



Information Article

United States of America

Relevance:

Family Assistance type legislation and its impact on airlines - operating into or over the United States and its Territories



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United States of America

Federal Family Assistance Plan



1 December 2008



(RELEVANT EXTRACTS FROM)

FEDERAL FAMILY ASSISTANCE PLAN FOR AVIATION DISASTERS

Prepared by

National **T**ransportation **S**afety **B**oard / Office of **T**ransportation **D**isaster **A**ssistance

REVISED - December 2008

<https://www.nts.gov/tda/TDADocuments/Federal-Family-Plan-Aviation-Disasters-rev-12-2008.pdf>

IMPORTANT NOTE: In *late 2023* the USA's NTSB updated / added information - over and above that found at the end of the link just above (and also any relevant / related details as shown elsewhere herein [i.e. *in the document being read right now*])

At time of writing this (early *2024*) a direct link to the latter (updated / added information) cannot be inserted herein as it (said link) does not seem to work? As this specific information is **important** to what is contained herein, it is strongly recommended that the interested reader conducts an on-line GOOGLE etc. search for it, using the search term shown in red, just below:

NTSB Federal Family Assistance Framework for Aviation Disasters - 2023

Once found, please do read the associated information contained therein



PURPOSE

This plan (guidance) assigns roles, responsibilities, descriptions etc. re how air carriers (passenger airlines in the main) together with relevant Federal (USA) agencies - should respond to / manage etc. an aviation accident (typically occurring in / over etc. the USA and / or its Territories) involving a significant number of passenger fatalities / injuries (and / or same to persons on the ground) as a consequence of such accident etc. That is, and more specifically - a 'family assistance' (and related matters) response

Organisations given authority, roles, responsibilities etc. by such legislation (as amended) should source / develop / train / exercise / maintain / review etc. procedures specific to said roles, responsibilities etc. - as per the requirements of this 'Federal Family Assistance Plan'

Supporting legislation for the above is shown starting page 18

IMPLEMENTATION

This plan shall be executed in full or part by the Director Office of Transportation Disaster Assistance (TDA), under the direction of the Chairman NTSB

1. The Director shall recommend activation of the plan (or parts thereof) to the Chairman
2. Federal agencies having roles, responsibilities etc. under this plan shall maintain control of their resources while supporting the NTSB in accordance with said legislation. (As used herein the term "Federal agencies / staff" includes the American Red Cross)
3. The NTSB will initiate notification of Federal agencies to activate planning and co-ordination with the involved air carrier(s) - for an appropriate (joint) response to be initiated / continued - based on the magnitude, circumstances etc. of the aviation accident

As factual information about the accident is confirmed, additional resources may be requested to support the overall family assistance response. As instructed by the Director, the NTSB comms centre will notify any / all of the following operations centres, as required:

- a. American Red Cross (ARC)
 - b. Department of State (DOS)
 - c. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)- Secretary's Ops Centre
 - d. Federal Bureau of Investigation Operations Centre (FBI-SIOC)
 - e. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
 - f. Department of Defence (DOD)
 - g. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
4. As per the Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act 1996, the NTSB coordinates the integration of Federal government resources + the resources of other organisations, so as to support efforts of local and State governments, the air carrier etc. - to meet the needs of aviation disaster victims and their families. Crisis intervention, victim identification and forensic services, communication with foreign governments, and translation services are among Federal government services available to help local authorities and the air carrier respond to a major aviation disaster.



Local government emergency services should provide a representative from the **Joint Family Support Operations Centre (JFSOC)** to participate in the local, air carrier and Federal responses. The layout of the JFSOC will depend on the facilities and rooms available in proximity to the disaster location. Details of the JFSOC are provided in appendix C

5. Local authorities maintain their usual jurisdictional responsibilities regarding the initial accident response, recovery, security, site clean-up and medical examiner operations. The **NTSB** leads the aviation accident investigation. If a criminal act is believed to have caused the accident, the **FBI** becomes the lead investigative agency and is supported by the NTSB
5. The air carrier (carrying airline etc.) has a fundamental responsibility to associated accident victims (and their families, relatives, friends etc.) adversely impacted by an aviation disaster

It (air carrier) is primarily responsible for family notifications plus all aspects of victim, family etc. logistical support. The Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act of 1996 and the Foreign Air Carrier Family Support Act (see appendix A) place the air carrier plus other supporting organisations, in a collaborative relationship with families

6. All personnel involved in providing services to assist accident etc. victims and their families should be trained accordingly and also demonstrate associated compassion, technical expertise, professionalism etc.

