within the next 24 hours, number of family members not expected to travel.	Air Carrier
	Number of family members at the FRC/PGA/CGA/FAC/RIC other family assistance locations (currently/daily).	Air Carrier
	Number of family member requests coordinated with the Red Cross.	Air Carrier
	Status of PE management.	Air Carrier
	Number of requests received for support by survivors, family members and/or Air Carrier Family Assistance Teams at the FAC, at hospitals, and those not traveling within the last 24 hours.	Red Cross
	Total number of survivors and family members provided services.	Red Cross
	Status update on current Red Cross staffing and services being provided at accident location/FRC/PGA/CGA/FAC/ hospitals/other locations.	Red Cross
	Status update on current staffing and services provided by other partner disaster relief or support services organization(s) being provided at accident location/FRC/FAC/ hospitals/other locations.	Red Cross
	Review of resource needs (additional service rooms or staffing) and additional support service needs and availability (respite care for minors, donation management).	Red Cross
	Status of community memorial events or services.	Red Cross
	Status and location of Red Cross region(s) involved outside the accident location.	Red Cross
	Status of victim recovery and identification efforts.	Medicolegal
	Status of antemortem data collection, interviews, and DNA reference sample collection.	Medicolegal

	Number of families notified of positive identification.	Medicolegal
	Status of the release of human remains.	Medicolegal
	Update on assistance provided to families of foreign nationals.	DOS
	Issues to report from the overnight operational period and/or yesterday.	All
	Successes, challenges, needs, gaps, duplication of services, during the previous operational period.	All
	Summary/Remarks on current daily activities.	All
	Anticipated challenges, gaps, duplication of services during the next operational period.	All
	Discussion of site visit; safety, NTSB Investigator-in-Charge (IIC) support, timing, and other considerations. See Appendix 16 for the site visit JFSOC meeting checklist.	All
	Exit strategy (for example, estimated timeline, transition to remote support update, challenges).	All

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Appendix 11 - Family Assistance Center

Definition & Purpose

The FAC is a secure, safe, and centralized facility that provides ongoing support services, information and resources to survivors and family members typically after an FRC or PGA closes. Historically, FAC operations addressed mass fatality incidents focusing on families of deceased victims; however, FAC operations have evolved to address MCIs involving survivors. and should be an important part of family assistance response planning. Air carriers are not required by 49 U.S.C. §41113 and §41313 to establish a FAC; however, a FAC provides a dedicated location to ensure a coordinated family assistance response among multiple organizations. In an aviation accident that meets the criteria of 49 U.S.C 1136, there should only be one FAC established. This will help ensure that the NTSB, air carrier, the Red Cross and other support agencies are coordinating resources and services together, identifying gaps in service, and effectively providing information to survivors and families of passengers in a consistent manner. In many cases, air carriers have FAC plans established for securing a location and logistical setup; however, a virtual component may be necessary to meet the needs of those who are unable or unwilling to travel to a FAC.

Although a FAC is not mandated by law, it has become an MCI best practice. If a FAC is determined necessary for the response, the air carrier should plan on securing a facility near the accident site but not overlooking the scene. In the event of an overwater loss, a discussion about the FAC location will take place during the JFSOC coordination call. Factors to be considered in an overwater loss are proximity to departure and arrival and proximity to nearest municipality with infrastructure that can support a family assistance operation.

The FAC facility should provide adequate space for family members to receive support services, resources, family briefings, and basic needs. If possible, it is best to secure a facility that allows for or is nearby overnight accommodations for family members. The air carrier should also consider adequate space to house the family assistance operations (such as the JFSOC, FAC staff break rooms, and operations rooms). See [Appendix 12](#) for a sample FAC floor plan.

FAC Functions

The FAC is established to meet and support the immediate and short-term needs of survivors and family members. Several critical functions will take place in the FAC, and

coordination among all agencies involved in FAC operations is essential in accomplishing these functions. These critical functions include:

- Providing safety, security, and basic needs, including food and beverages, health services, and the badging of staff and family members.
- Providing information on NTSB daily family briefings, death notifications, the victim recovery and identification process.
- Providing access to resources available through the air carrier, including travel and lodging, PE processing, and financial assistance.
- Providing access to emotional, psychological, spiritual, and family care services available through the Red Cross or other relief organizations, including mental health providers, support referrals, and respite care for minors.
- Prioritizing reunification efforts through:
 - Hospital or healthcare interface, including patient tracking, hospital coordination, and inclusion into the larger family assistance operation.
 - Victim recovery and identification, including antemortem interviews and DNA collection by the presiding medicolegal authority, death notifications, and the return of human remains.

Location & Facility

Ideally, the FAC should be nearby but not within view or walking distance of the accident location. The FAC provides easy access to on-site services and amenities and must be compliant with the ADA.⁶² At minimum, consideration should be given to a facility that provides a wide range of amenities and has multiple meeting rooms, a large ballroom or conference room, up-to-date information technology infrastructure, and food and beverage or kitchen services.

Arrangements for a FAC should be coordinated by the air carrier in consultation with the NTSB. This requires awareness of the local jurisdiction's plans and current status. In addition, the JFSOC will be established within or near the FAC to allow for close coordination among all the family assistance response partners.

If available, a hotel can typically address the critical functions of a FAC in a central location and may also provide access to lodging for survivors and family members, if necessary. If possible, FAC facilities should be identified ahead of time. Carriers may choose to identify hotels ahead of time and work with hotel management in advance. For

⁶² [42 U.S.C. §12102](#)

example, if adequate space is not available, the air carrier may choose to discuss with hotels the possibility of relocating current guests to other facilities to accommodate survivors and family members.

When preselecting a FAC facility, consideration should be given to the possible duration of the family assistance operation and the maximum length of availability the facility can provide. This will prevent closing the FAC prematurely and will allow families to stay at a single location for an extended period without risk of being moved. Air carriers should clearly communicate with families how long they intend to support a family assistance operation (for example, until shortly after all human remains are transported, etc.) The anticipated number of family members traveling to an area and choosing to visit the FAC may vary greatly from day to day. The number of family members per passenger may fluctuate between 5 and 10, depending upon the phase of the response (for example, human remains recovered, identifications made, human remains ready for transport for memorial or funeral services).

Family members will want to access the FAC unfettered by the media or onlookers. Restricting access to the areas (such as parking lots, side streets, parks) surrounding the FAC facility may not be possible; however, efforts should be made to work with hotel or facility management, security, or local law enforcement to determine what options are available to reduce interactions as families arrive or depart the FAC. Media and unsolicited attorneys are not permitted inside the FAC. The media will be provided separate briefings by the NTSB. Approved legal aid services that provide pro-bono legal assistance and education to survivors and families affected by the accident may be present as a support service within the FAC. For survivors or families who retain legal representation, these attorneys or legal representatives are also not permitted in the FAC and related family assistance activities (such as family briefings). Attorneys are also restricted from approaching other survivors or family members for 45 days following the accident. See [Appendix 12](#) for an FAC sample layout.

Virtual FAC Operations

Virtual FAC operations may be necessary for survivors or family members unable to travel to a physical FAC at the accident location. Through the JFSOC, family assistance response partners will evaluate the need for virtual operations, the extent to which they can be provided, and the virtual technology available to support this effort. Examples of possible virtual resources may include a hybrid family briefing provided in person at the FAC and simultaneously made available virtually for survivors and family members to attend from their current locations (for example, at home or in a hospital). A FAC website

may be established to provide online access to the same information and resources available in the FAC's support service area. Development of this website will be discussed during JFSOC meetings.

Demobilization

During JFSOC meetings, family assistance response partners should plan the demobilization of the FAC early in the operation to help survivors and families set realistic expectations of how long the facility and in-person services will remain operational. Early planning will also help response partners prepare for demobilizing their own on-scene operations and transition to remote and long-term operations, as necessary.

There may be several factors to consider when planning to demobilize the FAC. Family members are most likely to leave the FAC when their loved one has been identified and they can return home to begin planning funeral or burial rituals or when they are notified that the identification process will continue for an extended period, and they will be contacted directly when the process is complete. Should this occur, families will be contacted at home regarding positive identifications made after the FAC closes. As a reminder, the intermediate phase and associated FAC operations are focused on providing short-term services and information until survivors and families depart. As part of their demobilization, response partners should provide contact information to survivors and family members to access information and resources once the operations transition to the long-term phase.

