

FEDERAL PLAN FOR AVIATION ACCIDENTS INVOLVING AIRCRAFT OPERATED BY OR CHARTERED BY FEDERAL AGENCIES



PREPARED BY THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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1. **PURPOSE.** This plan assigns responsibilities and describes the Federal response to a government aircraft accident involving fatalities and/or injuries. It is the basic document for agencies which have been given responsibilities under this plan. It is recommended that each agency conduct an analysis based upon the agency mission and susceptibility to becoming involved in a government aviation accident. Depending on the outcome of the analysis, agencies should develop a plan supporting and augmenting this guidance and establish procedures to meet the requirements of their agency.
2. **BACKGROUND.** The aftermath of a plane crash is an extraordinarily painful time for the families of the passengers on board. The shock and sense of loss felt by families of passengers who are killed is incalculable. In a memorandum issued on September 9, 1996, President Clinton recognized that the Federal government bears responsibility for addressing the needs of these families.

When the accident involves a government owned or operated aircraft, the Federal government bears a special responsibility. In its final report issued on February 12, 1997, the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security (the White House Commission) chaired by Vice President Al Gore, called on the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) to coordinate the development of plans for responding to accidents involving civilians injured or killed while traveling on government aircraft. The White House Commission recognized that families of those who gave their lives serving their country are entitled to receive assistance at least comparable to that provided to families of passengers killed in accidents involving commercial aircraft.

Recommendation 4.2 in the White House Commission's report, issued on February 12, 1997, states as follows:

“The families of civilians killed while traveling on government aircraft face the same traumas and challenges as those whose loved ones were killed on commercial flights. However, the response to such disasters is covered under different laws and procedures. Those differences, and a clear statement regarding their rights and benefits in the event of an aviation disaster, should be provided to passengers on government aircraft prior to boarding. The Commission believes that it is essential that those families receive assistance comparable to that provided after commercial disasters through the enhanced role of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). The Commission urges the DOT to work with NTSB, Department of Defense (DOD), and other agencies and family members to develop plans to accomplish that goal by September, 1997 and to evaluate the need to revise existing laws and regulations governing the rights and benefits of civilians on government aircraft.”

DOT developed an Intergovernmental Working Group (the Working Group) which reviewed suggestions on ways to improve the response to families and victims of passengers traveling on government owned or chartered aircraft. Participants in the review of policy and procedures included family members involved in the CT-43 crash in Dubrovnik, Croatia, in April 1996. The Working Group found, based in part on the testimony of the CT-43 family members, that a disclosure statement of rights, benefits, and possible consequences of boarding a government aircraft should be routinely available to

passengers. The Working Group found that such notice should be given to passengers at the time of invitation, or at the issuance of the travel orders, depending on the nature of the mission and the type of passengers (private citizen or Federal employee). A sample disclosure statement of rights and benefits is attached as Appendix F. The purpose of the statement is to provide potential passengers adequate notice that traveling on government aircraft is different than traveling on commercial aircraft, and to inform the potential passenger to seek more information if the person so chooses.

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) was tasked by the Working Group to produce a final version of this summarized statement for distribution. Agencies would be asked to ensure that the disclosure statement is given to all civilian and Federal employees traveling on their agency's aircraft, whether it is government owned, leased or chartered. OPM has issued a pamphlet "Federal Payments That May be Available to Federal Employees and Their Families When Employees are Injured or Die on the Job". The publication is number RI 84-2, issued in September of 1996.

The General Services Administration (GSA) was asked to take the lead on any travel changes deemed necessary or desirable. GSA's Interagency Committee for Aviation Policy (ICAP) should continue assistance with regard to implementing air disaster response plans and aircraft flight planning and management issues.

The Working Group designated the NTSB as the best agency to be responsible for the overall coordination of family support matters. The NTSB is the agency recognized by victims' families as an independent source of representation for them in the event of a crash. The Working Group recognized the significant family support expertise and statutory responsibilities residing with the Department of State (DOS) for accidents in a foreign country and with the DOD for military disasters. It further recognized DOD's special responsibility to take on the lead of assistance issues for accidents that arise from these missions.

3. **IMPLEMENTATION.** The NTSB Director of the Office of Family Affairs (FA) will put this plan into execution, in full or part, at the direction of the Chairman of the NTSB. All Federal government agencies (other than aircraft owned and operated by the Armed Forces or intelligence agencies of the United States) that own, lease, charter, rent, and/or operate aircraft for the government shall implement the provisions of this plan.
 - a. Federal agencies that have responsibilities under this plan maintain control of their resources while supporting the NTSB, in accordance with references at Appendix A. (For purposes of this document, the terms "Federal agencies" and "Federal staff" includes the American Red Cross.)

b. The NTSB will initiate notification of Federal support agencies to activate planning and coordinating with the sponsoring agency for an appropriate response based upon the magnitude of the aviation accident. Additional requirements will follow, as the accident situation becomes better known. Upon direction from Director of FA, the NTSB Communications Center (202-314-6290) will notify some or all of the following operations centers:

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|---|--|
| (1) American Red Cross (ARC) | (703) 206-8822 |
| (2) DOS | (202) 647-1512 |
| (3) Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) | (301) 443-1167 Ext. 0
1-800- 872-6367 |
| (4) Federal Bureau of Investigation Operations Center (FBI) | (202) 324-6700 |
| (5) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) | (202) 898-6100 |
| (6) DOD | (703) 697-0218 |
| (7) Department of Justice (DOJ) | (202) 514-5000 |

c. The role of the NTSB can generally be described as a coordinator to integrate the resources of the Federal government and other organizations to support the efforts of the local and state government and the sponsoring agency to meet the needs of aviation accident victims and their families. The NTSB assists in making Federal resources available to local authorities and the sponsoring agency. Family counseling, victim identification and forensic services, communications with foreign governments, and translation services, are just a few of the areas in which the Federal government can help local authorities and the sponsoring agency respond to an aviation accident. It is recommended that the local government emergency services provide a representative to participate in the local and Federal response.