Personal information provided by family members and victims through discussions, interviews, counselling or any other form of information exchange should remain confidential and shall not be used for future litigation purposes

SCOPE

This plan pertains to any domestic and / or foreign commercial aviation accident(s) occurring within the United States, its territories, possessions and territorial seas

ASSUMPTIONS

1. The NTSB Chairman will request Federal agencies to support the NTSB in accordance with the references included in appendix A
2. Pursuant to the Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act 1996, the NTSB has the primary, Federal responsibility for **facilitating** victim recovery and identification

It is understood that the presiding medical examiner (ME) or coroner is **legally responsible** for victim recovery and identification. (Note: There are differences between a medical examiner and coroner. However, for the purposes of herein, the term “medical examiner” can and is used interchangeably with “coroner”)

So as to ensure adequate resources are available for MEs (i.e. to accomplish their jurisdictional responsibilities) the NTSB co-ordinates the resources of various Federal agencies to effect associated victim recovery, identification etc. It also supports the use of local mass fatality teams and other, appropriate personnel - under the direction of the medical examiner



3. For the purposes of this document, the terms “family,” “family members,” “friends,” and “relatives” are used generically to refer to those persons having a ‘valid’ relationship to a person involved in the accident. Although these terms might have slightly different meanings, they are used interchangeably herein
4. Large numbers of family members (of any deceased accident victims) might want to travel to the city / town etc. closest to the accident site and will typically utilise the accommodations provided / arranged by the involved air carrier(s). Other family members may choose to remain in their (normal) local residences
5. Most, if not all families of those seriously injured will want to travel to where the injured are hospitalised. Once the injured are released from hospital(s) etc. - they and any family members with them are typically expected to return to their homes
6. Implementation of this plan assumes that the accident occurs in a geographical area where the resources described above are available. Air carriers operating over remote areas (e.g. Alaska) should contact NTSB TDA re modifications required for accident response in such locations

GENERAL MISSION TASKS

The family assistance mission tasks following an aviation accident include:

1. Notify family members of victims involved in the aviation accident - based on crew and passenger manifest documents and other available information.
2. Monitor search and rescue / recovery ops and offer assistance if needed.
3. Determine the status / condition and location of injured victims.
4. Obtain approval of local medical examiner for Federal assistance (e.g. the Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team [DMORT]) to assist in the identification of fatalities and the notification of associated families.
5. Provide crisis intervention, logistical support and services to victims and their families
6. Provide daily briefings to families on the progress of recovery efforts, identification of victims, progress of the air accident investigation - and other areas of concern.
7. Arrange for a memorial service(s) - if / as desired by families.
8. Provide for the return of personal effects.
9. Maintain contact with victims and their families, so as to provide regular updates re the progress of the associated, air accident investigation + other related matters - both at the accident location and once the families have returned home.

RESPONSIBILITIES

7 Victim Support Tasks (VSTs) identify the response requirements assigned to participating organisations. The organisations responsible for each of the seven VSTs are as follows:

VST 1 / NTSB

VST 2/ Air Carrier (Carrying Airline)



VST 3/ American Red Cross (Family Care and Mental Health)
VST 4/ DHHS/ASPR and DOD (Victim Identification Services)
VST 5/ DOS (Assisting Families of Foreign Victims)
VST 6/ DHS/FEMA (Communications)
VST 7/ DOJ (Assisting Victims of Crime)

As each aviation accident is unique, the following responsibilities may be employed fully, partially or not at all.

VICTIM SUPPORT TASK 1 - NTSB

1. Co-ordinate Federal assistance and serve as a liaison between the air carrier and family members.
2. Provide an NTSB toll-free number and e-mail address to family members for obtaining information on the victim recovery / identification effort, air accident investigation progress and other, relevant concerns. This number will normally be provided to families during the final family briefing. The NTSB will co-ordinate with the air carrier to provide, through its family assistance scheme, said contact info to any families not travelling to the accident city, town, other location etc.
3. Request a copy of the passenger manifest from the air carrier.
4. Review with the air carrier the logistical needs of the families, giving special consideration to security, quality of hotel rooms / facilities and privacy.
5. Integrate local and Federal government officials + air carrier staff etc. - so as to form a JFSOC (co-ordinating services, activities etc. for relevant families involved).
6. Co-ordinate assistance efforts with local and State authorities, including the medical examiner, local / county / State law enforcement, emergency management agency, hospitals and other emergency support personnel.
7. Maintain communications with the air carrier so as to receive updates regarding the notification status of victims' families.
8. Conduct daily co-ordination meetings with the air carrier and local and Federal government representatives - so as to review daily activities, resolve problems and synchronise future family support ops, activities etc. See appendix D for an example of information required for the daily coordination meeting.
9. Provide and co-ordinate family briefings - both with families at the accident city / wherever and with families who remain at home / are located elsewhere.
10. Discuss with medical examiner the capabilities of his / her staff to conduct victim identification. Examine the capabilities of local / State mass fatality teams and procedures so as to use the team in the identification process. Discuss strategies for collecting ante-mortem information and other factors influencing victim identification. Discuss the use of DMORT including the standard procedures which DMORT uses which potentially support NTSB efforts.
11. Discuss with medical examiner the subject of victim identification, in particular the use of DNA analysis. Inform all concerned that the NTSB typically co-ordinates with the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory for DNA identification.