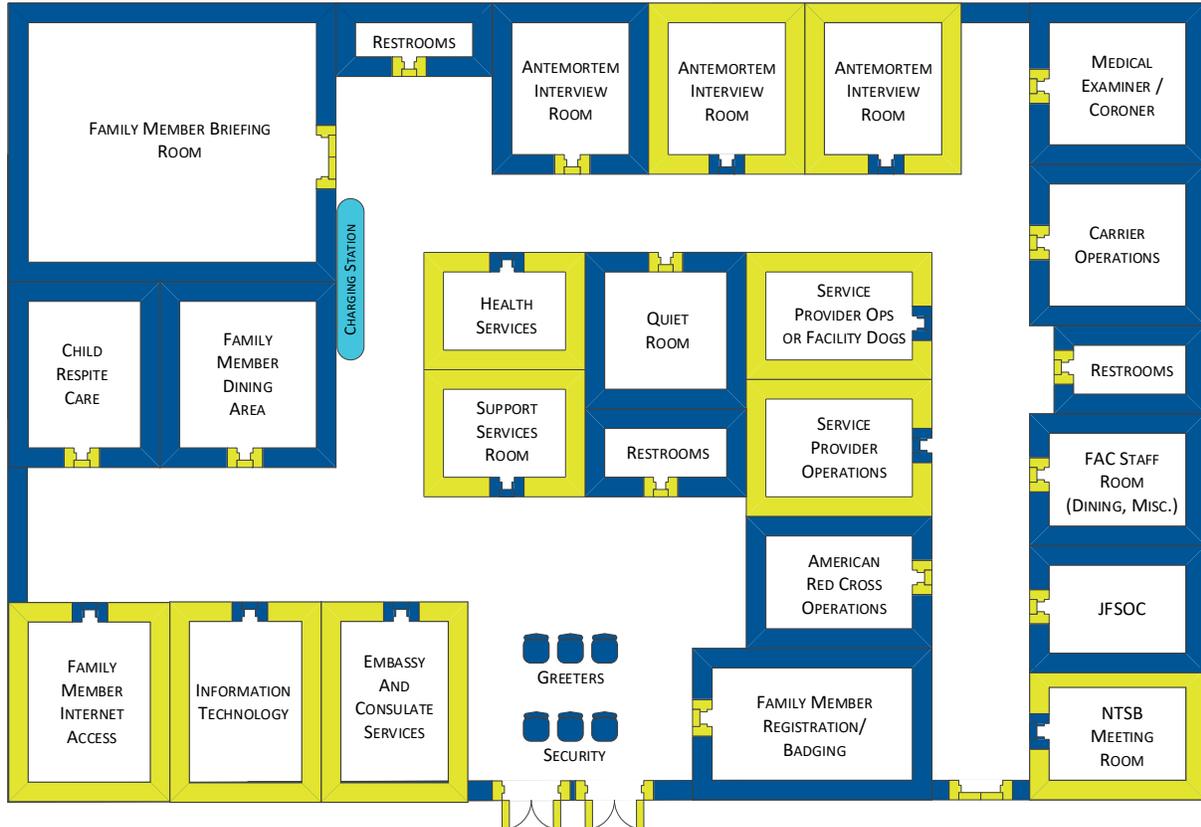
Concerning the NTSB TDA's departure from the accident location, this decision will be made in the JFSOC and will depend on multiple factors, including the status of the on-scene work involved in the NTSB investigation and NTSB launch team (such as Board member, media relations, and government affairs) departures from the accident location. Once NTSB on-scene media briefings cease and the documentation and fact-gathering efforts by the NTSB investigative team begin to conclude, the NTSB TDA will transition to remote communications with survivors and family concerning investigative updates and information, ending on-scene family briefings facilitated by the TDA team, and initiating their departure from the accident location.

The departure of NTSB TDA does not conclude the family assistance operation. Response partners, including the air carrier and the Red Cross, will continue coordinating efforts with the NTSB TDA Division to address ongoing assistance to survivors and family members as the intermediate phase of the family assistance operation transitions to the long-term phase and demobilization of the FAC.

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Appendix 12 - FAC Layout (Sample)

POSSIBLE FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER (FAC) LAYOUT*



* THIS DIAGRAM IS A SCHEMATIC. THESE ARE OPERATIONAL/SERVICE PROVISION AREAS NOT DRAWN TO SIZE OR MEANT TO INDICATE LOCATION. SPECIFIC FAC LAYOUT WILL BE BASED ON THE PHYSICAL FACILITY. *

* AREAS HIGHLIGHTED IN BLUE ARE CRITICAL AREAS THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHEN DETERMINING THE LAYOUT OF A FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER. *

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Appendix 13 - Family Briefings

During the intermediate phase of the family assistance operation, the NTSB TDA will facilitate family briefings to ensure a consistent, coordinated message from family assistance response partners to survivors and family members. The focus of briefings is on providing official information about search, rescue/recovery, victim identification, and other activities to include the NTSB's investigation, to the extent possible.

Those selected to brief on behalf of their organization should be effective communicators, be experienced with crisis communications, and have good listening skills. It is recommended that these briefers be senior-level officials within their organization or a subject matter expert on the topic being discussed. Each briefer is expected to participate in all family briefing planning meetings.

Briefers will also be expected to debrief together in the JFSOC immediately following the family briefing to address issues, follow up requests or needs, ensure that questions were answered by the appropriate organization, and make any needed corrections or updates prior to the next briefings.

NTSB-facilitated briefings should be provided to survivors and family members at least once daily, and more often as deemed necessary. Briefings should be held at the same time each day and notice of upcoming meetings should be communicated as soon as possible to survivors and families. In the event of a change to the briefing schedule or other information associated with the event, it is important to consider the most effective form of communication (such as SMS messaging, email, phone calls) to deliver updates on short notice.

Briefings should include adequate time after each presentation for survivors and family members to ask questions. A moderated conference bridge should be used for sessions with remote tele- and/or video conferencing to ensure that all questions from remote attendees are heard and addressed. The time allotment scheduled for questions and answers must be long enough to accommodate the number of questions that may be asked but must consider the needs of briefers that have an active and ongoing role in the site response (such as fire and rescue responders and the medicolegal authority representative). An agenda should be made available to survivors and family members once it has been finalized in the JFSOC. Agendas should include the list of briefers in the order they will present, their organization, and title. Providing an agenda will help inform survivors and family members about information being given during the briefing, who will provide that information, and where to direct any questions they have. Questions

should be addressed by the organization's briefer responsible for the item or topic, and briefers should delegate questions as needed to the appropriate organization involved in the family briefing. Survivors and family members should also be made aware of any other organizations in attendance that are not identified on the agenda.

Family Briefing Planning Meeting

The NTSB TDA will facilitate a JFSOC meeting before each family briefing to determine the agenda and order of briefers. Lengths of briefings vary; however, a briefing can last up to 2-3 hours or longer, depending on multiple factors, such as the number of attendees and questions, status of on-scene recovery work or investigation, or use of interpretation services, if needed.

Briefing Agenda (Sample)

A typical family briefing agenda may include –

- Opening statement, review of agenda:
 - Date and time of briefings.
 - Safety orientation (evacuation, exits, AEDs) and housekeeping items.
- Introduction of each briefer.
- Briefing topics (question-and-answer session after each).
 - Status of search and recovery operations (if needed).
 - Status of medicolegal process (such as status of identification).
 - Status of investigation.
 - Status of PE management.
 - Available support services (for example, travel, financial, emotional care, childcare, legal services).
- Planned events (such as incident site visit, community memorial events).
- Closing statement; location and time of next briefing.

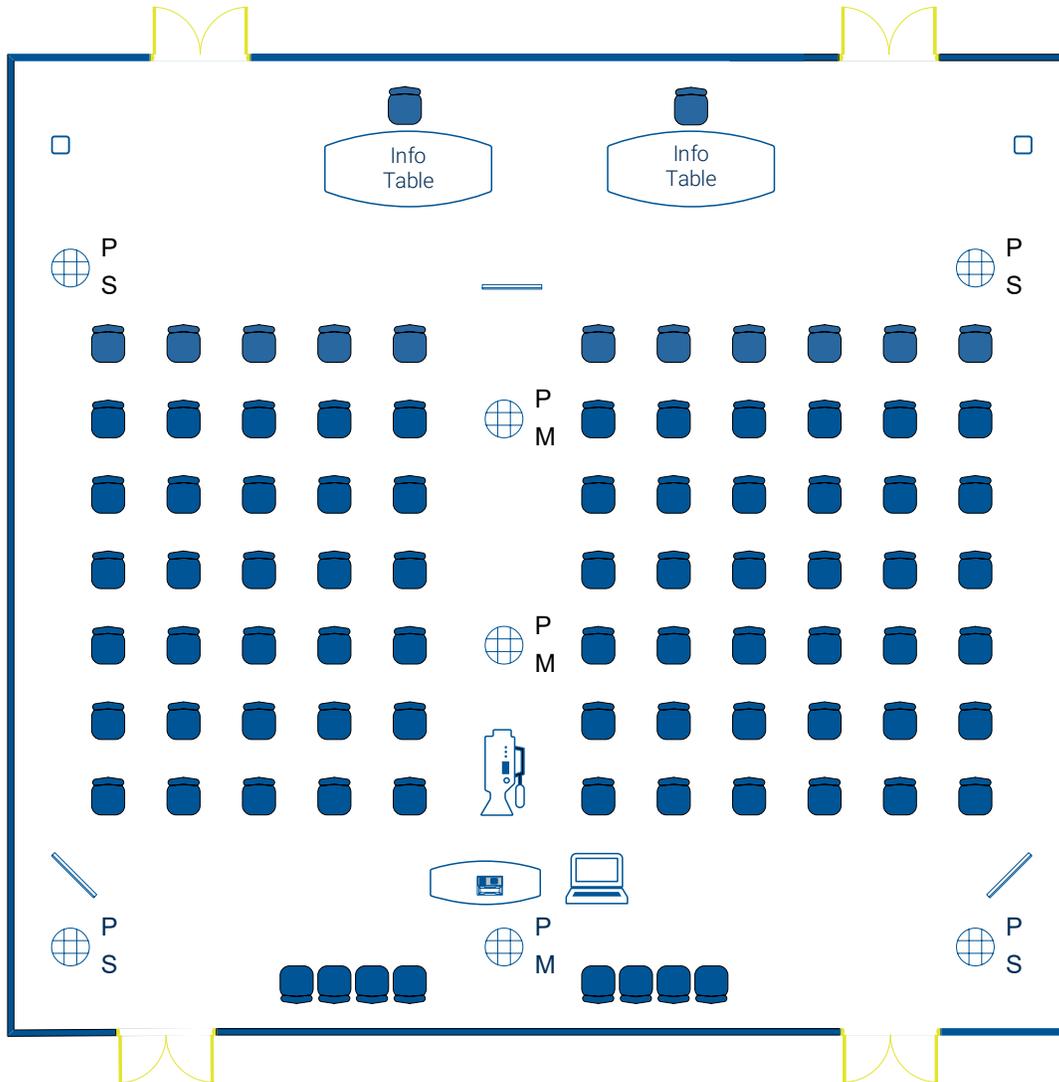
Attendance at family briefings is tightly controlled and limited. Those not allowed into the FAC, such as media, members of the public, and attorneys, will not be allowed to attend family briefings, neither in person nor remotely. If space is limited in the briefing room, survivors and family members may be asked to select a single representative or a limited number of representatives to attend in person for their family group, and additional family members may be encouraged to attend remotely.

Only briefers and a limited number of senior representatives from each organization should attend family briefings. Family briefings are not intended for air carrier assistance team members, Red Cross volunteers, or others staffing the FAC. Support services and staffing needs during a family briefing will be determined ahead of time in the JFSOC and coordinated through each JFSOC liaison. Those staffing the FAC should use the family briefing time as an opportunity to rest, call home, eat, or handle personal tasks. Senior representatives present in the family briefing may provide an update to their organization's staff, as deemed appropriate, following the briefing.