d. Local authorities will maintain jurisdiction of accident response, recovery, security, site cleanup, and medical examiner operations. The NTSB will lead the aviation accident investigation unless the accident is determined to have been caused by a criminal act. If a criminal act is involved, a parallel investigation will be conducted by law enforcement agencies.

e. The sponsoring agency (the agency operating the aircraft) has the fundamental responsibility to provide for the victims and their families affected by the aviation accident. This includes family notification and all aspects of victim and family logistical support.

f. All personnel involved in providing services to assist the victims and their family members should be trained in crisis response and must demonstrate compassion, sympathy, technical expertise, and professionalism. Information provided by family members and victims through discussions, interviews, counseling, and any other form of

exchange of personal information must remain confidential and used only for the purpose of the original disclosure.

4. SCOPE.

- a. This plan pertains to any domestic Federal government aviation accident, (other than aircraft owned and operated by the Armed Forces or intelligence agencies of the United States) that occurs within the United States, its territories, possessions, and territorial seas involving Federal employees and/or private citizens whose travel is sponsored by the Federal government. Agencies which sponsor travel on aircraft owned and operated by the Armed Forces or intelligence agencies, should provide a point of contact to the respective operating agency. Support to families involved in Armed Forces or intelligence owned and operated aviation accidents will be based upon regulations, policies, or other guidelines of the operating agency. When requested, the NTSB will provide technical family affairs support to the sponsoring and operating agency.
- b. The DOS has the primary responsibility for dealing with U.S. citizens affairs following aviation accidents occurring outside the United States, its territories, possessions, and territorial seas. This document does not address aviation accidents that occur outside the United States. Sponsoring and operating agencies that are vulnerable to an overseas accident should coordinate with the DOS to establish an effective response.

5. ASSUMPTIONS.

- a. Should an accident occur that has a significant loss of life, the Chairman of the NTSB can request that Federal agencies provide support and additional resources to help the victims and their families.
- b. Local and state officials having jurisdiction will allow the Federal government to provide assistance.
- c. Some families of victims will travel to the city closest to the accident and will use accommodations provided by the sponsoring agency. The remainder of families will remain at their local residence. Families of seriously injured personnel will travel to the location where the injured are hospitalized, and once the victim is released from the hospital will return home.

6. GENERAL. The family assistance mission tasks that follow a Federal government aviation accident are:

- a. Make initial notification to victims' family members involved in the aviation accident based on manifest documents and other available information.
- b. Monitor search and recovery operations conducted by the local jurisdiction and offer assistance where needed. This could include assets from the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, Civil Air Patrol and or the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.
- c. Determine the status and location of victims.

- d. Obtain approval of the local jurisdiction to provide Federal assistance, where appropriate.
 - e. Assist the local medical examiner in the identification of fatalities and the formal notification of their families. (It is noted that there are differences between a medical examiner and coroner. For purposes of this document the term “medical examiner” is used interchangeably with “coroner”).
 - f. Provide psychological and logistical support and services to victims and their family members.
 - g. Provide daily briefings to families on the progress of recovery effort, identification of victims, the investigation and other areas of concern.
 - h. Arrange for a memorial service for victims and their family members.
 - i. Arrange for the return of personal effects.
 - j. Maintain contact with victims and their families to provide updates on the progress of the investigation and other related matters.
7. **RESPONSIBILITIES.** There are seven Victim Support Tasks (VSTs). VSTs are tasks which participating organizations may be required to perform based upon the size and circumstances of the actual incident. The seven VSTs are NTSB Tasks; Sponsoring Agency; Family Care and Mental Health (ARC); Victim Identification, Forensic and Medical Services (DHHS); Assisting Families of Foreign Victims (DOS); Communications (FEMA); and Assisting Victims of Crime (DOJ). Each aviation crash is unique, and all of the following responsibilities may or may not be employed. Agencies and organizations should consider this and the three crash level scales when developing their supporting plans.
- a. **NTSB: VST 1, “NTSB Tasks”.**
 - (1) Coordinate Federal assistance and serve as liaison between the sponsoring agency and family members.
 - (2) Request a copy of the passenger manifest from the sponsoring agency.
 - (3) Review family support logistics with the sponsoring agency with special consideration toward security, quality of rooms and facilities, and privacy for family members.
 - (4) Coordinate assistance effort with local and state authorities, to include the medical examiner, local law enforcement, emergency management, hospitals, and other emergency support personnel.
 - (5) Maintain communications with the sponsoring agency to receive frequent updates on the status of notification of victims’ families.

- (6) Conduct daily coordination meetings with the sponsoring agency, local and Federal staff to review daily activities, resolve problem areas, and to synchronize future family support operations and activities. Information that may be needed at the daily coordination meeting is at Appendix D.
- (7) Provide family briefings to those at the site and those who are not at the site.
- (8) Discuss with the medical examiner the subject of DNA testing: i.e., (under what conditions would it be used; to what extent it would be used; whom the medical examiner would use to collect and test samples; and whom would pay for testing of samples).
- (9) Coordinate with the Safety Board's investigator-in-charge for a possible visit to the accident site for family members.
- (10) Provide information releases to the media pertaining to family support areas of interest.
- (11) Develop procedures for the handling of personal effects not being held as evidence for purposes of a criminal or accident investigation.
- (12) Coordinate with DOJ in arranging meetings with family members to explain their rights under the victim of crime legislation should the accident be declared a crime.
- (13) Maintain contact with family members to keep them informed about the progress of the investigation as well as to continue to meet their future needs.
 - a) Generally, about 6 to 9 months after the date of the accident, factual reports written by the NTSB investigators are made available in a public docket. Families should be informed approximately 4 weeks prior to the factual report being made public that they may request the NTSB provide a copy of the report to them. The report will be provided to them at no cost.
 - b) Families will also be notified of a public hearing concerning the accident, if the NTSB decides a public hearing is necessary. The hearing is designed to gather additional facts from individuals selected to testify. Travel and lodging to the hearing is at the family's expense. Families will be provided seating and copies of official exhibits discussed at the hearing.
 - c) Should a Board meeting be held, families will be invited to attend, at their own expense, at the NTSB's Washington, DC, headquarters at which the NTSB investigative staff presents a draft accident report to the full five-member Board for member discussion and approval. This report results in the NTSB's probable cause of the accident and recommendations on how to prevent future aviation accidents.
- (14) Consolidate and review after action reports to resolve problem areas and update operating plans and procedures.