12. At the discretion of NTSB Investigator in Charge (IIC), co-ordinate a visit(s) to the accident site for family members. Planning for such a visit can only begin with IIC agreement that such a visit will not impede the investigation and is believed to be safe for family members.
13. Provide information releases to the media, in coordination with the NTSB Office of Public Affairs, pertaining to the types of Federal support available to assist air accident victims and their family members.
14. Maintain contact with family members to keep them informed about the victim recovery and identification effort, accident investigation and other accident-related concerns.
 - a. Approximately 6 to 8 months after accident date, factual reports written by the NTSB investigators are made available in a public docket. Families should be informed prior to this so that they may request a timely copy of the report from the NTSB, which will be provided at no cost.
 - b. If the NTSB decides a public hearing is necessary for the purpose of the investigation, families will be notified of the date, time and location. Such a hearing is designed to gather additional facts from individuals selected to testify. Travel and lodging for the hearing will be at the family's expense. Families will be provided seating and copies of official exhibits discussed at the hearing. NTSB public hearings are broadcast via the Internet through the NTSB website at www.nts.gov.

'Vision 100' states the following:

'..... An assurance that, in the case of an accident in which the NTSB conducts a public hearing or comparable proceeding at a location greater than 80 miles from the accident site, the air carrier will ensure that the proceeding is made available simultaneously by electronic means at a location open to the public - at both the origin city and destination city of the air carrier's flight (provided that said city/cities is / are located in the United States [49 USC 41113 (b) (18)]). Based on the facts of the accident, location requirements will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.....'

- c. Families will be informed of the date, time and location of any Board meeting to be held at the NTSB, Washington, D.C., headquarters (travel will be at the families' expense). At the meeting, the NTSB investigative staff will present to the Board a draft accident report for member discussion and approval. This report documents the NTSB's findings, determination of the probable cause of the accident and recommendations to prevent future aviation disasters.

Board meetings are broadcast via the Internet through the NTSB website (www.nts.gov). See VST 2 "Air Carrier", number 30, and to the Vision 100 legislation [49 USC 41113 (b) (18)] for additional information.
15. If the accident is determined to be the result of a criminal act, the NTSB TDA staff may assist the FBI Office for Victim Assistance (OVA) in family assistance support.
16. Consolidate and review 'After Action Reports' (AARs) to resolve problem areas and update operating plans and procedures.



VICTIM SUPPORT TASK 2 - Air Carrier

1. In addition to accident notification required by Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) 830.5 - notify the NTSB communications centre immediately upon knowledge of an accident. The following information must be provided:
 - Place (or general vicinity) of accident, number of passengers and crew (based on preliminary departure information) and number of injuries and fatalities (if known)
 - Flight number, origination, connection points, final destination, demographics of passengers (if known) and whether the flight was domestic or international
 - Name + telephone number of the persons in charge of the air carrier's humanitarian response, passenger manifest reconciliation and family notification processes
 - Names, telephone numbers and locations of the facilities designated as the 'Family Assistance Centre' (FAC) and 'JFSOC'
2. Provide the NTSB, upon request, the most current reconciled copy of the passenger manifest / list. Each copy should be numbered or annotated indicating the date and time - so that it is distinguishable from previous copies.
3. Provide a reliable, publicised toll-free telephone number with sufficient capacity to handle the anticipated call volume. Although not required, consider providing teletypewriter (TTY) capability
4. When disseminating the toll-free number, ask the media to request that it be used only by those who have reason to believe a family member or friend was a passenger on the accident flight.
5. Emphasise in the appropriate, media notice that, upon initial contact with the air carrier, family members will receive basic accident flight and point-of-contact information as the first steps of the accident airline's humanitarian assistance support.
6. Ask the media to re-emphasise (and continue to so re-emphasise) the name of the carrier(s) involved, the accident flight number, originating airport, connecting airport(s) and the final destination airport.
7. Provide media with regular updates on progress of the notification process e.g. providing the number of victims' families notified and the number remaining to be notified (at any specific time). This process will continue until all victims' families have been notified (as appropriate).
8. Modify the / your air carrier's normal "on-hold" messages during an accident to eliminate music, sales information and similar, non-accident related messages.
9. Provide timely notification to family members of passengers (As required by AIR 21 and at a family member's request, inform the family if the passenger's name appears on a preliminary manifest for the accident flight. Updated information is to be provided to family members as available. (AIR 21 states the following: "upon request of the family of a passenger, the air carrier will inform same if the passenger's name appeared on a preliminary passenger manifest for the flight involved)
10. Provide notification to family members prior to releasing passenger names to the public. Give family members adequate time to notify other family members and friends prior to such release