The date and time for the final official NTSB-facilitated family briefing should be determined during a JFSOC meeting. Survivors and family members should be notified as soon as possible in advance of the final briefing's occurrence. The final briefing is a critical opportunity to provide survivors and families with plans and expectations for demobilizing the FAC provisioning of in-person services and transitioning to long-term and remote support and communication. This is also an opportunity to provide survivors and family members contact information that will assist them in requesting available ongoing support and information after they depart.

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Family Briefing Room Layout (Sample)



- | | | |
|--|---|---|
|  P M Pedestal Microphone |  Chair |  Table |
|  P S Pedestal Audio Speaker |  Telephone / Speaker Phone | |
|  Whiteboard or Easel |  Trash Bin | |
|  Laptop |  Camera | |

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Appendix 14 - Victim Accounting

What is Victim Accounting?

Accounting for passengers and other victims involved in an aircraft accident is an important step in the reunification process. Upon learning that a loved one was involved in an accident, family members will often want to go to the passenger's last known location. To be able to report where the passenger is in an accurate and timely manner and to facilitate reunification, the NTSB; the air carrier; the Red Cross; and local, state, tribal, and federal response agencies will need to coordinate with one another to answer two questions: Who was aboard and where are they located?

Who was aboard? To determine who was aboard the aircraft at the time of the accident, the local response community will require input from the air carrier. The passenger list/manifest serves as the most immediate form of information available regarding the identities of those aboard the aircraft. Knowing who was aboard provides a starting place for the victim accounting process. The jurisdiction responsible for victim accounting should identify a coordinating agency to request passenger list/manifest information from the carrier. The air carrier should develop a process to consider requests and a mechanism to provide relevant information (such as number of persons aboard, names of passengers, contact information for survivors and family members) to the coordinating agency responsible for victim accounting. The NTSB Guidance (see [Appendix 6](#)) does not obligate air carriers to provide the passenger list/manifest to any agency or organization beyond what is required by relevant federal, state, or local statute.

Additionally, based on the circumstances of the accident, there may be a need to account for victims affected by the accident that were not aboard the aircraft at the time of the accident.⁶³ As their names will not appear on the passenger list/manifest, identifying and locating additional victims will require coordination among all the response partners. It will be important to locate and identify these victims to ensure they are provided equal access to important information and resources as required by 49 U.S.C. §1136, §41113 and §41313.

Where are they located? Identifying the location of passengers and other victims can be difficult depending on the circumstances of the accident and the nature of

⁶³ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(9\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(9\)](#)

the injuries received. The victim accounting process involves a variety of agencies and varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. For example, the presiding medicolegal authority is responsible for identifying fatally injured passengers transported to the morgue; injured passengers may be treated on-scene by local first responders, transported to multiple medical facilities, or transport themselves to a medical treatment facility; uninjured passengers may evacuate to a nearby PGA/CGA without the need for medical treatment or may even leave the accident location without interfacing with any responding agency.

Managing Victim Location Data

Given the potential for numerous passengers aboard an aircraft and the multiple places where victims may be in the aftermath of an accident, coordination among all responding agencies must start from the beginning of the response effort. Ideally, the local jurisdiction designates a central coordinating agency to collect and consolidate all the data that is part of the victim accounting operation. This agency would then be responsible for coordinating the information received from first responders, hospitals, the air carrier, and other key organizations, as well as ensuring all response stakeholders receive the information they need to meet their responsibilities. Coordination efforts would begin at the EOC and transition to the JFSOC.

The central coordinating agency should look at all information sources to synthesize the data into a full accounting of the identities and location of all accident fatalities and survivors. Once this information is known, it should be communicated through the JFSOC with the NTSB, air carrier, the Red Cross and other federal, state, tribal, and local government, and support organizations. Information on the location of survivors should be communicated to family members by the air carrier as soon as possible. All responding agencies will need to contribute information received from various sources to notify family members and provide relevant, timely information and resources to survivors and family members.

The following information sources are used in the victim accounting and reunification process:

Passenger List/Manifest: The air carrier is the source of the passenger list/manifest of names of the passengers and crew members aboard the aircraft at the time of departure. This information is critical in clarifying who was aboard, as well as providing the initial data required to continue the accounting process and to organize family member contact information for a particular passenger. Given

the importance of this information, the NTSB has developed guidelines to assist air carriers and the response community regarding both the distribution of the passenger list/manifest and the importance of maintaining control of the information contained on the list. See [Appendix 6](#) for more information on passenger list/manifest distribution.

Friends and Relatives Centers and Passenger Gathering Area Records: FRC records provide information to responding agencies about family members at a given location who may be associated with a passenger aboard the aircraft. PGA records provide information to the responding agencies about which passengers have evacuated the aircraft and have been accounted for in a safe gathering location.

First Responder Data: First responder data can come in the form of (EMS) run sheets, triage tags, and/or missing persons reports collected by fire, EMS, or law enforcement. Initial identification of injured passengers begins at the accident scene by first responders and is then fed into the larger victim accounting or patient-tracking process. EMS triages patients and transports them to the appropriate medical treatment facility based upon their status and injuries. In some cases, data includes EMS run sheets, transport records, or other triage data that accompanies the patient to the medical treatment facility. Many jurisdictions have patient-tracking systems initiated by EMS; the tracking concludes when the patient or fatality arrives at the medical treatment facility or the presiding medicolegal authority. Local law enforcement is responsible for taking missing persons reports from family members attempting to locate their loved ones. Information from these reports can be helpful in creating a complete victim list.

Hospital Records: As patients are received at medical treatment facilities, hospital staff either collect identity information from patients themselves or use other means to assist in a presumptive identification of the patient. Hospital data may involve the upload of patient information into an existing electronic medical record system (for example, an online system or a tracking spreadsheet). Once patient information is collected and available, the hospital should work with the designated central coordinating agency to relay information for victim accounting and reunification through the JFSOC.

Call Center Data: Multiple call centers may be activated following a mass casualty or fatality incident to disseminate information to the affected population and collect information from potential family members of passengers. The local

jurisdiction may activate a call center to quickly divert calls from 911 or other emergency service lines. As required by 49 U.S.C. §41113 and §41313, the air carrier will activate a toll-free number for family members of passengers to call seeking information about the accident and the response. Records collected from the various call centers can be helpful in identifying potential accident fatalities and survivors. If a call center is established by the local jurisdiction, family member contact information should be provided to the JFSOC so that the air carrier may establish communication with families once a passenger's involvement in the accident has been confirmed.

Decedent Identification: The presiding medicolegal authority is responsible for the positive identification of decedents. Depending upon jurisdiction, the medicolegal authority or law enforcement may provide death notifications to the NOK. The medicolegal authority may rely on information collected by the local central coordinating agency to carry out these responsibilities.

Major Aviation Accident Victim Accounting - Best Practices

The amount of data regarding survivors, their location and status depends largely on the severity of the accident and the number of victims. Integration of data from several sources is required in an aviation accident to assist with victim accounting and reunification. All individuals believed to be missing because of the accident must be accounted for as alive or among the deceased. This victim accounting process requires close communication and coordination between law enforcement (responsible for missing persons investigations) and the presiding medicolegal authority (responsible for medicolegal death investigations).

In an aviation accident involving numerous injuries and fatalities, knowing the exact status of each passenger in the first hours is challenging. The affected air carrier is still attempting to gather information from the PGA and other locations and may not be able to immediately track passenger status or location. First responders [such as Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF), EMS, and law enforcement] may begin to collect passenger information. ARFF/EMS responders create pre-hospital care reports that may be useful for tracking the status of passengers who have been treated and transported to hospitals or medical treatment facilities.

Local, state, or tribal law enforcement agencies in the jurisdiction where the accident occurred are responsible for initiating and completing a missing person investigation for those individuals reported (or otherwise believed to be) missing

because of the accident. When someone is found alive in a local hospital or at home in another town, their name can be removed from the list of the reported missing/presumed dead. When the presiding medicolegal authority has positively identified an individual, their name can also be removed. In a mass fatality incident, the air carrier will have a passenger list/manifest as an initial source of data sharing, and the presiding medicolegal authority responsible for victim recovery and identification will confirm the identity of the fatalities as part of the medicolegal death investigation.

In an event resulting in fatalities and injuries, first responders (ARFF, EMS, and law enforcement) and hospitals receiving patients provide additional data needed to account for survivors. In an event resulting in some fatalities and injuries, uninjured survivors may have walked away from the accident location, increasing the challenge. Attempts should be made to account for uninjured survivors prior to their departure from the site. For example, law enforcement entities should obtain name and contact information for survivors who are not injured and plan to leave the area.

Additionally, airport and air carrier personnel should already have agreements in place with Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) regarding customs clearance procedures for uninjured survivors who are foreign nationals and should communicate the status of foreign nationals to the DOS and relevant consulates. Accounting for uninjured survivors may require additional follow-up by either the air carrier or law enforcement if these survivors have not been accounted for prior to departing from the accident location. The NTSB will support the victim accounting process by coordinating efforts among local, state, or tribal response agencies, including the presiding medicolegal authority, law enforcement, OEM, hospitals, and other emergency support personnel.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), Public Law 104-191, requires that hospitals restrict release of patient information.⁶⁴ The NTSB is a “public health authority” as defined under HIPAA, and the regulations promulgated by the DHHS to administer HIPAA. Consistent with 49 U.S.C. 1101-1155 and HIPAA, a “covered entity” may disclose protected health information to the NTSB for the purpose of the notification of family members. Individual hospitals may have internal policies that are more restrictive than those of HIPAA.

Some issues concerning victim accounting depend on the status of the victims:

1. *Fatalities*: The presiding medicolegal authority has responsibility to recover and identify fatalities. Depending on the jurisdiction, local law enforcement or the

⁶⁴ HIPAA - <https://www.cdc.gov/php/publications/topic/hipaa.html>

medicolegal authority may be responsible for death notification. However, death notification cannot occur until a fatality has been identified.