b. Sponsoring Agency: VST 2, "Sponsoring Agency Tasks".

- (1) Ensure that the operating agency notifies the NTSB of the accident as required by 49 [Code of Federal Regulations] (CFR)830.5; notify the nearest NTSB Field Office or the NTSB Communications Center at (202) 314-6290, immediately upon knowledge of a crash.
- (2) Plan and coordinate with the operating agency procedures and responsibilities regarding the flight manifest. The manifest should include the full name of each passenger and crewmember, along with the name of a contact person and his or her telephone number.
- (3) Provide to the NTSB per Title 49 CFR, section 830.6:
 - a) Type, nationality, and registration marks of the aircraft.
 - b) Name of the owner, and operator of the aircraft.
 - c) Name of the pilot-in-command.
 - d) Date and time of the accident.
 - e) Last point of departure and point of intended landing of the aircraft.
 - f) Position of the aircraft with reference to some easily defined geographical point.
 - g) Number of persons aboard, number killed, and seriously injured.
 - h) Nature of the accident, the weather and the extent of damage to the aircraft, so far it is known.
 - i) A description of any explosives, radioactive materials, or other dangerous goods carried.

Although not a requirement in Title 49 CFR, section 830.6, the NTSB requests the following information be provided to the Deputy Director of FA.

- a) The name and telephone number of the person who is representing the sponsoring agency.
 - b) Whether the flight was domestic or international.
 - c) The most current reconciled copy of the flight manifest. Each copy should be numbered or annotated so it can be distinguished from previous copies.
- (4) Provide victims' families the telephone number and name of an agency contact.
 - (5) Provide timely notification and updated information to family members of crew and passengers, as it becomes available. Personnel providing notification and updates should be trained in crisis response and death notification.

- (6) Provide logistical support to the extent possible, to family members who desire to travel to the accident site (or to a hospital location), which includes, but not limited to, transportation, lodging, meals, security, communications, and incidentals. Factors to consider in selecting a facility are quality of rooms and size of facilities, privacy for family members, and relative location to medical examiner's office, temporary morgue, airport operations, accident site, NTSB investigation Command Post, and medical treatment facilities.
- (7) Inform family members (or family friends or clergy who are with the family) at an appropriate time, but as early as possible after being notified, that it is critical that they contact their family dentist to obtain the dental records and dental x-rays of their loved one. Ask the family to have the records and x-rays overnight expressed to a designated agency representative at the accident. The agency representative will ensure the delivery of these records to the local medical examiner/coroner. If the family is coming to the site within the next 48 hours, the family may arrange to hand carry these documents. It should be explained that dental records and x-rays are critical in the victim identification process.
- (8) Make provisions for private rooms within the Family Assistance Center (FAC) for medical examiner personnel to collect ante mortem questionnaire information from families who are at the site. These rooms should have telephones for medical examiner personnel to telephonically collect ante mortem questionnaire information from families who are away from the site.
- (9) Provide DOS representative, if present, or the NTSB Investigator-in-Charge (IIC), necessary information on foreign passengers to facilitate interaction with appropriate foreign government embassies.
- (10) Provide notification of family members prior to releasing passenger names to the public. Family members should be advised and given appropriate time to notify other family members and friends prior to public release of the victim's name.
- (11) Provide the media with continuous updates on the progress of the notification process, such as providing the numbers of victims' families notified as of a certain time and the number remaining to be notified. This should be done an authorized representative of the sponsoring agency. This process should continue until all victims' families have been notified.
- (12) Provide contact person to meet family members as they arrive and while at the accident site. This person will be responsible for assisting the family while at the site and until the family returns to their residence. At that time the sponsoring agency may want to designate a single contact person for all families.
- (13) Maintain daily contact with family members who do not travel to the accident site by providing a contact person from the sponsoring agency.
- (14) Inquire at the time of notification or soon after if family members desire crisis assistance. If so, the sponsoring agency may employ their Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider to assist the family. If they are undecided or decline, let

them know if they change their mind, they should inform their sponsoring agency representative. If the sponsoring agency does not want to employ their EAP provider, the sponsoring agency should coordinate with ARC to provide crisis assistance. Keep in mind that not all EAP providers are trained in this type of crisis assistance.

