

Responding to a Transportation Accident

A GUIDE FOR POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL

NTSB investigators employ procedures similar to those utilized by law enforcement. NTSB safety investigations, while concurrent, are also independent of police investigations. The NTSB will attempt to not interfere with any concurrent criminal investigation or preparation for prosecution.

For aviation accidents, 49 CFR 830.5 requires air carrier operators to notify the NTSB. The carrier will coordinate directly with NTSB investigators.

To report an incident/accident, please call 844-373-9922 to speak to a Watch Officer at the NTSB Response Operations Center (ROC) in Washington, DC.



UPON COMPLETION OF FIRST RESPONDER AND LIFE SAFETY ACTIVITIES

1. Secure scene and preserve evidence
2. Contact the NTSB at 844-373-9922

PROTECT LIFE, PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE

- Establish a security perimeter around the accident scene.
- Allow Public Safety Personnel access to preserve life, recover the fatally injured and stabilize hazardous materials.
- Prevent disturbance of the accident scene and the wreckage.
- Protect and preserve ground scars and marks made by the aircraft, vehicle, train, vessel, pipeline, and other physical evidence related to the accident.
- Document and photograph pavement evidence prior to re-opening of roadway. Mark possible evidence for analysis by the NTSB investigators upon arrival.
- Remove highway vehicles to a secure location and ensure that recovery operations do not alter critical pre-crash adjustments such as airbrake settings.
- Maintain a record of personnel who enter the accident scene.

How to Support the NTSB

PRIOR TO NTSB ARRIVAL, RESTRICT SCENE ACCESS TO AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL

- Police/Fire/EMS
- Medical Examiner/Coroner
- State and Federal OSHA
- Other Emergency Services Agencies

Aviation Accidents

- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- Air Carrier/Operators investigative teams must call the NTSB at 844-373-9922 prior to scene entry

Rail/Transit Accidents

- Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Marine Accidents

- United States Coast Guard
- State or local waterway or harbor police

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Accidents

- Pipeline and Hazards Materials Safety Agency (PHMSA)
- State pipeline regulator

Upon arrival of the NTSB, scene access should be coordinated with the NTSB and local law enforcement.

POTENTIAL HAZARDS AT AN ACCIDENT SCENE

Potentially dangerous materials that may be present include but are not limited to: toxic chemicals, pressurized objects (oxygen systems, hydraulic systems, accumulators, tires, airbag systems, evacuation chutes), chemical / fluids (fuel, oil, hydraulic fluids, battery acid and other oxidizers), fire bottles / extinguishers, flares, ballistic recovery systems (i.e. airframe parachutes), radioactive materials, explosives, railroad high voltage 3rd rails, railroad overhead wires.



WRECKAGE DOCUMENTATION

- Obtain the aircraft registration number (N number), name of marine vessel, truck, or bus operator, pipeline operator, railroad company, and any other unique identifying information.
- Photograph or video overall accident scene starting at the initial point of impact (if possible). Include equipment such as locomotives, cockpit or operators controls.
- Photograph or video ground scars or marks made by the aircraft, vehicle, train, pipeline or vessel.
- Secure any unsecured electronic data or video recorders that may have been dislodged in the accident.

INJURED/FATALITIES

- Gather patient transport information from EMS to account for all injured victims.
- Coordinate with the NTSB prior to documenting and recovering fatally injured victims. If the NTSB is not available, document the following prior to recovery of victims: original position of the remains, use/condition of restraint systems, use/condition of lifesaving equipment, and intentional or accidental manipulation of the wreckage, vessel control panels, machinery during the recovery process.
- Collect names and contact information for all persons injured and uninjured in the accident.

WITNESS DOCUMENTATION

- Obtain name, address, email address and phone numbers.
- Determine location of witness relative to the accident site.
- Capture description of what they observed or heard.
- Identify the name of the person reporting accident (from 911 recordings).
- Obtain video or still photo images witness has of the accident scene.
- Identify and secure any video from security cameras.
- Secure cell phones, or other recording devices in the accident scene.

MEDIA RELATIONS

- Only the NTSB may release factual information on the investigation; do not speculate on the cause of the accident.
- Coordinate media releases and press conferences with the NTSB public affairs officer.
- The NTSB will not release names of crew members, passengers, or other victims associated with the accident.

CONTACT US

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