2. *Injured, able to communicate, and hospitalized:* Hospitals gather contact information from affected individuals (patients). Patients may be able to notify family about their status and location; hospital staff may contact family members at a patient's request.
3. *Injured, not able to communicate, and hospitalized:* Hospitals may have an internal process for cases of unidentified patients. However, in the chaos of numerous patients being admitted following an accident, identification of patients may take a while to resolve. Information collected by the air carrier (such as passenger list/manifest, call center records, notification of involvement call records) may assist hospitals in patient identification. Identifying these patients is a joint effort among law enforcement, the air carrier, and the hospital. Information provided by other hospitals, and possibly the presiding medicolegal authority, may help account for unidentified patients through elimination.
4. *Non-injured:* Incident command and first response agencies capture contact information for those who wish to depart the accident scene.

Appendix 15 - Victim Identification

Definition and Importance

Victim identification is the method of identifying fatalities of a mass casualty or mass fatality incident. The NTSB engages with the presiding medicolegal authority as soon as practicable to establish a working relationship to understand the size and scope of the accident and the capabilities and resources of the jurisdiction, and to offer federal support.⁶⁵

In general, five factors influence the complexity of the victim identification process and may influence the amount and type of resources requested to support the recovery and identification effort:

1. **The number of fatalities.** As the number of fatalities increases, so do the amount of time and resources needed to collect, manage, and analyze ante- and postmortem data.
2. **An open or closed victim population.** A closed population is when the number of victims and their names are known (for example, air carrier accident with a passenger list/manifest). Conversely, an open population is one in which neither the number of victims nor their names are known (for example, explosion in a public building). Accidents involving open victim populations require more time and resources to resolve because authorities must distinguish those *actually* missing from those *initially reported* missing. The antemortem data collection process can only begin once a victim is known to be missing.
3. **The condition of human remains.** It is generally much easier to recover and identify complete bodies than fragmented human remains. Other conditions that increase the amount of time and resources to identify the fatalities include commingling, thermal modification, and decomposition. When remains are fragmented, the reliance on DNA identification methods increases, in turn requiring more time and resources. In an open population accident with fragmented remains, the standard of care is to identify all remains, since the number and names of the dead are not known. With a closed population accident, the goal is to account for all potentially identifiable remains for each fatality. Often, this approach does not require analysis of all remains, just those that have a potential to be identified.
4. **Challenges in search and recovery operations.** Remote terrestrial or underwater recovery operations require specialized support and more time, thus delaying the collection of postmortem data.

⁶⁵ [49 U.S.C. §1136](#)

5. **The availability of antemortem information.** Not all fatalities have easily accessible or available antemortem information. For example, a fatality who has never received dental care will not have dental records. Often, antemortem information is provided by the families of passengers. However, the absence of useful antemortem data, or the presence of incorrect data, will slow the victim identification process.

In coordination with the presiding medicolegal authority, the NTSB can request the following federal assets to assist in the victim recovery and identification effort:

- DMORT⁶⁶ to assist with fatality management and victim identification.
- FBI DVI Team⁶⁷ to assist in obtaining fingerprint identifications.
- FBI ERT⁶⁸ or other FBI laboratory assets to assist with victim recovery and documentation operations.
- AFMES⁶⁹ to assist in medicolegal investigation issues. This includes AFMES resources and facilities including the AFDIL⁷⁰ and the DOD DNA Registry.⁷¹

The NTSB will work directly with the presiding medicolegal authority to determine the need for additional resources to support victim recovery and identification efforts.

Medicolegal authorities vary greatly in terms of staffing, facility size, capabilities, and resource networking. Some offices may be able to manage an aviation accident with existing staff and facilities, while other offices, particularly those in rural areas, may require assistance. To ensure adequate resources for the presiding medicolegal authority to meet their responsibilities, the NTSB will work with the local jurisdiction to coordinate the use of local, state, or tribal response teams along with the resources of various federal agencies.

The presiding medicolegal authority, with support from other responding organizations, has the following roles:

1. **Victim Recovery:** The physical location of the accident determines the resources required and the procedures employed for search and recovery operations. The personnel and equipment needed for scene documentation and recovery operations vary significantly depending on whether the accident occurred on land or over water. The NTSB has authority for the aircraft

⁶⁶ <https://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/responders/ndms/ndms-teams/Pages/dmort.aspx>

⁶⁷ <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/handbook-of-forensic-services-pdf.pdf/view>

⁶⁸ https://www.fbi.gov/?came_from=https%3A//www.fbi.gov/services/laboratory-1/forensic-response/evidence-response-team

⁶⁹ <https://www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Health-Readiness/AFMES>

⁷⁰ <https://dpaa-mil.sites.crmforce.mil/dpaaFamWebAFMES>

⁷¹ <https://health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Health-Readiness/AFMES/DoD-DNA-Registry?type=Fact+Sheets>

wreckage, the presiding medicolegal authority has jurisdiction over the human remains and associated PE, and the air carrier has responsibility for unassociated PE.

The costs related to victim recovery and identification can be high and are directly related to the number of fatalities, the condition of human remains, and the presiding medicolegal authority's policies regarding identification of remains. Typically, the air carrier is responsible for reasonable costs of victim recovery and identification. However, the air carrier is not required by legislation to pay for such costs. The costs of the victim recovery operation are normally shared among local, state, tribal, and federal agencies.

2. **Victim Identification:** The process of victim identification following an aircraft accident is thorough, deliberate, and based upon proven scientific methods. While there are best practice recommendations in the U.S. for accident victim identification (DVI), there are no enforceable national standards. The expectation by families and society at large is that all reasonable methods will be used to complete identifications in a timely and professional manner.

Biologically based methods are considered by courts of law as primary methods of positive identification. Other methods may result in a presumptive identification and may lead to a positive identification, which requires the comparison of antemortem records with samples collected from the human remains. Exact matches of unique biological characteristics found in both lead to a positive identification.

Biologically based methods include:

- Comparison of dental records and radiographs
- Comparison of fingerprints
- Comparison of bone structure in radiographs
- Comparison of healed fractures in radiographs
- Unique medical features, such as implants/prosthetics
- Comparison of DNA

In an aircraft accident involving fragmented human remains, identification is followed by the process of reassociation of remains. Reassociation takes more time and is more complex than identification. Although a victim may be identified quickly using a single tooth, the ability to bring together the disassociated remains of victims relies primarily on DNA. DNA identification involves comparing DNA samples of the deceased with either antemortem samples from biological relatives or a sample of DNA from the deceased obtained from clothing, a hairbrush, or a similar item containing skin or hair cells.

3. **Antemortem and Postmortem Information Collection:** The presiding medicolegal authority is responsible for interviewing families of fatalities and, if necessary, obtaining medical or dental record information. Depending on the condition of the human remains, families may be asked to provide the contact information of their loved one's dentist or doctor.

When activated, DMORT can also assist the presiding medicolegal authority with monitoring the status and receipt of requested antemortem records. This includes dental records, medical records, and DNA reference samples.

4. **Positive Identification and Death Notification:** Once a positive identification has been made, the presiding medicolegal authority, DMORT team member, or designee will provide an official death notification to the passenger's legal NOK, to decide on how and when the human remains will be returned for burial or disposition. Air carriers may employ a service provider who will work with the medicolegal authority and family members to assist in the transfer from the medicolegal office or temporary morgue operation to final disposition. Family assistance team members may assist family members by making appointments for conversations with the medicolegal authority and service provider, if applicable.
5. **Disposition of Human Remains:** The medicolegal authority will make arrangements in coordination with the air carrier for the release of human remains to the funeral home selected by the NOK. Victim's remains will be transported from the morgue by a service provider contracted by the air carrier, dependent upon the policy of the medicolegal authority, to the funeral home selected by the NOK. A POC for the funeral home selected by the NOK should be provided during the identification and death notification process.

Generally, victims' remains are released on an individual basis as they are identified. However, the medicolegal authority may choose to release unidentified remains as a group and will hold the release of those remains until family members can be consulted about disposition.⁷²

Air carrier family assistance team members should direct questions regarding victim recovery, identification, disposition of remains and death certification to their team leader or equivalent. The team leader should notify their air carrier JFSOC liaison to make the NTSB TDA and other JFSOC liaisons aware of any concerns raised by individual family members so they may be properly addressed with the relevant medicolegal representative.

⁷² [49 U.S.C. §41113 \(b\)\(5\)](#) and [§41313 \(c\)\(5\)](#)

Additionally, families should be reminded of available emotional, spiritual, and family care services from the Red Cross or other disaster relief organizations if additional support is desired during the victim identification and death notification process.

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Appendix 16 - Accident Site Visit

After an aviation accident, it is common for survivors and families to request to see the site where the accident occurred. Early in the operation, during JFSOC meetings it is important to begin discussing the possibility of an accident site visit prior to receiving requests. An assessment should be done to identify any potential risks before such a request is granted, and safety should remain a top priority in the decision-making process. It is critical that all key stakeholders are involved in the decision, including those who may not be involved in ongoing JFSOC coordination efforts (such as TSA representatives, airport representatives, incident command, the NTSB investigative team). If a site visit is determined possible, the NTSB will facilitate the coordination of the event with relevant family assistance partners, including the air carrier, the Red Cross, and applicable federal, state, tribal, and local agencies critical to planning efforts. NTSB TDA will coordinate directly with the NTSB's IIC to ensure the site visit does not impede the investigative process and minimally impacts personnel working at the accident location. Planning efforts should address, but are not limited to:

Condition of Site

Site visits should not occur until the site is deemed safe for access by survivors and family members by the NTSB, incident command agencies, or other relevant stakeholders (such as the property owner). A viewing area should be established to identify specific access boundaries; prevent direct access to wreckage, evidence, or other potential hazards; and reduce visitors' risk of injury at the accident location. Site visits should not be scheduled until human remains, and clearly distinguishable PE are removed from the site or from view in the area.