- (15) Establish a joint liaison with ARC at each supporting medical treatment facility to track the status of injured victims and to provide assistance to their families.
- (16) Consult with family members regarding their wishes concerning agency sponsored memorial service and memorial.
- (17) Participate in daily coordination meetings to review daily activities, resolve problem areas and to synchronize future family support operations and activities. Information that may be needed at the daily coordination meeting is at Appendix D. This information is needed to plan logistical requirements, such as food, lodging, and transportation, as well as providing everyone with an overall picture of current and future support operations.
- (18) Provide NTSB names of victims and their next of kin (NOK); NOK relationship to victim; and NOK address and telephone number.
- (19) Designate an individual who will be the agency's representative to the Deputy Director, FA. This individual will travel to various locations, such as the accident site, morgue, and family assistance center with the Deputy Director, FA. The designated individual should have a sufficient degree of authority to make decisions to resolve problem areas.

c. ARC: VST 3, "Family Care and Mental Health", if required:

- (1) Coordinate and manage the numerous organizations and personnel that will offer counseling, religious and support services to the operation. A staff processing center, away from the FAC, should be set up to monitor and manage this area so that families are not outnumbered and overwhelmed by well-intentioned organizations and individuals. Badging of staff and volunteers, matching volunteer skills with organizational needs, assigning work schedules, briefing and debriefing of support staff, and planning for future activities are a few of the activities that can take place at the staff processing center.
- (2) Qualified local resources should be integrated with ARC personnel to provide crisis and grief counseling, food services, administrative assistance and other support services to family members and support organizations.
- (3) Coordinate with the sponsoring agency as to whether the agency's EAP provider will provide crisis and grief counseling to family members. Integrate EAP personnel into the ARC managed activity. If the sponsoring agency does not utilize its EAP provider or the EAP provider does not have sufficient qualified personnel, activate ARC personnel to provide crisis and grief counseling to family members and support personnel.

- (5) Assess the needs and available resources of other agencies and coordinate with them to ensure ongoing emotional support for workers during the operation and provide debriefings before departure.
 - (6) Establish a joint liaison with the sponsoring agency at each supporting medical treatment facility to track the status of injured victims and to provide assistance to their families.
 - (7) Coordinate with the sponsoring agency to establish areas for families to grieve privately.
 - (8) Coordinate on site child care services for families that bring young children.
 - (9) Arrange a suitable inter-faith memorial service days following the accident and a memorial service for any future burial of unidentified remains.
- d. DHHS: VST 4, “Victim Identification, Forensic and Medical Services”, if required:
- (1) Provide necessary Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT) members to assist the medical examiner in victim identification and mortuary services. Configuration of team and skills required will be determined by details of the accident and medical examiner’s request for assistance.
 - (2) Provide, if necessary, a portable morgue facility and the necessary equipment and supplies to augment the local medical examiner’s capabilities.
 - (3) Monitor the status of incoming dental records and x-rays to insure that all records have been received. If not, take appropriate steps to obtain the records and x-rays. Request assistance from DOS for acquiring necessary records for foreign passengers.
 - (4) Interview family members who are both on site and off site for ante mortem identification information and disposition of remains information.
 - (5) Coordinate with the medical examiner to integrate non-DMORT personnel who are providing assistance to the medical examiner’s office into the DMORT response.
 - (6) Assist the medical examiner in notifying family members of positive identification, to include explanation of how identification was determined. Notification team may include, if appropriate, EAP/ARC crisis counselor, clergy, and sponsoring agency family escort.
 - (7) Check remains prior to release to local funeral director. Insure that all documentation is correct and establish a chain of custody.
- e. DOD: Supports DHHS in VST 4, “Victim Identification, Forensic and Medical Services”, if required:
- (1) Provide the use of a military installation, such as Dover Air Force Base, for mortuary support operations.

- (2) Provide personnel from the Armed Forces Institute Pathology, Office of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner, to assist in the identification effort and to conduct appropriate DNA comparison testing on specimens submitted by the medical examiner.
 - (3) Through the NTSB IIC, provide assets from the US Navy's Support Salvage (SUPSALV) for the purposes of offshore search, salvage, and recovery of non-military aircraft wreckage, when these services are not locally available. SUPSALV is delegated the responsibility for technical and, when tasked, operational control of aircraft search, identification, and/or underwater recovery operations. NTSB and SUPSALV will jointly confer if assets should be deployed and SUPSALV will advise the NTSB on alternate search and recovery methods which may be employed.
- f. DOS: VST 5, "Assisting Families of Foreign Victims", if required:
- (1) Provide official notification to foreign governments that have citizens involved in the aviation accident after obtaining necessary information on foreign passengers from the sponsoring agency.
 - (2) Assist the sponsoring agency in notifying U.S. citizens who may reside or are traveling outside the United States that a member of their family has been involved in an aviation accident.
 - (3) Provide translation services to facilitate communications with the victim's family and all interested parties.
 - (4) Assist the sponsoring agency, the Federal support staff, and others in maintaining daily contact with foreign families who do not travel to the United States.
 - (5) Assist families of foreign victims with entry into the United States and extend or grant visas.
 - (6) Facilitate necessary consulate and customs services for the return of remains and personal effects into the country of destination.
 - (7) Assist in the effort to provide the medical examiner the necessary information on foreign victims to complete death certificates.
- g. FEMA: VST 6, "Communications", if required:
- (1) Provide personnel, upon request of the NTSB, to assist in public information dissemination, to include assistance in establishing and staffing external media support centers, such as the accident site, wreckage hanger, family support operations center, airport, and other areas that may attract media interest.
 - (2) Provide voice and data communication assets to communicate from the accident site to the NTSB Command Post and or the NTSB HQ Communications Center.
- h. DOJ: VST 7, "Assisting Victims of Crime", if required:

- (1) Provide, upon NTSB request, a FBI Disaster Squad with sufficient personnel to obtain fingerprint identification of aviation accident fatalities. This team will work with the medical examiner and the DMORT personnel at the morgue location.
- (2) The following responsibilities will only be implemented if the sponsoring agency accident is officially declared a criminal act:
 - a) Provide information to victims and their family members, on site and off site, as required under the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, as amended the Victim and Witness Protection Act of 1982, other relevant statutes, and the 1995 *Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance*.
 - b) Provide updates to victims and their family members on the progress of the criminal investigation.

