



The Honorable
Christopher A. Hart
Vice Chairman

NTSB Investigates Accidents

- Independent federal agency, investigate transportation accidents and incidents, all modes
 - Aviation
 - Highway
 - Rail
 - Marine (NTSB or Coast Guard)
 - Pipeline
- Determine probable cause(s) and make recommendations to prevent recurrences



Exception: Criminal

- NTSB has investigative priority
- If accident “may have been caused by an intentional criminal act,” FBI may take over
- NTSB then provides technical support upon request
- Help as needed, but try to minimize participation in order not to be perceived in transportation industry as criminal investigator



Independent

- 5 Members, nominated by the President, confirmed by the Senate
- Members are not investigators
- Safeguards for independence
 - Members have a fixed term (not discretionary appointees)
 - Terms staggered
 - Political party balance
 - Technical expertise
- Conclusions from facts, not politics



The Party System: Facts

- NTSB relies on parties to help develop the facts
 - Carrier/Operator
 - Manufacturers
 - Unions
 - Regulator
 - Others, e.g., air traffic controllers
- Parties selected for technical expertise
 - Excludes plaintiffs, attorneys, insurers



The Party System: Analysis

- Once facts are developed, NTSB conducts analysis without parties
- NTSB's neutrality is important for impartial, unbiased analysis
- Parties are free to submit their own analyses into the public docket



Obligations of Parties

- Contribute technical expertise to the investigation
- Share information with other parties
- Avoid talking to media about the accident



Information to the Public

- Objective: Transparency of the facts and the process
- Factual information is placed in the public docket
- Board deliberations and decisions are required to be public
- Final NTSB accident report is not admissible in court



Other NTSB Activities

- Conduct special studies and investigations
 - Review troubling trends
 - Make recommendations to address trends
- Assist victims and their families
 - Extensive assistance, first few days
 - Longer term, further assistance upon request



Purpose

- Single focus of investigations and recommendations is **SAFETY**
- Primary product: Safety recommendations
- Not a regulator, cannot require compliance with recommendations



Safety Recommendations

- Safety recommendations are issued to any organization that has authority to fix the problem, including operators, regulators, labor unions, and state and local governments
- Favorable response to recommendations: More than 80%



Thank You

Questions?



National Transportation Safety Board