Environmental Conditions

Environmental conditions or hazards may have a significant effect on-site visit planning and execution and may change suddenly and without notice. Conditions or hazards to consider and monitor prior to the site visit may include weather, temperature, wildlife, or contamination. Additional supplies, staff, equipment, and other resources may be needed to ensure the safety of those participating in the visit. Hazardous or poor conditions may necessitate cancellation of the site visit.

Victim Populations

Those choosing to attend a site visit may not be from the same victim population and may include family members of deceased passengers, surviving passengers and their families, ground victims, crew members, or others. It is important to discuss during the JFSOC coordination meetings whether a single site visit will be adequate or if more than one visit will be needed to address the range or number of potential attendees.

Logistics, Resources, and Staffing

The potential number of survivors and family members interested in attending a site visit, along with the range of accident location considerations, directly impact logistics planning and management of resources for such an event. Resources that may need to be addressed or managed during a site visit include security, staff, transportation, fencing or barriers, restrooms, water, a temporary memorial stand, safety gear, and other necessary equipment or resources.

Transportation should be provided for all attendees to the site rather than allowing independent travel to the location, when possible.

A designated temporary memorial should be set up prior to the site visit to allow attendees to leave tributes, flowers, or other mementos when they arrive. Survivors and family members should be advised about the final disposition of any item left at the temporary memorial in advance of the event to ensure that items of significant value or sentiment are not left as returning these items may not be possible.

Appropriate support services and staffing needs during a site visit are determined in advance in the JFSOC and coordinated through each JFSOC liaison. On-site support should include adequate mental health, spiritual care, and medical staffing. Site visits are not intended for air carrier assistance team members, Red Cross volunteers, or FAC staff, and none of these should attend. Those staffing the FAC should use the site-visit time as an opportunity to rest, call home, eat, or handle personal tasks.

Pre-Site Visit Family Briefing

Prior to a site visit, a family briefing should be scheduled dedicated to preparing and setting expectations for survivors and family members planning to attend the event.

This briefing will provide an opportunity to explain the site visit schedule, transportation, the amount of time they will have at the site, and any limitations (such as distance they will be from the wreckage, no video or photography policies, media exposure). The JFSOC team may elect to request that attendees sign a waiver in advance of the visit (this can take place during the pre-site visit family briefing. An example of a waiver is provided on the next page).

Upon return from a site visit to the FAC or other designated location, additional support services and staffing should be made available, for those returning from the event. Requests for basic needs such as water, quiet room, food, or rest, should also be addressed.

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National Transportation Safety Board Site Visit Waiver (Sample)

I understand that participation in this wreckage viewing is limited and may be obtained only under the close supervision and control of authorized NTSB personnel. I acknowledge that the unauthorized and knowing alteration, destruction or removal of any wreckage or other materials is a federal crime. The NTSB prohibits unauthorized touching or manipulation of the aircraft wreckage as well as all photography, video, or audio recording during the wreckage viewing, and I hereby agree to abide by these prohibitions. Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by their parent or legal guardian.

I understand that the wreckage viewing is being held on private property and the NTSB has received permission to use the property for this viewing by the property owner. I agree to remain in the designated areas identified for the wreckage viewing and will not access restricted areas or items on the property not involved with this viewing.

I agree to abide by the restrictions associated with the viewing, both those restrictions known at signing as well as any that the NTSB states during the viewing to ensure safety. I understand that I may be required to leave the viewing location if NTSB personnel determine that I am not abiding by these restrictions, that I am causing a disruption, hazard to myself, or hazard to others. I release the NTSB from any and all injuries, physical and otherwise, and any associated liabilities that may arise from viewing the property and viewing the aircraft wreckage. I also acknowledge by my signature below that, before entering the site, I have been made fully aware of the potential emotional and physical consequences of viewing the site and associated wreckage. I have been informed of emotional support services available from the American Red Cross and how to access them in the event I feel the need for such services during or following the site visit.

Visitor's Name (Please print): _____

Attendee Signature or
Parent/Legal Guardian for child attendee

Date

*By submitting this form, you are confirming that you are the parent or legal guardian of the child attendee.

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National Transportation Safety Board Site Visit Sign-up Form (Sample)

Access to the [NTSB case #] site is limited and may be obtained only under the close supervision and control of authorized NTSB personnel.

The site may include wreckage or other items that could cause physical harm if touched. Visiting this site may have an emotional and psychological impact.

The alteration, destruction or removal of any wreckage, personal effects, or other materials associated with the site is a federal crime.

Photography, video, or audio recording during the site visit is prohibited.

Children under the age of 18 years must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

Those seeking to participate in the site visit must complete the NTSB’s Site Visit Waiver and provide their contact information below.

	Name	Telephone #	Email Address	Signed Waiver
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
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Appendix 17 - Personal Effects Management Best Practices

In an aviation accident, the following suggested PE management best practices should be considered by the JFSOC team. It is understood that unique factors at the accident location may influence the application of these procedures.

PE Survey Team

Prior to the PE recovery process, a PE survey team will meet at the accident location approximately 24-36 hours (depending on circumstances) after the accident. The team will include:

- Personal effects service provider representative.
- NTSB TDA specialist.
- FBI ERT team leader (at the request of the NTSB).
- Local law enforcement representative.
- Air carrier representative.
- Underwriter representative (optional).
- Presiding medicolegal authority representative.

The survey team will inspect the accident location and perform the following tasks:

- Locate the PE item farthest from the main wreckage.
- Based on a standard approach to crime scene investigation methodology, search an area twice the distance and depth from the location of the farthest and deepest PE item recovered.
- Examine the influence of terrain and environmental issues (such as mud, sand, trees) on PE search and recovery.
- Discuss and agree upon the recovery plan offered by the PE vendor.
- Brief air carrier management on the recovery plan.

Survey Team Final Inspection

Once the PE vendor has cleared the scene of PE and is ready to terminate on-scene operations, survey team members will assemble at the accident scene for a final inspection of the accident site, ensuring that the scene is clear of all visible PE and all reasonable recovery actions have been completed.

The survey team will include all the members of the PE survey team (see above), except for the presiding medicolegal authority.

Monitor Accident Scene

Monitoring the accident site for a period following the initial cleanup may reveal additional PE. The following surveys are recommended:

- A site survey by the PE vendor and the air carrier representative 30-60 days following environmental remediation.
- A site survey by the PE vendor and the air carrier representative following the first significant environmental, geological, or meteorological events likely to alter the site conditions (such as heavy rains, snow melt, flooding, crop planting or clearing, windstorms, or earthquakes).

Once completed, survey results are to be provided to the NTSB TDA via email at assistance@ntsb.gov. TDA staff may be reached at (202) 314-6185.

One-Year Anniversary

Approximately 30 days before the one-year anniversary, the PE vendor and air carrier should walk the accident site to locate any PE that has moved to the surface because of changes in the site condition. This survey should be conducted regardless of whether there are any anniversary visits or memorial events planned or scheduled to take place at the accident location.

Once the PE vendor and air carrier representative have completed this survey, results are to be provided to the NTSB TDA, via email, at assistance@ntsb.gov. TDA staff may be reached at (202) 314-6185.

Appendix 18 – Family Support Tasks by Role

NTSB FSTs

1. Inform the air carrier(s) involved in the aircraft accident regarding the applicability of 49 U.S.C. §41113 or 49 U.S.C. §41313.
2. Inform the DOT regarding the applicability of 49 U.S.C. §41113 or Title 49 U.S.C. §41313.
3. Request from the air carrier a copy of the passenger list/manifest, based on the best available information at the time of the request, with the names of the passengers who were aboard the accident aircraft.
4. Designate and publicize the name and telephone number of a director of family support services (NTSB TDA chief or other TDA-appointed representative) to serve as a federal POC for the families of passengers involved in the accident and to act as a liaison between the air carrier and the families of passengers. The NTSB's TDA Division addresses family members' requests for information regarding the agency's investigation, family assistance operations, and services provided by the air carrier and the Red Cross.
5. Designate the Red Cross as the organization with the primary responsibility for coordinating emotional care and support for the families of passengers involved in an accident. Notify the Red Cross National Headquarters of the aircraft accident and their designation in accordance with 49 U.S.C. §1136.
6. Discuss with the presiding medicolegal authority the capabilities and resources of their office staff for conducting fatality identification based on the size and scale of the accident, including possible coordination with the AFDIL for DNA identification.
7. If requested, provide information on the passenger list/manifest about a specific passenger to their family, to the extent that the NTSB TDA representative considers appropriate. Advise family members of air carrier's toll-free number. Notify air carrier POC of family contact information.
8. Ensure that family members receive the air carrier's toll-free number and are made aware of support services being provided by the air carrier and the Red Cross.
9. Provide an NTSB toll-free number and email address to families of passengers for them to obtain information on the accident investigation and the victim identification and recovery process.
10. Organize and facilitate a JFSOC coordination call with the air carrier, the Red Cross, and other supporting federal, state, tribal, and local agencies as needed to become aware of the family assistance operation and response status.

11. Encourage response organizations to share information about the whereabouts of fatalities and the whereabouts and welfare of survivors with the air carrier, the Red Cross, and the NTSB as part of the victim accounting process.
12. Establish and maintain contact with families of passengers to keep them informed about support services, the accident investigation, and other accident investigation related concerns including relevant NTSB public hearings and meetings.
13. Coordinate through the NTSB Media Relations Division regarding family assistance efforts.
14. Monitor open-source media to determine when the air carrier toll-free number becomes publicly available:
 - 14.1. Publicize the air carrier's toll-free number through NTSB social media platforms.
 - 14.2. Call the air carrier's toll-free number to verify its operational status and to determine how information is being provided to callers seeking information.
15. Maintain communication with the air carrier to remain current regarding the status of family notification (for example, number of family groups notified, number for which notification was attempted, number still pending notification). See [Appendix 10](#) for additional information.
16. Establish a JFSOC based upon available space in or near the FAC. Invite representatives of the air carrier's family assistance response team, the Red Cross liaisons and other response organizations (for example, medicolegal authority, hospital association, ESF-8 representative, etc.).
17. Integrate the NTSB, the air carrier, the Red Cross, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the travel and logistical support needs of the families of passengers are being addressed, giving special consideration to security, the quality of hotel rooms and facilities, privacy, and access and functional needs.
18. Coordinate family assistance efforts with local response organizations and individuals, including the medical examiner, law enforcement, OEM, hospitals, and other responding organizations.
19. Coordinate with the air carrier and local jurisdiction to help determine the appropriate agency(ies) to receive passenger list/manifest data when multiple requests are made to the air carrier.
20. Provide family members with contact information for local law enforcement and/or the presiding medicolegal authority to answer questions and concerns regarding victim accounting, identification processes and reunification efforts.
21. Facilitate the federal response in the recovery and identification of fatally injured passengers involved in the aircraft accident.

