

NTSB | National Transportation Safety Board

NTSB's Family Assistance Operations and Healthcare Community Engagement

Sarah Quinn
Emergency Operations Coordinator, Hospitals/Healthcare Coalitions
Transportation Disaster Assistance Division

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NTSB - Our Mission





NTSB - Our Mission: <https://youtu.be/9iQkxe8jCW8>

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Investigative Responsibilities

- All U.S. civil aviation and commercial space accident investigations
- Accredited representative for foreign aviation accidents
- Selected surface mode accidents:
 - Rail
 - Highway
 - Marine
 - Pipeline
 - Hazmat



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NTSB's Legislative Mandate

- Maintain congressionally mandated independence and objectivity;
- Conduct objective, precise accident investigations & safety studies;
- Perform fair & objective airman and mariner certification appeals;
- Advocating and promoting safety recommendation;
- Assist victims of transportation accidents and their families



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Family Assistance Legislation - Background

Major Aviation

- 49 USC 1136: NTSB and Designated Organization Responsibilities
- 49 USC 41313: Foreign Air Carrier Responsibilities
- 49 USC 41113: Domestic Air Carrier Responsibilities

Major Rail

- 49 USC 1139: NTSB and American Red Cross Responsibilities
- 49 USC 24316: Rail Passenger Carrier Responsibilities

NTSB [coordinates](#) and provides [additional resources](#) to the airline/rail carrier and local government to help victims and their families while preserving local responsibility and jurisdiction.


All NTSB Investigations

- 49 USC 1140: NTSB Responsibilities


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US Federal Family Assistance Legislation



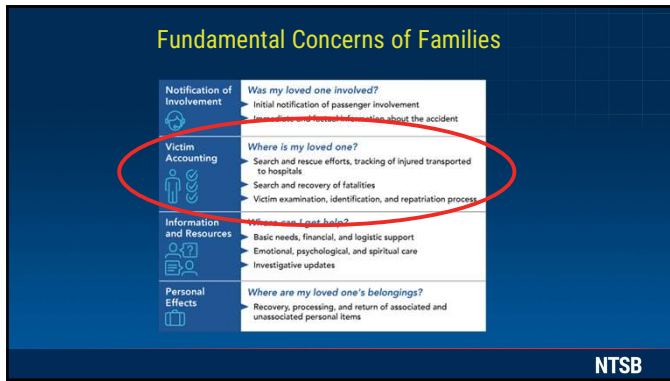
Family Assistance Operation



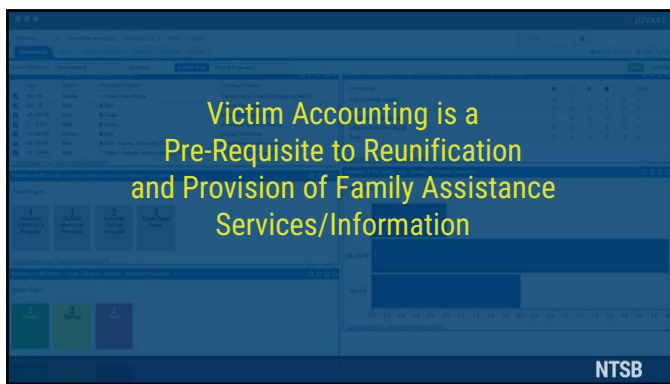
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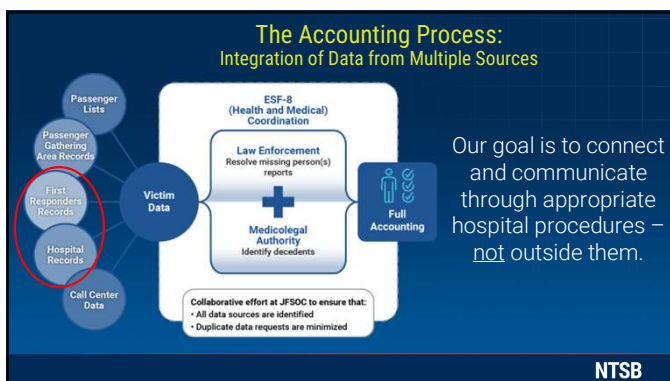
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Federal Family Assistance Framework for Aviation Disasters

(Released August 2023)



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Federal Family Assistance Framework for Aviation Disasters

Prepared by:
The National Transportation Safety Board
The National Disaster Assistance Division
Revised 2023

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Family Support Tasks (FSTs):

1. NTSB
2. Affected Air Carrier
3. Red Cross
4. Department of State (DOS)
5. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
6. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
7. Department of Defense (DOD)
8. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
9. Federal Protective Service (FPS)



Link to Framework

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Asiana Airlines 214

San Francisco International Airport
July 6, 2013
DCA13MA120
Legacy Legislated Accident