8. COORDINATING INSTRUCTIONS.

- a. The point of contact for this plan is the Deputy Director, FA, NTSB. The telephone number is (202) 314-6185. The office fax number is (202) 314-6638.
- b. Upon implementation and until the NTSB FA staff is situated at the accident site, calls should be directed to the NTSB Communications Center at (202) 314-6290 (voice) or (202) 314- 6293 (fax). The Communications Center will pass any information or messages to the appropriate NTSB FA staff member.
- c. Sponsoring agencies should develop procedures for ensuring all affected employees receive a copy of the Disclosure Statement of Right and Benefits as shown in Appendix F. This document can be given out at the time annual, invitational or temporary travel orders are issued. Employees do not need to receive this document every time they commence government travel.
- d. Sponsoring agencies have critical responsibilities under this plan and are to develop plans tailored to the agency's mission and vulnerability to a government aviation accident. Sponsoring agencies are requested to complete their plans by December 1, 1999, and provide a copy to the following address: National Transportation Safety Board, Deputy Director, Office of Family Affairs, 490 L'Enfant Plaza East, SW, Washington D.C. 20594-2000.
- e. It is recommended that Federal personnel involved at the accident site wear clothing articles, such as hats, shirts, and/or jackets, that identify the agency or group with which they are associated. This will be helpful for families, as well as for all those involved in supporting the operation.
- f. Agencies that participate in supporting victims and their family members under this plan are requested to submit an after action report to the Deputy Director, FA, within 30 days of completion of their tasks. This information must be captured so appropriate lessons can be derived, corrective actions taken, and plans changed accordingly. A sample format is at Appendix C.

- g. All media inquiries and releases that pertain to the family support operation will be referred to the NTSB public affairs officer. The NTSB will advise and assist the local medical examiner on any media affairs in his or her area of responsibility. Sponsoring and other support agencies may provide press releases or briefings on their specific agency mission/action during this event. There are no restrictions on victims or family members meeting with the media, if they so desire.

ENCLOSURES

Appendix A	References
Appendix B	Definitions
Appendix C	Sample after Action Report Format
Appendix D	Daily Status Report Information
Appendix E	Frequently Asked Questions
Appendix F	Disclosure Statement of Rights and Benefits

APPENDIX A

REFERENCES

- a. Presidential Executive Memorandum, Subject: Assistance to Families Affected by Aviation and Other Transportation Disasters, September 9, 1996
- b. Public Law 104-264, Title VII, Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act of 1996, October 9, 1996
- c. White House Commission Report on Aviation Safety and Security, February 12, 1997.
- d. Task Force on Assistance to Families of Aviation Disasters, (Final Report) October 29, 1997
- e. Memorandum of Understanding between Department of Justice and National Transportation Safety Board, January 28, 1997.
- f. Memorandum of Understanding between Federal Emergency Management Agency and National Transportation Safety Board, October 24, 1998.
- g. Memorandum of Understanding between Department of Defense and National Transportation Safety Board, April 1, 1997.
- h. Memorandum of Understanding between Department of State and National Transportation Safety Board, June 2, 1997.
- i. Memorandum of Understanding between Department of Health and Human Services and National Transportation Safety Board, June 19, 1997.
- j. Memorandum of Understanding between Department of Transportation and National Transportation Safety Board, June 19, 1997.
- k. Statement of Understanding between American Red Cross and National Transportation Safety Board, September 28, 1998.
- l. Development of Plans for Responding to Aviation Disasters Involving Civilians on Government Aircraft, Intergovernmental Working Group, (Final Report) March 11, 1999.

APPENDIX B

DEFINITIONS

- ◆ **Accident** - An occurrence associated with the operation of an aircraft which takes place between the time any person boards the aircraft with the intention of flight and all such persons having disembarked and in which any person suffers death or serious injury, or in which the aircraft receives substantial damage.
- ◆ **DMORT** - Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team is a part of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and available upon request to assist the local medical examiner/coroner in identification of fatalities. The team is composed of professionals from the fields of pathology, Odontology, anthropology, mortuary care, and other technical backgrounds. They can also provide and set up a portable morgue on site.
- ◆ **Family Member** - The person that would normally be the next of kin for initial notification purposes. Generally, this means spouse, children, parents, and/or siblings. For family assistance purposes, a family member may also include close members of the family such as a grandparent, aunt, uncle or other relative. It might also include a fiancée, step-children, cousins, companions, or other person outside the traditional definition of family. The definition is left to the sponsoring agency.
- ◆ **Government Aircraft (Federal)** – (For the purposes of this document, this definition *does not include state, local or county aircraft*) Any aircraft owned, leased, chartered or rented by an executive agency other than an armed forces or an intelligence agency.
- ◆ **Operating Agency** - A United States government agency or government chartered entity responsible for operation of the aircraft, including provisions of the aircraft and flight personnel, filing flight plans, and completion of passenger manifests.
- ◆ **Passenger and/or Crew** - Any individual aboard a government aircraft.
- ◆ **FAC**-The Family Assistance Center (FAC) is established in the accident city as soon as possible after an accident to provide support to family members. It will generally be located in a facility large enough to meet the basic needs of all families, including lodging, food, communication, etc. In addition, this facility must be secured so that families can grieve in private.
- ◆ **Sponsoring Agency** - A United States government agency with primary responsibility for the mission under which the travel was initiated.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE AFTER ACTION REPORT FORMAT

National Transportation Safety Board
Deputy Director, Office of Family Affairs
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, SW
Washington, DC 20594-2000

SUBJECT: (AVIATION ACCIDENT) AFTER ACTION REPORT

Describe such items as: how the organization was organized; relationships to other organizations; the nature of the organization's mission; how many of the organization's personnel were involved; list of other resources that were provided, along with transportation and equipment requirements; date of the arrival and departure of agency personnel; list of daily activities; and any other items the organization feels are important to add to this document. This outline is not intended to limit the content.