22. Notify the DHHS to initiate the NDMS and the appropriate DMORT personnel, supplies, and equipment to assist in the management of fatality identification, as needed.
23. Facilitate coordination between DOS and the presiding medicolegal authority to support fatality recovery and identification efforts for foreign passengers, as applicable.
24. Inform the presiding medicolegal authority about the role of the Red Cross and the support services available to families, to include coordinating efforts for memorial services associated with individuals or group remains interment and psychological, emotional, and spiritual care.
25. Coordinate and initiate requests for federal family assistance assets using MOAs/MOUs as determined necessary.
26. Coordinate with DHS and FPS to provide law enforcement and security services at any federally leased, owned, or occupied facility, property, investigation site, operational area, asset, or other location owned, occupied, or secured by the federal government during the course of an NTSB investigation, hearing, meeting, or study, including facilities used for FACs, FRCs, and JFSOC operations and for press briefings, telecasts, and other functions.
27. Organize and facilitate family briefings to ensure that the families of passengers are provided information to the maximum extent practicable prior to any NTSB public briefing, about the accident, its causes, and any other findings from the NTSB's investigation.
28. If the accident location remains under the control of the NTSB, assess the potential of a site visit for families of passengers. Accident scenes under the control of law enforcement officers require collaboration among the responsible agency, NTSB, air carrier, the Red Cross, and other support agencies. Management of the site visit should be coordinated through the JFSOC. See [Appendix 16](#) for site visit considerations.
29. Upon request, facilitate the sharing of contact information among survivors and/or family members.
30. Coordinate an on-scene and post-response family assistance assurance review with the air carrier and the Red Cross to review the family assistance operation and legislative requirements and to identify challenges and lessons learned, with the goal of enhancing operating plans and procedures in the future.
31. Within 45 days of the accident, monitors for and responds accordingly to any unsolicited communications from attorneys received by families of passengers.⁷³

⁷³ [49 U.S.C. §1136\(g\)\(2\)](#)

32. Determine whether a 30-day extension is required for the Red Cross as the designated organization to ensure access to services by families of passengers beyond 30 days after the accident has occurred.⁷⁴
33. Via JFSOC meetings, support the coordination of PE management by response partners. See [Appendix 8](#) for JFSOC information.
 - 33.1. Ensure that the affected air carrier is aware of its role and responsibilities regarding the PE management obligations outlined in federal legislation.
 - 33.2. Ensure that families of passengers are informed about PE recovery, processing, claim, and disposition. **Note:** For PE retained for an accident investigation or a criminal investigation, securing and returning these items is typically the responsibility of the investigative agency. The NTSB will coordinate the return of PE it has retained for an accident investigation.
 - 33.3. Determine the evidentiary value of PE, retain relevant items, and release non-evidentiary PE to the appropriate organization, communicating with the families of passengers regarding the investigative process and the return of PE taken into NTSB custody.
 - 33.4. the provision of federal family assistance activities if the investigation determines that the accident is the result of an intentional criminal act.
 - 33.5. Coordinate the transition of PE management to the FBI if the event has been determined to be a criminal act.
34. Inform families of passengers of NTSB public hearings and meetings pertaining to the investigation and provide information about attendance at the event.
35. Ensure that briefings are made available simultaneously by electronic means for survivors/family members that are not able to attend briefings in person.

Air Carrier FSTs

1. Submit a plan to the NTSB and the DOT for addressing the needs of the families of passengers involved in an aircraft accident resulting in any loss of life.⁷⁵ See [Appendix 2](#) for submission guidance.
 - 1.1. If the air carrier requires the utilization of the Red Cross or any other suitably trained individuals to initiate notification to the families of the passengers at the time of the accident, a mutually agreed-upon plan should be established in advance and included in the carrier's plan filed with the NTSB and the DOT.

⁷⁴ [49 U.S.C. §1136\(g\)\(3\)](#)

⁷⁵ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(a\)](#) and [§41313\(b\)](#)

2. Commit sufficient resources to carry out the filed plan to address the needs of passengers' families.⁷⁶
3. Establish a process for notifying the family members of passengers regarding the passengers' involvement in the accident.⁷⁷
4. Provide adequate training to employees and agents (for example, gate, customer support, and reservations) to meet the needs of survivors and family members following an accident. Training topics should include, but are not limited to:
 - 4.1. Federal transportation accident family assistance legislation.
 - 4.2. The air carrier's roles and available resources.
 - 4.3. The role of response partners, including the Red Cross.
 - 4.4. The employee's and agent's specific role.
 - 4.5. Psychological first aid, crisis response, interpersonal communication, and stress management.
5. Establish a plan for providing media updates regarding the air carrier's family assistance operation. Consider providing information regarding:
 - 5.1. Availability of the toll-free number.
 - 5.2. Establishment of family assistance facilities.
 - 5.3. Progress of the family notification process (the number of families notified, the number of families remaining to be notified, and/or completion of the process).
 - 5.4. Information regarding resources available to passengers' families.
6. In addition to the accident notification requirements under 49 C.F.R. §830.5,⁷⁸ as soon as practicable, complete and submit the NTSB TDA Accident Notification Supplemental Information Worksheet (see [Appendix 5](#)) to assistance@ntsb.gov.
7. Provide the NTSB and the Red Cross NTSB and/or JFSOC Liaison, upon request, a copy of the passenger list/manifest, based on the best available information at the time of the request.
 - 7.1. Provide subsequent versions of the passenger list/manifest to the NTSB upon request and at regular intervals as agreed upon by the air carrier and the NTSB, based on the specific circumstances of the accident. The information contained on the passenger list/manifest should be the best available information at the time the request is made or at the agreed

⁷⁶ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(14\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(13\)](#)

⁷⁷ The air carrier is under no obligation to publicly release the names of passengers; however, if the air carrier elects to do so, the air carrier should provide notification to family members prior to releasing this information. The air carrier should give family members adequate time to notify other family members prior to public release.

⁷⁸ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/subtitle-B/chapter-VIII/part-830/subpart-B/section-830.5>

upon intervals. See [Appendix 6](#) for additional information. Provide updated passenger list/manifests to the Red Cross NTSB and/or JFSOC Liaison (if initially requested) at the same time as those provided to the NTSB.

8. Develop procedures to consider and respond to additional requests for the passenger list/manifest from the local response community via the EOC. See [Appendix 6](#) for distribution guidance.
9. Ensure equal treatment of the families of revenue passengers, non-revenue passengers, and any other victim of the accident (including ground victims).⁷⁹
10. Secure private facilities at departure, arrival, connecting airports, and hubs, as needed, in coordination with the airport authority(ies) for use as family assistance facilities. Families of passengers may elect to gather at these locations while in transit to the accident location. Facilities established to support family assistance operations should be compliant with the ADA.⁸⁰
11. Notify family members (in person, if practicable)⁸¹ as soon as possible to verify whether a passenger was aboard the aircraft (even if the names of all passengers have not yet been verified).
12. Establish a toll-free telephone number to allow family members to contact the air carrier directly for information regarding the air carrier's assistance to family members. Consider the following:
 - 12.1. Modify the normal "hold" message. Similar considerations should be made for "on-hold" soundtrack(s) for phone lines that may receive incoming calls following an accident to eliminate music, sales information, and similar non-accident-related messages. Similar considerations should be made for all public interfaces.
 - 12.2. Ensure that sufficient staff are designated to manage an increase in call volume from family members immediately following an accident.
 - 12.3. Ensure that the toll-free call center staff are adequately trained and prepared to work with affected family members.
 - 12.4. Establish a process for efficiently gathering critical information from callers to aid in timely notification and to facilitate subsequent engagement regarding the family assistance operation and available services.
 - 12.5. Gather and share contact data collected from affected family members both internally and with federal, state, tribal and local response organizations (for example, data from multiple call centers, multiple family members of the same passenger) through the JFSOC.

⁷⁹ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(9\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(9\)](#)

⁸⁰ [42 U.S.C. §12102](#)

⁸¹ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(3\)](#)

- 12.6. Establish a process to follow up with callers who have been identified as affected family members.
 - 12.7. Determine and share information about services that will be made immediately available to affected family members in the aftermath of an accident.
 - 12.8. Ensure the accessibility of information to callers with varying access and functional needs (for example, speakers of languages other than English, those who rely on TTY technology, and those who may have difficulty in understanding or processing complex information).
 - 12.9. Establish a plan to decommission the toll-free number as the family assistance operation transitions from an active response to long-term assistance.
13. Publicize the toll-free number and consider using both traditional and digital media outlets to emphasize the following information:
 - 13.1. The name and accident flight number of the air carrier(s) involved. Provide all partner and codeshare flight information.
 - 13.2. The origination, connecting, and destination airports.
 - 13.3. The toll-free number is for family members of passengers believed to be on the flight.
 - 13.4. The air carrier has activated its family assistance program in response to the accident and encourage families to contact the air carrier through the toll-free number to receive additional information and support.
 14. Ensure the publicized toll-free telephone number remains operable with sufficient capacity to handle the anticipated call volume to collect contact information of family members of passengers.
 15. Inform families of passengers at the time of initial notification (or soon thereafter) about the involvement of the Red Cross and their available services and provide reminders throughout the operation about these services to address any needs for psychological, emotional, and spiritual care.
 16. Coordinate directly with the Red Cross JFSOC liaison to address support requests for psychological, emotional, and spiritual care as they are received by the air carrier's family assistance teams or other sources and ensure that adequate facility space is available for providing these services and for accommodating support services staff.
 17. Designate a representative of the air carrier's security division to collaborate with DHS FPS and other law enforcement agencies (for example, local, state, tribal, federal) to conduct a threat assessment to determine the necessary level of security.