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Victim Accounting, Patient Tracking & Reunification Challenges

- Mass Casualty Incident vs. Mass Fatality Incident
 - Large number of survivors vs. fatal
 - Reports of missing persons
 - Unconfirmed fatalities
- Mass injured patient transports
 - Difficulty with central EMS coordination or tracking
 - Multiple hospitals received patients
 - Surge procedures and policies
 - Across the region, across jurisdictional lines

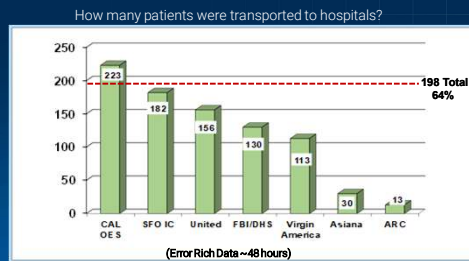
- Uninjured passengers
 - Separated at multiple hotels
 - Stayed at airport
 - Some locations unknown
- Command and Control Challenges
 - Multiple jurisdictions responded
 - Multiple EOCs activated
 - Limited/no communication
- Culture and language

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Patient Tracking

- Serious Injuries
 - 40 passengers
 - 8 flight attendants
 - 1 crewmember
- Minor or No Injuries
 - 248 passengers
 - 4 flight attendants
 - 3 crewmembers



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Survivor Tracking

- X Asiana Airline's lack of family assistance response
- X Airport unaware of airline family assistance response or plans
- X Airport tried to operate their own family assistance response
 - Coordinated transport to five local hotels
 - Coordinated bus transport between airport and hospitals
 - Some passengers stay overnight at SFO
- ✓ Coordination challenges with hospitals
 - Larger operations and focused healthcare operations: underutilization of available support and resources to discharged patients
 - I.e., transportation, clothing, medical equipment, etc.
- ✓ No awareness of Federal Family Assistance Legislation
- ✓ Practiced and planned for MCI but limited to internal response only
 - Limited information shared due to privacy concerns
 - Even beyond HIPAA

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Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

- HIPAA restricts release of protected health information by covered entities
- NTSB regulations permit staff to obtain medical records for an NTSB investigation (49 C.F.R. § 831.9)
- HIPAA authorizes a health care provider to disclose protected health information (45 C.F.R. § 164.512(b)(i)(1))
 - to a public health authority, without the patient's written authorization or opportunity to agree or object
 - for purposes of controlling disease, injury, or disability
- NTSB can provide a letter to hospitals explaining investigative authority and outlining specific request(s)
 - Will subpoena records and lab specimen draws, if necessary, but seek to avoid the subpoena process

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Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

- Per DHHS, **NTSB is a public health authority** for purposes of HIPAA (49 C.F.R. § 831.9(b)(2))
- NTSB will provide a letter to hospitals explaining authority and outlining specific request(s)
 - Will subpoena records and lab specimen draws, if necessary, but seek to avoid the subpoena process

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Passenger List Guidance: Response Community Considerations

- Requests for information on a carrier manifest/passenger list should be directed to the NTSB TDA Division by agencies that have direct responsibilities for victim accounting
- *All additional local and state requests for the passenger list should be directed to the NTSB (via assistance@ntsb.gov)*
- The response community and carriers are encouraged to contact the NTSB TDA during the preparedness phase and during the response phase to address requests for the passenger list.

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Passenger List Guidance: Response Community Considerations

- Understand that information on a passenger list is sensitive
- Establish appropriate document control and safeguards
- Do not forward information received from the NTSB without express permission, unless that information was lawfully obtained through other means
- If requesting directly from the carrier, be prepared to address questions from the carrier regarding the role of the requesting agency in the victim accounting process
- Share information about the whereabouts and welfare of victims

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Information Request

- Healthcare Coalitions
 - Patient Tracking process/status
 - Seek information for number of red/green/yellows
 - Distribution/Tracking to hospital locations
 - Appropriate contacts for medical facilities involved


- Hospitals
 - Name/DOB, if available
 - General Status – Possible to speak with patient? Family?
 - Emergency Contact Info:
 - Phone
 - Email
 - Physical Address
 - Is there a family assistance operation at your facility?
 - Involved in larger operations?
 - Possible engagement with lab
 - evidence preservation/tox-box

*Medical Examiner/Coroner is engaged for tracking fatalities or needed federal resources. **NTSB**

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NTSB Contact Information


NTSB.gov




NTSB Headquarters
 490 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
 Washington, DC 20594

Response Operations Center (ROC) 24/7
 Phone: 202-314-6290

NTSB.gov/tda








Report an accident




Sarah Quinn
 Phone: 202-320-4478
 Email: sarah.quinn@ntsb.gov

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