Attach as separate enclosures specific areas observed throughout the operation that were both successful and problem areas. The following format is provided:

Topic:

Discussion:

Recommendations:

Also enclose any programs, associated ceremonial material, or video coverage.

**APPENDIX D
DAILY STATUS REPORT INFORMATION**

1. Number families notified / number pending notification	SPONSORING AGENCY
2. Number families on site/ number of families at home	SPONSORING AGENCY
3. Number of total family members at the hotel	SPONSORING AGENCY
4. Number of families expected to arrive within next 24 hours	SPONSORING AGENCY
5. Number of families expected to depart within the next 24 hours	SPONSORING AGENCY
6. Number of families at home that have been contacted by their representative within the last 24 hours	SPONSORING AGENCY
7. Status of injured personnel and location of family members	SPONSORING AGENCY
8. Number of families at the site that have requested ARC assistance and have been assisted by ARC personnel within the last 24 hours	ARC
9. Number of families at home that have requested ARC assistance and have been contacted by their ARC representative within the last 24 hours	ARC
10. Number of workers that have received ARC assistance in last 24 hours	ARC
11. Number of injured personnel that have received ARC assistance	ARC
12. Status of medical/dental records and x-rays	ME
13. Status of ante mortem and disposition of remains interviews	ME
14. Status of identification efforts	ME
15. Status of families notified of positive identification	ME
16. Status of release of remains	ME
17. Update on assistance provided to foreign families	DOS
18. Update on assistance provided to victims and families	DOJ
19. Number of Federal support personnel, to include DMORT and ARC personnel on site and their locations.	ALL
20. Remarks on daily activities.	ALL
21. Remarks on next 24 hours activities.	ALL

APPENDIX E

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

Please note this section was in response to many inquiries for clarification about various topics of the basic agency plan. This is not a substitute for reading and understanding the basic agency plan.

1. Is there a specific definition of who constitutes a family member?

U.S. Federal and state laws define who constitutes a family member from a legal point of view. These legal definitions may also vary from state to state. The traditional view included spouse, children, mother, father, brother, and sister. Terms such as stepparents, stepsiblings and life partners have become more common in recent years in defining some family environments. It is suggested that sponsoring agency should plan on dealing with a variety of family member scenarios and to take each one on a case by case basis.

2. During the initial hours of an aviation disaster there is a significant amount of verification of facts that the sponsoring agency needs to do. What information should be given to a family member if they call while the verification process is still in progress?

The sponsoring agency must establish contact with the family of a victim as soon as possible following an accident. In some cases, a family member may call the sponsoring agency before the sponsoring agency has reached out to contact the family. During this process it is important to give whatever passenger information about the victim that is available. There are cases in which notifying an additional family member may be necessary. There maybe is a family member that will be more helpful to the sponsoring agency in working with his or her family, such as families with language difficulties.

3. Are there any special needs that family escorts should inquire about shortly after meeting their assigned family?

As sponsoring agency escorts are assigned to family members, it is important to identify any immediate needs the family may have. This may include such things as monetary, childcare, medical or religious needs.

4. Are there any steps that a sponsoring agency can take to be better prepared to manage the manifest reconciliation process during an emergency?

It is suggested that periodically sponsoring agencies randomly select flights that have departed and verify the manifest using each sponsoring agency's specific emergency procedures for manifest reconciliation. This exercise serves several purposes. First, it serves as a training opportunity for agencies to get their employees familiar with the agency's manifest verification procedures. Secondly, it may help the sponsoring agency identify and correct procedural and process problems prior to a future accident.

1. Is there a requirement by a sponsoring agency to release the names of the passengers and crew to the media?

There is no requirement to release the names of passengers and crew to the media. However, once notification has been made, it is acceptable to ask a family how long they may need to establish contact with other family members. There should be consideration in delaying any release of names until a family has had an opportunity to contact other family members and friends.

It is important to keep family members informed, even if there is no additional news. Family members should receive regular updates. Please remember that if the sponsoring agency states they will call a family member back within a specific time frame, then those calls must be done as close to the time set as possible.

2. Are there any steps a sponsoring agency can take to limit the number of inquiry calls that follow a disaster?

If the sponsoring agency uses an 800/888 number, it is important for the sponsoring agency to stress to the media that the numbers are for “only those family members that have reason to believe that their loved one was onboard the flight”. Also the media should continue to reemphasize the specific details of the flight, such as, “This was a Department of Justice aircraft traveling from Tempe, AZ to Denver, CO, carrying Federal government employees. This was not a commercially scheduled flight.”

The sponsoring agency should also have an internal “call home” system. Upon learning that the sponsoring agency has had a major accident, employees should be advised through the agencies internal communications network of the event and they should be asked to call home and let loved ones know they are OK.

3. Are there any training topics that can help teach employees how to assist families following an accident?

Sponsoring agencies should train their employees in a number of areas, including, but not limited to: an understanding of the range of physical and emotional reaction to trauma, including long term effects from post traumatic stress disorder; understanding the need for information by family members and victims; skills to assist with age groups that range from children to the elderly; how to remain caring, non-judgmental and compassionate while assisting those that are suffering or who are extremely demanding or angry.

There should be a variety of methods used, including, but not limited to: small groups with role play scenarios and the use of survivors and family members telling their experiences.

It is also very important to tell employees about the effects that they may encounter while responding to a major accident. Training should include how employees can take care of themselves during and after their response. It should also teach them how to look out for co-workers that may be having difficulties. After initial training there should be annual recurrent training.

8. What issues should a sponsoring agency consider in managing personal effects?

Due to the physical and psychological impact that the recovery process can have on sponsoring agency employees, many airlines have contracted with professional third party vendors that are employed to respond to and manage the recovery and cataloging of the personal effects effort.