18. Work with the local jurisdiction to secure a facility to serve as the FAC, considering size, services available, security, privacy, and proximity to the key elements of the family assistance operation. Make alternate accommodations to provide information and offer resources to families of passengers when a physical FAC is not established, or individuals elect not to travel to the primary FAC. Facilities established to support alternate accommodations should be ADA compliant.
 - 18.1. Coordinate adequate private spaces or rooms within the FAC, or other suitable location, for the presiding medicolegal authority, the Red Cross, and other family assistance operation organizations to communicate privately with families of passengers. These spaces should be equipped with sufficient technology to allow for virtual meetings (for example, conference calls and web-based video conferences).
 - 18.2. Make provisions for a JFSOC to include meeting space, separate workspace, communication technologies, and logistical support for local, state, tribal, and federal response partners. If available, separate workspace may be made available for the NTSB and the Red Cross on a full- or part-time basis as needed.
 - 18.3. Ensure the provision of an adequate number of private rooms or space in the FAC for families of passengers to meet with the presiding medicolegal authority or designee, for the authority to obtain antemortem information and/or the collection of DNA reference samples. These rooms can also be used for other family assistance support services when the medicolegal authority has completed their process.
 - 18.4. Provide a dedicated area in the FAC, or other suitable location, for the Red Cross to establish as an area for families and survivors to grieve privately.⁸²
 - 18.5. Provide a dedicated area in the FAC, or other suitable location, for the Red Cross to establish on-site temporary respite care for families who arrive with minors.
 - 18.6. As part of broader FAC security, establish a badging system that uniquely identifies families of passengers for access within family assistance facilities. Considerations should be made regarding badging requirements for individuals who have a need to access family assistance facilities.
 - 18.7. Coordinate through the JFSOC badging requirements for support personnel; if necessary, consider development of a unique badging system to ensure proper identification and to allow access for other supporting agencies. In unique cases, the NTSB, in coordination with the air carrier, will decide on the layout and design of the badge(s).

⁸² [49 U.S.C. §1136\(c\)\(2\)](#)

19. Provide the DOS the information outlined in 14 C.F.R. § 243.7⁸³ if the accident meets the criteria established under 14 C.F.R. §243.11⁸⁴ and provide DOS representatives information about any foreign passengers to facilitate interaction with appropriate foreign embassies.
20. Inform the presiding medicolegal authority about the air carrier's assistance that is available to families of passengers related to the disposition of human remains. If assistance is being provided via a service provider, ensure that connections are made between the family and the service provider.
21. Consult with the family of each fatally injured passenger in coordination with the medicolegal authority about available resources related to the disposition of human remains.
22. Provide DOS representatives information regarding foreign passengers necessary for facilitating interaction with appropriate foreign government embassies.
23. Designate a contact person(s) to support families of passengers while they remain in the accident location. If possible, this person(s) should continue to be the air carrier interface with the family until the family returns to their residence, or until the conclusion of the on-site family assistance operation.
 - 23.1. If the family has not previously received official notification, notify them of their loved one's involvement in the accident at an appropriate time as soon as possible after the family arrives in the accident location.
 - 23.2. For family members not present in the accident location, establish a contact for remote support to ensure the delivery of daily updates during the on-site family assistance operation. Communicate any changes to the support structure between on-site/immediate support and long-term support to the TDA JFSOC liaison as soon as possible.
24. Provide physical care and logistical support including, but not limited to, transportation, lodging, meals, security, communications, and incidental expenditures, to families of passengers who desire to travel to the accident location.⁸⁵ This may include the following:
 - 24.1. Informing and making available air carrier personnel at departure, connecting, and arrival airports to offer assistance.
 - 24.2. Informing gate agents and flight crews that families of passengers are aboard.
 - 24.3. Seeking assistance from other carriers with a larger presence at airports or transportation hubs where family members will be transiting.
 - 24.4. When possible, tell family members about other available services (for example, the Red Cross) at first contact with the family.

⁸³ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-14/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-243/section-243.7>

⁸⁴ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-14/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-243?toc=1>

⁸⁵ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(11\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(11\)](#)

25. Designate an air carrier senior representative (see [Appendix 8](#)) who will serve as the representative to the NTSB's designated director of family support services. This person will oversee the air carrier's family assistance operation and may need to:
 - 25.1. Travel to various locations, such as the accident location, healthcare facilities, medicolegal facilities, JFSOC, and FAC.
 - 25.2. Address questions regarding the air carrier's Emergency Response Plan (for example, service providers, available resources, and limits to family assistance support).
 - 25.3. Participate in, or coordinate the participation of, an alternative spokesperson for family briefings.
26. Designate an air carrier family assistance coordinator who will serve as the primary POC regarding the air carrier's day-to-day family assistance operations. Depending on the unique nature of the accident and the resources available from the family assistance response partner, it may be necessary for one individual to take on multiple roles or to delegate specific tasks to other individuals within their organization. See [Appendix 8](#) for additional duties.
27. Designate an air carrier JFSOC liaison, who will remain present in the JFSOC to coordinate the air carrier's ongoing family assistance operations. This person should have the authority to make decisions and commit resources⁸⁶ on behalf of the air carrier. See [Appendix 8](#) for additional duties.
28. Assign a primary POC to the Red Cross JFSOC liaison to ensure that requests from families of passengers or survivors received by the air carrier for emotional, spiritual, and psychological care services or referrals are addressed, regardless of where the families or survivors are located. See [Appendix 8](#) for additional duties.
29. Review with the NTSB, the Red Cross, and other relevant stakeholders the travel and logistical support needs (for example, video, software, or other technological needs) of the families of passengers, giving special consideration to security, the quality of hotel rooms and facilities, privacy, equitable access, and functional needs.
30. Advise the NTSB and the Red Cross if family members have expressed that they would prefer not to engage directly with air carrier representatives so that alternative means of offering information and services are made available.
31. Monitor the needs of injured passengers and their family members at each medical treatment facility through ongoing coordination with the Red Cross JFSOC liaison and other agency JFSOC liaisons to ensure access to information and resources.

⁸⁶ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(14\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(13\)](#)

32. Coordinate with the Red Cross spiritual care staff to address family member requests for memorial services.
33. Participate in the preparation and logistical coordination of an accident site visit for families of passengers if an accident site visit is determined appropriate by the NTSB.
34. If appropriate and requested by the families of passengers, support the Red Cross in facilitating a memorial service for any future burial of unidentified human remains through coordination with the families, the local medicolegal authority, and other relevant local organizations.
35. Consult with the families of passengers about any air carrier-sponsored monument, including any inscriptions.
36. Ensure that the transmission of any NTSB-conducted public hearing, or comparable proceeding, occurring at a location more than 80 miles from the accident location, is available to families of passengers at a location open to the public at both the origin city and destination city of the accident flight.
37. Consult with the NTSB and the DOS on the provision of assistance to U.S. citizens within the United States in the event of an accident occurring outside of the United States that involves any loss of life.
38. Coordinate directly with the FBI VSD regarding the provision of family assistance if the event is determined to be an intentional criminal act and the NTSB relinquishes investigative priority to the FBI.
39. Provide reasonable compensation to the Red Cross for services they have provided if requested by the Red Cross National Headquarters.⁸⁷
40. Participate in the NTSB-coordinated family assistance assurances reviews, both on-scene and post-response, to review the family assistance operation and legislative requirements, resolve problems, and update operating plans and procedures.
41. Ensure that a plan is in place to address the management of PE within the control of the air carrier. See [Appendix 17](#) for more information. The air carrier may consider using a third party that has experience in managing PE associated with MCIs.
42. Ensure that families of passengers are informed about the PE management process, the condition in which items may be returned (cleaned, repaired, as-is with the caveat that items be safe to handle), including any future disposal process for unclaimed items.⁸⁸
 - 42.1. Return any possession, if requested by the family of a passenger, within the control of the air carrier (regardless of its condition), unless the

⁸⁷ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(11\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(11\)](#)

⁸⁸ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(5\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(5\)](#)

possession is needed for the accident investigation or a criminal investigation.⁸⁹

- 42.2. Retain any unclaimed possession of a passenger within the control of the air carrier for at least 18 months.⁹⁰
43. Consult with the NTSB regarding the air carrier's role in the return process of any PE in the custody of the NTSB.
44. Consult with other entities that may have a role in the management of PE (for example, medicolegal authority, local, state, tribal, or federal law enforcement, insurance companies, hospitals) to determine the air carrier's role in the return process of any PE in the custody of those entities.
45. Provide updates regarding the PE management process during daily JFSOC meetings and post-accident response discussions. Specific information to share includes the role of a third-party, progress and complications with the returns process, and the status of unclaimed or unwanted items 18 months following the accident. See [Appendix 8](#) and [Appendix 10](#) for additional information for additional information.
46. Consult with survivors and family members regarding the disposition of remains of carry-on or checked fatally injured pets.
47. Notify family members both before and after any planned disposal of unclaimed PE within the control of the air carrier that will occur after the required 18-month retention period lapses.

Red Cross FSTs

1. Designate an NTSB liaison familiar with federal family assistance legislation, the NTSB-Red Cross MOU, and the roles and responsibilities of the Red Cross, the NTSB, and the air carrier to support the regional or the local Red Cross leadership team assigned to serve as the functional lead for emotional, spiritual, and psychological care services in accordance with the legislation.
2. Assign a JFSOC liaison who will remain present in the JFSOC to coordinate ongoing family assistance operations on behalf of the Red Cross with the authority to make decisions on behalf of the organization. The liaison will be responsible for participating in daily JFSOC status meetings, providing operational updates and the status of daily activities and services, disseminating information within their organization as appropriate, and maintaining up-to-date information regarding available Red Cross or other disaster relief organization staffing and services within the FAC and any alternate locations (for example, hospitals). See [Appendix 10](#) for the JFSOC status report form.

