



**NTSB** National Transportation Safety Board

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# NTSB Accident Investigations

Managing Communications  
Following a Major Motorcoach  
Accident

ABA MARKETPLACE  
January 10, 2013

# ntsb mission

## INVESTIGATE...

- Every civil aviation accident in the U.S. (about 1,600 per year)
- Significant accidents in marine, highway, rail and pipeline
- In highway, that's about 10-12 out of 10 million annually



# ntsb mission - highway



Motorcoach highway excursion  
Umatilla, OR  
December 30, 2012



# ntsb mission - marine



Cargo ship collision with highway bridge  
Marshall, KY  
January 26, 2012



# ntsb mission - rail



Freight train derailment with hazmat release  
Columbus, OH  
July 11, 2012



# ntsb mission - pipeline



Natural gas pipeline rupture and fire  
Sissonville, WV  
December 11, 2012



# ntsb mission - aviation



Colgan Air Flight 3407  
Clarence Center, NY  
February 12, 2009

# ntsb mission

## RECOMMEND...

- Safety recommendations are most important product
- Issued to organizations that can improve safety of system

## ADVOCATE...

For the adoption of our safety recommendations



# ntsb mission



WorldWide Tours Motorcoach Accident  
New York City  
March 12, 2011



# ntsb mission



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# ntsb mission

## WorldWide Tours Investigation Issues

- Driver fatigue and onboard monitoring systems
- Commercial driver license history
- Heavy vehicle speed limiters
- Safety management systems
- Motorcarrier safety ratings
- Roadside barrier systems
- Motorcoach crashworthiness



# ntsb mission

15-month investigation resulted in 16  
new and 6 reiterated safety  
recommendations:

- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- Federal Highway Administration
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials



# ntsb mission

16 new and 6 reiterated safety recommendations:

- American Bus Association
- National Motorcoach Network
- United Motorcoach Association



# Recent Motorcoach Investigations

Date	City	State	Passengers	Fatalities	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Minor to Serious Injuries
2012	Umatilla	OR	40	9			
2011	Doswell	VA	58	4	14	35	
2011	New York	NY	32	15			17
2009	Dolan Springs	AZ	16	7			9
2008	Sherman	TX	55	17			38
2008	Mexican Hat	UT	52	9			43
2008	Victoria	TX	47	1			46
2007	Atlanta	GA	33	5	7	21	
2006	Westport	NY	52	5	20	28	
2005	Wilmer	TX	44	23	2	19	
2004	Turrell	AR	29	14	13	2	
			<b>458</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>153</b>



## NTSB GOVERNANCE

- Reports directly to Congress
- Independent federal agency
- No regulatory authority
- Composed of five Board Members
- ~400 employees



# board members



Current NTSB Members

Mark Rosekind, Ph.D., Christopher Hart, Chairman Deborah A.P. Hersman, Robert Sumwalt, Earl Weener, Ph.D. (left to right)



# board members

## BOARD MEMBER ROLE

- “Face of the NTSB” on-scene
- Role of spokesman on accident ends after leaving scene
- Investigative staff propose draft report, Members adopt or revise

# investigative process

## NTSB ACCIDENT RESPONSE

- Major: 10 - 15 member go team
- Field: 1 - 2 investigators on-scene
- Incident: No investigators on-scene



# investigative process

## NTSB ACCIDENT RESPONSE

Major: An investigator will be on-scene in 6 to 18 hours. (Investigators are based in California, Colorado, Delaware, Texas and D.C.)

Field: Investigators will arrive within 18 hours

# investigative process



NTSB Go Team leaving Washington



# investigative process



Team reviews reports en route to accident site

# investigative process

GO TEAM (arrives in 6 -18 hours)

- Investigator-in-Charge (IIC)
- Board Member
- Public Affairs Officer
- Transportation Disaster Assistance
- Investigative Specialists



# investigative process

## PRIMARY INVESTIGATIVE GROUPS

- Human Performance
- Motor Carrier
- Vehicle
- Highway
- Survival Factors / Emergency Response

# investigative process

## SUB-GROUPS (as applicable)

- Vehicle Recorders
- Video Analysis
- Witnesses
- Weather



# investigative process

## PROGRESS MEETING

- First meeting: establish order, identify participants, organize groups, review rules of conduct
- Led by IIC
- Factual info shared
- Basis of media briefings

# investigative process

## PARTY PROCESS

- NTSB picks parties that can offer technical expertise
- Motorcoach operators, State Police, and State DOTs frequently designated as parties
- Parties prohibited from speaking publically about NTSB's investigative findings
- Investigative information is shared between parties



# investigative process

## PARTIES...

- Do not participate in the analysis of the draft final report
- Can contribute to the analytical process by submitting their own findings, recommendations and probable cause
- Information about investigation goes through party coordinator

# investigative process

Process of eliminating all possible causes to prove what didn't happen

- Driver(s) – 72-hour background, medical, violations history, employment background
- Roadway – design, condition, barrier systems, signage, sight distances, accident history
- Vehicle – maintenance, design and performance, recorders/ECM



# investigative process

Process of eliminating all possible causes to prove what didn't happen

- Motor carrier – training, safety culture, operations
- Weather – including lighting conditions
- Survival factors – crashworthiness, restraint systems, emergency response

# investigative process



Investigation timeline: 12-18 months total



# investigative process



Board Meeting

# investigative process

## GO TEAM (arrives in 6 -18 hours)

- Team of 8-12 arrives at accident scene
- Will coordinate investigation efforts with local authorities
- Duration of on-scene investigation: 5-10 days
- Daily media briefings for 3-5 days
- Team returns to Washington
- Accident updates via press release





**NTSB**