Sponsoring agencies need to allow family members the opportunity to view non-associated personal effects. This can be done via a catalog or a CD with photographs of the items.

9. Does this plan apply to aviation accidents that occur in a foreign country, such as a USAF aircraft carrying Federal government employees?

No. The Department of State and the sponsoring agency has responsibility for assisting families of accidents occurring outside the United States and its territories.

10. What is the role of the American Red Cross?

The NTSB designated the ARC to assist them in meeting the needs of family members effected by a domestic commercial aviation accident. Since being selected the ARC has worked a number of aviation accidents with the Safety Board. Their ability to respond nationwide along with experience in trauma communications with families and taking the responsibility of coordinating the emotional care and support of the families of passengers involved in the accident has proven to be invaluable. The ARC will have a similar role in Federal government aviation accidents.

11. Does this mean the agency has no role in the providing emotional care and support to their own employee's family members?

No. The ARC will coordinate with the sponsoring agency to ensure that sufficient resources are available to support everyone who needs assistance. If the agency wants to utilize their Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider to support family members and their employees, that can be worked out with the ARC. The ARC retains the responsibility to coordinate services to effected families at the site.

12. What is the AIR Team?

The local chapter of the American Red Cross will normally send representatives followed by personnel from the state chapter. A national response will follow within 6-8 hours from the Aviation Incident Response Team (AIR) . This team is made up of trained and experienced ARC disaster management specialists. The size of the team is dependent upon the size of the accident.

13. Who manages volunteers that offer their assistance during a disaster?

The NTSB selected the ARC to manage volunteers that will offer to assist at a disaster. In order to meet this requirement, the ARC will establish a staff processing center located away from the accident site to manage and screen volunteers that wish to assist. This center will maintain records of expenses for accounting purposes and establish credentials and work schedules for the volunteers selected to assist.

14. Who is responsible for the FAC?

The sponsoring agency should secure a facility to accommodate all family members traveling to the accident city. Agencies providing support and services to families will work together to insure families are served properly. The NTSB Office of Family Affairs will facilitate the smooth operation of the FAC, but it will rely upon the cooperation and support of all contributing organizations.

15. Who is considered family for access to the FAC?

Today's family often does not have traditional boundaries. Any definition of "family member" should take into consideration that many individuals may consider themselves to be the family of the victim, even though the law does not formally recognize the relationship. This would be the case for a fiancée or long-time companion. Family member should be defined in broad terms for the purpose of FAC access.

16. How do families not traveling to the accident city get information and support?

A conference call "bridge" will be used during family member briefings. Families not traveling to the accident city will be provided a toll-free number to connect to the "bridge". In addition, the sponsoring agency is expected to maintain contact and provide support to the family through representatives or EAP provider and the ARC can provide additional support through their chapters in the local community.

17. Who is responsible for the expenses associated with the FAC?

The sponsoring agency is generally responsible for expenses associated with the set up and operation of the Family Assistance Center.

18. How will the sponsoring agency, local emergency responders, ARC, other Federal agencies coordinate the services delivered to family members?

These services for families will be coordinated through a Joint Family Support Operation Center (JFSOC). The center operations will be facilitated by a member of the NTSB Office of Family Affairs and will have representation from each organization providing assistance. This will insure efficient use of resources and sharing of information.

19. How do the family members get answers to their individual questions?

First, they should ask their sponsoring agency representative for answers to their questions. If the sponsoring agency representative can not answer the question they will notify their supervisor. The supervisor will either provide the answer or ask assistance from the organization that is most likely to have the answer. The JFSOC is an ideal place to get a factual and coordinated response back to the family. It should be noted that there may not be answers to some of the questions families may pose.

20. What resources can the NTSB provide in the way of personnel, equipment and temporary morgue facilities?

The NTSB will coordinate and integrate the resources of the Federal Government to support the efforts of the local and state government. The Department of Health and Human Services/Office of Emergency Preparedness (DHHS/OEP) have been designated as the primary agency for “Victim Identification and Forensic and Medical Services.”

The Public Health Service, a division of DHHS has developed a Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT) and mobile morgue to provide manpower and technical assistance to support local medical examiners or coroners in times of an aviation disaster.

The NTSB can also call upon the resources of the Department of Defense (DOD) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Disaster Squad to provide additional support.

21. What is DMORT?

DMORT stands for Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team. The team is set up to provide professional personnel and technical support and assistance to the local medical examiner or coroner in forensic services and victim identification. The team is composed of volunteer forensic pathologists, forensic anthropologists, forensic dentists, medical investigators, funeral directors and other technical support staff that have been pre-screened by DHHS. Once activated they become Federalized personnel.

22. What is the Portable Morgue Unit?

The DMORT Portable Morgue Unit (DPMU) has been developed to support DMORTs in the processing and identification of victims in the event of a mass fatality incident. The DPMU is a packaged system containing all the equipment and supplies required establishing and operating a temporary morgue facility under austere field conditions and/or augmenting the local morgue capabilities. It is designed to be deployed by land, sea and air transport.

23. What is the FBI Disaster Squad?

The FBI has a team of highly trained experts in the area of fingerprinting and identification. This team is normally activated simultaneously with the DMORT and will provide any assistance to the local medical examiner or coroner in the area of fingerprint identification.

24. In addition to the conventional means of identification, can DNA be used as another method of identification?

Dental and fingerprints are normally the primary methods used in victim identification. Should those methods of identification fail, discussions will be held with the local medical examiner/coroner about the possible use of DNA testing. These discussions will include under

what conditions would it be used; to what extent it would be used; whom the medical examiner would use to collect and test samples; and whom would pay for testing of samples.