⁸⁹ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(6\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(6\)](#)

⁹⁰ [49 U.S.C. §41113\(b\)\(7\)](#) and [§41313\(c\)\(7\)](#)

3. Ensure that Red Cross staff and volunteers, and any other personnel approved by the Red Cross to provide support services, are familiar with the roles and responsibilities of the NTSB, the air carrier, the Red Cross, and other federal partners during a federal family assistance operation.
4. Review with the air carrier, the NTSB, and other stakeholders the travel and logistical support being provided to the families of passengers by the air carrier, to provide subject matter expertise related to the access and functional needs of family members and survivors, to ensure needs are being adequately addressed.
5. Coordinate with the air carrier liaison assigned to the Red Cross to address any requests from families of passengers or survivors for emotional, spiritual and/or psychological care services or referrals, regardless of their locations (for example, an FAC, hotel, hospitals, other medical treatment facilities, home).
6. Assign Red Cross disaster mental health staff or volunteers to coordinate with local disaster relief organizations or agencies to address on-site emotional and psychological care requests during the JFSOC coordination phase.
7. Assign Red Cross spiritual care staff or volunteers or coordinate with local disaster relief organizations or agencies to provide on-site spiritual care at the FAC, or other suitable location.
8. Coordinate staffing activities with the air carrier to ensure the badging of support personnel providing emotional, spiritual, and psychological care services at the FAC, or other suitable location is adequate. If necessary, consider developing a unique badging system to ensure proper identification and allow access for other disaster relief organizations approved by the Red Cross.
9. Coordinate with the air carrier to establish a dedicated area in the FAC, or other suitable location, for families and survivors to grieve privately⁹¹ and provide appropriate staff, as necessary.
10. Coordinate with the air carrier to establish a secure location within the FAC, or other suitable location, for on-site temporary respite care for survivors or families of passengers who arrive with minors, if determined necessary by the air carrier, the Red Cross, and the NTSB, and provide appropriate staff.
11. Coordinate with the air carrier to identify adequate private spaces or rooms with technology and telephonic capabilities within the FAC, or other suitable location, necessary for providing on-scene, remote or virtual psychological, emotional, and spiritual care support to survivors and/or families of passengers.
12. Manage spontaneous unaffiliated volunteers, as necessary.
13. Manage unsolicited donations through partnerships with local community entities experienced in donation management, as necessary.

⁹¹ [49 U.S.C. §1136\(c\)\(2\)](#)

14. For resources other than psychological, emotional, and spiritual care support, coordinate with the air carrier to identify the availability for additional resources needed.
15. Employ an accounting system to accurately record cost data in specific cost categories in case the Red Cross National Headquarters later requests reimbursement for their response from the air carrier.
16. Facilitate a memorial service for any future burial of unidentified human remains through coordination with the families, the local medicolegal authority, the air carrier, and other relevant local organizations, when appropriate. Should these services occur outside of the JFSOC operational period, coordinate directly with the air carrier's identified individual(s) for ongoing support. Notify the NTSB TDA Red Cross coordinator of event date and time. See [Appendix 8](#) for more information.
17. Participate in the preparation and logistical coordination of an accident site visit for survivors or families of passengers if an accident site visit is determined appropriate by the NTSB. Coordinate with the NTSB and the air carrier to ensure that staffing for psychological, emotional, and spiritual support is sufficient for the event.
18. Participate in the NTSB-coordinated assurances reviews, both on-scene and post-response, to review the family assistance operation and legislative requirements, resolve problem areas, and update operating plans and procedures.
19. Upon request, provide psychological, emotional, and spiritual care staff to public locations where any NTSB-conducted public hearing and meetings, or comparable proceeding, are being held or transmitted.
20. Coordinate directly with the FBI VSD if an event is determined to be an intentional criminal act and the NTSB relinquishes investigative priority to the FBI. Coordinate directly with the FBI VSD to determine their ongoing involvement in the response under agreements the Red Cross has or makes with the FBI VSD.

DOS FSTs

1. Provide official notification to foreign governments of citizens involved in the accident. Such notifications will take place after obtaining necessary information on foreign passengers from the air carrier.
2. Assist the air carrier in notifying U.S. citizens who may reside in, or who are traveling, outside the U.S. that a member of their family has been involved in an aviation accident.
3. Assist the presiding medicolegal authority in acquiring the necessary information to facilitate the identification of foreign national fatalities and to complete death certificates.

4. Assist in obtaining dental and medical records and DNA reference samples from families of foreign national fatalities.
5. Assign a representative to the JFSOC to coordinate DOS-related issues, including obtaining records (dental and medical) and DNA reference samples from the families of foreign nationals, upon request. See [Appendix 8](#) for JFSOC information.
6. Provide logistical and communications support in establishing contact with foreign authorities and individuals abroad to aid the air carrier, the Red Cross, and the NTSB in fulfilling their legislated duties, if possible.
7. Provide adequate personnel to assist the federal family assistance operation for accidents involving significant numbers of foreign nationals, particularly for those accidents involving international flights.
8. Provide interpretation and/or translation services (via DOS staff or a contracted provider) as needed to facilitate communications with the families of passengers and all interested parties, during family briefings.
9. Assist foreign air carrier employees and families of foreign nationals (both fatalities and survivors) with entry into the U.S., extending or granting of visas to eligible applicants, as determined necessary.
10. Respond to requests of the families of passengers for information and assistance, as appropriate.
11. Coordinate with the necessary foreign mission(s) to facilitate consulate and customs services for the return of PE to the country of destination, as applicable.

FBI FSTs

1. Provide the NTSB, upon request, an FBI ERT, and other FBI Laboratory assets to assist with fatality documentation and identification as directed by the presiding medicolegal authority.
2. If the FBI is asked to support the local response community with family assistance services, assign a JFSOC liaison to coordinate with the NTSB, the air carrier, and the Red Cross to ensure integration into the federal family assistance operation.
3. If the aviation accident is determined to be an intentional criminal act, assume responsibility for the investigation from the NTSB; the FBI VSD will assume federal family assistance activities, including the following:
 - 3.1. Coordinate with the NTSB TDA to ensure an effective transfer of the federal family assistance operation to reduce any additional distress to families of passengers during the transition.
 - 3.2. Coordinate with the air carrier and the Red Cross regarding any ongoing responsibilities or roles they have for a federal criminal investigation.
 - 3.3. Coordinate with the NTSB regarding the transition of PE management.

- 3.4. Coordinate with the air carrier regarding their role in the return of PE.

DHHS FSTs

1. Provide the resources of the NDMS, DMORT, the VIC team, and other fatality management personnel, supplies, and equipment to assist the presiding medicolegal authority and the NTSB with the examination and identification of fatalities.
2. Provide, if necessary, a DPMU and the necessary personnel, equipment, and supplies to augment the capabilities of the presiding medicolegal authority.
3. Follow the DMORT Standard Operating Procedures for National Transportation Safety Board Activations.
4. Assign the necessary DMORT personnel, based on necessary skills and existing capabilities, to assist the presiding medicolegal authority with fatality identification and mortuary services.
5. Monitor the status of all incoming antemortem records, including dental, medical, and DNA data, to ensure that all records have been received. Take steps to obtain the missing records and radiographs.
6. Use a specially trained VIC team to interview families of passengers, both on- and off-site, regarding antemortem identification and disposition of human remains.
7. Coordinate with the presiding medicolegal authority to integrate qualified personnel into the morgue operation.
8. Assist the presiding medicolegal authority in notifying families of passengers of positive identification, including an explanation of how identification was determined, if necessary.
9. Ensure the accuracy of the chain of custody by reviewing documentation and human remains prior to their release to the designated funeral director.
10. Assist the presiding medicolegal authority with the reassociation of human remains following the identification process.
11. Provide the NTSB with contact information for the NOK, gathered from the antemortem interview.
12. Employ a standard antemortem questionnaire and disposition-of-remains form that can be adapted to meet local medical examiner and state requirements. The form will be used to obtain directions from the lawfully authorized NOK regarding their wishes for human remains that may later be identified as those of their family member. **Note:** Information collected from families of passengers is strictly confidential and is ultimately under the control of the presiding medicolegal authority.
13. Coordinate with the presiding medicolegal authority regarding the management of PE physically associated with human remains.

DOD FSTs

1. Provide the use of a military installation, such as the Charles C. Carson Center for Mortuary Affairs located at Dover Air Force Base, in support of mortuary operations, if requested.
2. Provide resources from AFMES and AFDIL to assist in the identification effort and to conduct appropriate DNA comparison testing on specimens submitted by the presiding medicolegal authority. **Note:** AFMES and AFDIL personnel may travel to the accident location to assist with victim identification.
3. Provide available medical and dental records and DNA reference samples of fatalities who may have antemortem records based on prior or current military service.

FEMA FSTs

1. Assign a JFSOC liaison to coordinate with federal, state, and local officials concerning emergency management-related issues, if requested by the NTSB. See [Appendix 8](#) for more JFSOC information.
2. Provide personnel and communication assets to facilitate communication from the accident location to the NTSB ROC, if requested by the NTSB.
3. Provide personnel to assist in public information dissemination, including assistance in establishing and staffing external media support centers at the accident location, wreckage hangar, locations associated with the family assistance operation, airport(s) and other areas that may attract media interest, if requested by the NTSB.

FPS FSTs

1. Coordinate with the NTSB to determine security vulnerabilities and countermeasure requirements for location(s) associated with the NTSB investigation (for example, the accident location, those associated with the family assistance operation, and those for media briefings).
2. Conduct building and facility security risk assessments, upon request from the NTSB; provide a threat assessment and recommendations for ensuring the security of designated locations.
3. Ensure that sufficient certified, trained, and equipped uniformed personnel are provided as deemed appropriate by the threat assessment, for each designated location.
4. Provide protection for designated NTSB Board Members and NTSB staff during the response.
5. Provide an FPS-operated mobile command vehicle to afford interoperable communications and a secure environment for use by NTSB staff.

6. Assume responsibility for investigations associated with FPS activities at NTSB-designated locations as required, and share current intelligence with the NTSB, as permitted by law, regulation, or order, at the affected location.