Although it may be necessary for some families to have more than 1 contact point with the air carrier - the latter may request that families designate one primary contact point for purposes of sharing information. This will allow said carrier to use its staff in a more efficient way. The carrier should typically not release a victim's name, if family members request otherwise.

11. Inform family members (at time of notification or soon thereafter) of American Red Cross family care and crisis assistance available at the FAC and also after families return home. Relay requests for crisis assistance to the ARC rep who will co-ordinate on-scene or home area contacts for family members. For family members not travelling to the accident location, ARC personnel on-scene can co-ordinate their personnel at the family member's location, to provide assistance.

12. Secure facilities at departure, arrival and connecting airports for family / friends who may be gathering at said locations. Such facilities are designed to allow family members etc. to grieve in private, shielding them from the media etc. + serving as a secure location where families can receive regular updates re the reconciliation of the passenger list, other accident info etc.

Be prepared to provide necessary assistance to special needs populations as per the 'American with Disabilities' Act (ADA). Arrange for one of your carrier's employees or agents (trained in associated crisis response) to meet privately with family members once they have arrived at the facility secured. Employees or agents should be prepared to inform family members that their loved ones had been on board the accident flight.

13. Secure a facility for use as the FAC. Factors to consider here are the quality and size of the facility, privacy for family members, ability to secure the facility and proximity to the accident site and medical treatment facilities. See appendix B.
14. Make provision for a JFSOC to include space, communication and logistical support for all staff etc. manning same. Details of the JFSOC are provided in appendix C.
15. Provide logistical support to family members desiring to travel to the accident city (and / or to hospital locations and / or to elsewhere, as required) that includes but is not limited to, transportation, lodging, meals, security, communications, incidental expenditure etc.
16. Assist family members travelling to / from the city etc. - by informing associated airline crews, airport personnel etc. about said family members travelling on board particular flights. At departure, connecting and arrival airports - family members should have air carrier personnel meet and assist them accordingly. If necessary, seek assistance from other carriers with a larger presence at any particular airport involved. Assist family members when they eventually depart the accident city / area etc. - and provide a contact person who will continue to be the air carrier's interface with same, following their return home etc.
17. Provide a contact person to meet family members as they arrive and accompany them at the accident city etc. Said person to be responsible for assisting families whilst in the accident city etc. - and should continue to be the air carrier interface with them until they return to their residences / wherever. Re this, the air carrier may decide to designate a single contact person for specific / all family members. This point of contact should be available via toll-free phone communications
18. Maintain daily contact with family members (who do not travel to the accident city etc.) by providing a contact person from the air carrier, until the on-site investigation has concluded