25. Will autopsies be performed on all flight crew and passengers?

The NTSB has specific requirements that the flight crew or individuals who have access to the controls be autopsied and have full toxicology tests performed. Depending on the circumstances of the crash, the NTSB investigator-in-charge will consult with the medical examiner or coroner to determine if additional autopsies and toxicology tests are required.

26. How is antemortem information obtained from family members?

Generally, the local medical examiner or coroner will be responsible for obtaining medical record information from family members. However, in the event the local jurisdiction does not have enough staff to interview family members, trained DMORT members can be used to assist the local jurisdiction in interviewing family members.

27. If an accident occurs in a medical examiner's/coroner's jurisdiction, what do they do as a medical examiner or coroner?

It is strongly recommended that they contact the NTSB in Washington, DC and ask to speak to the Forensic Specialist in the Office of Family Affairs. This person will ask them specific question number of fatalities and what resources they have or don't have in order to meet their responsibilities. The NTSB will activate the DMORT and FBI Disaster Squad at the request of the medical examiner or coroner.

28. Who is responsible for making positive identification of victims in the disaster?

The local coroner or medical examiner is responsible for making positive identification of victims. The NTSB can provide additional resources, such as the DMORT and or the mobile morgue from the Department of Health and Human Services. These resources are available to help local authorities manage a large number of victims. It has no effect on the local coroner or medical examiner's jurisdictional responsibilities.

APPENDIX F

DISCLOSURE FOR CIVILIANS TRAVELING ABOARD FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AIRCRAFT (*Interim*)

NOTE: The disclosure contained herein is not all-inclusive. You should contact your agency's personnel office, or if you are a private citizen, your agency sponsor or point-of-contact for further assistance.

To all passengers traveling aboard government aircraft:

4. Generally, an aircraft operating exclusively for the U.S. Government may be considered a "public aircraft" provided it is not a government-owned aircraft operating for commercial purposes or transporting passengers other than for the performance of a governmental function (e.g., fire-fighting, law enforcement). A public aircraft is not subject to many Federal Aviation Regulations, including requirements relating to aircraft certification, maintenance, and pilot certification. Public Law 103-411, the Independent Safety Board Act Amendments of 1994, modified the definition of "public aircraft" so that a government-owned aircraft that transports passengers other than for the performance of a governmental function would be required to comply with all Federal Aviation Regulations applicable to civil aircraft. In addition, any government-owned aircraft operated for commercial purposes is considered a civil aircraft and is subject to all such regulations. If you have any questions concerning whether a particular flight will be a public aircraft operation or a civil aircraft operation, you should contact the agency sponsor of that flight.
5. You and your family have certain rights and benefits in the unlikely event you are injured or killed while riding aboard a government-owned or operated aircraft. Federal employees and some private citizens are eligible for workers' compensation benefits under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA). When FECA applies, it is the sole remedy. For more information about FECA and its coverage, consult with your agency's benefits office or contact the Branch of Technical Assistance at the DOL's Office of Workers' Compensation Programs at (202) 693-0044. (These rules also apply to travel on other government-owned or operated conveyances such as cars, vans, or buses.)
6. State or foreign laws may provide for product liability or "third party" causes of actions for personal injury or wrongful death. If you have questions about a particular case or believe you have a claim, you should consult with an attorney.
7. Some insurance policies may exclude coverage for injuries or death sustained while traveling aboard a government or military aircraft or while within a combat area. You may wish to check your policy or consult with your insurance provider before your flight. The insurance available to Federal employees through the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Program does not contain an exclusion of this type.

8. If you are the victim of an air disaster resulting from criminal activity, Victim and Witness Specialists from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and/or the local U.S. Attorney's Office will keep you or your family informed about the status of the criminal investigation(s) and provide you or your family with information about rights and services, such as crisis intervention, counseling and emotional support. State crime victim compensation may be able to cover crime-related expenses, such as medical costs, mental health counseling, funeral and burial costs, and lost wages or loss of support. The Office for Victims of Crime (an agency of the DOJ) is authorized by the Antiterrorism Act of 1996 to provide emergency financial assistance to state programs, as well as the U.S. Attorneys Office, for the benefit of victims of terrorist acts or mass violence.

If you are a Federal employee:

1. If you are injured or killed on the job during the performance of duty – including while traveling aboard a government aircraft or other government-owned or operated conveyance for business purposes – you and your family are eligible to collect workers' compensation benefits under FECA. You and your family may not file a personal injury or wrongful death suit against the United States or its employees. However, you may have cause of action against potentially liable third parties.
2. You or your qualifying family member must normally also choose between FECA disability or death benefits, and those payable under your retirement system (either the Civil Service Retirement System or the Federal Employees Retirement System). You may choose the benefit that is more favorable to you.

If you are a private citizen not employed by the Federal government:

1. Even if you are not regularly employed by the Federal government, if you are rendering personal service to the Federal government on a voluntary basis or for nominal pay, you may be defined as a Federal employee for purposes of FECA. If that is the case, you and your family are eligible to receive workers' compensation benefits under FECA, but may not collect in a personal injury or wrongful death lawsuit against the United States or its employees. You and your family may file suit against potentially liable third parties. Before you depart, you may wish to consult with the department or agency sponsoring the flight to clarify whether you are considered a Federal employee.
2. If you are determined not to be a "Federal employee," you and your family will not be eligible to receive workers' compensation benefits under FECA. If you are traveling for business purposes, you may be eligible for workman's compensation benefits under state law. If the accident occurs within the United States, or its territories, its airspace, or over the high seas, you and your family may claim against the United States under the Federal Tort Claims Act or Suits in Admiralty Act. If you are killed aboard a military aircraft, your family may be eligible

to receive compensation under the Military Claims Act, or if you are an inhabitant of a foreign country, under the Foreign Claims Act.