19. Designate an individual who will be the air carrier's representative to the Director of NTSB TDA. This individual will travel to various locations, such as the accident site, morgue, JFSOC and FAC with the Director of NTSB TDA. The designated individual should have the authority, or ready access to those who have sufficient authority, to make decisions on behalf of the air carrier
20. Establish an exclusive 'badging' system to identify family members. In unique cases, the NTSB, in coordination with the air carrier, will decide on the specifications of the badging system.
21. Participate and provide operational updates during daily coordination meetings to review daily activities resolve problems and synchronise future family support operations / activities at the FAC. This information is helpful in planning logistical support (such as meals, lodging, and transportation) and allows for an update of current and future support operations. The type of information typically discussed during the daily coordination meetings is located in appendix D.
22. Make provisions for private areas within the hotel etc. for medical examiner personnel and the DMORT FAC Team to collect ante-mortem information and DNA reference samples from families. Provide quiet space / communications for DMORT / medical examiner personnel to collect ante mortem information from family members who are not at the FAC. Secure a sufficient number of rooms for DMORT / crisis counselling use. Based on NTSB experience, the number of rooms required ranges from 4 to 12, depending on the number of fatalities.
23. Awareness that crisis counselling and DMORT facilities are also used as venues to inform families when *positive* death identification has been made. By having the medical examiner / DMORT team representative located at he FAC, transportation of victim's remains and other logistical considerations can be better co-ordinated. Support requirements for planning purposes are in appendix C.
24. Provide DOS representatives the necessary information regarding foreign passengers to facilitate interaction with appropriate foreign government embassies.
25. Establish a liaison with the American Red Cross at each medical treatment facility to monitor the status of injured victims and to provide assistance to their families.
26. Develop procedures for the handling of personal effects released by the FBI if the aviation disaster is declared a criminal act. Consider utilizing a third party that has experience in the return of personal effects associated with aviation disasters. As required by law, provisions will be made for unclaimed possessions to be retained for at least 18 months from the date of the accident. NTSB has developed guidelines for the on-scene search for personal effects.
27. Consult with family members about any air carrier sponsored monument, including any inscriptions.
28. As required by the Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act of 1996, provide reasonable reimbursement to the American Red Cross for the services provided to the family, air carrier, and supporting personnel.
29. Provide the same support and treatment to families of non-revenue passengers or any other victim of the accident (for instance, ground fatalities) as is provided for revenue passengers.



30. If the NTSB conducts a public hearing or comparable proceeding at a location more than 80 miles from the accident site, ensure that a simultaneous transmission of the proceeding is available to family members at a location open to the public at both the origin city and destination city of the accident flight.
31. In the event of an accident outside the United States, AIR 21 legislation requires “..... in the event that the air carrier volunteers assistance to United States citizens within the United States, with respect to an aircraft accident outside the United States involving major loss of life, the air carrier will consult with the Board and the Department of State on the provision of the assistance.”
32. In the event the investigation determines the accident is the result of a criminal act, co-ordinate with the FBI OVA in arranging meetings with family members to explain their rights as victims of a Federal crime.

VICTIM SUPPORT TASK 3 - American Red Cross-Family Care and Mental Health

1. An American Red Cross Critical Response Team (CRT) is deployed from the American Red Cross National Headquarters Disaster Operations Centre (DOC) and serves as the functional leadership of family care and crisis intervention during the aviation accident. The CRT will support the local American Red Cross response and manage any spontaneous volunteers.
2. Assign a representative to the JFSOC to co-ordinate and address American Red Cross related issues and family requests for assistance.
3. Co-ordinate and manage the numerous organisations and personnel offering counselling, religious and other support services to the operation. Create a staff processing centre, operated away from the FAC, to screen, monitor, and manage personnel (employee and volunteer staff).

This staff processing centre will also be responsible for developing an exclusive badge system for personnel, matching staff skills with organisational needs, assigning work schedules, briefing and debriefing of support staff and planning for future activities.

- a. Qualified local resources should be integrated with American Red Cross personnel for crisis and grief counselling, food services, administrative assistance, and other support services to family members and support organisations
 - b. Crisis and grief counselling for family members who travel to the accident city should be co-ordinated with air carrier personnel.
4. Employ an accounting system to accurately record cost data in specific cost categories for reimbursement by the air carrier.
5. Assess the needs and available resources of other crisis support agencies, co-ordinate with them to ensure ongoing emotional support for workers during the operation, and provide exit interviews before departure.
6. Establish a liaison with the air carrier at each supporting medical treatment facility to monitor the status of injured victims and to provide assistance to their families.
7. Co-ordinate with the air carrier to establish areas in the FAC for families to grieve privately.



8. If deemed necessary, deploy a Critical Response Childcare Team (CRC) to co-ordinate on-site childcare services for families who arrive with young children. Ensure the CRC Team is equipped with the necessary supplies to operate a childcare centre along with specially trained staff qualified to attend to children in the aftermath of a traumatic disaster.
9. If deemed necessary, deploy a Spiritual Care Response Team (SRT) to co-ordinate on-site spiritual care. The SRT is trained to provide spiritual care to an array of faiths and will manage spiritual care for the victims and their families. If desired by the families, the SRT will co-ordinate the planning for a suitable interfaith memorial service within the first few days following the accident. The SRT deploys an events manager to begin planning the memorial service(s) upon a request from the family members. The American Red Cross Events Manager will work closely with the NTSB, the air carrier, County and State governments etc. to plan a suitable memorial site. The American Red Cross will also deploy a Life Safety and Asset Protection manager to the JFSOC to manage safety and security concerns related to the memorial event
10. If deemed necessary, arrange a memorial service for any future burial of unidentified remains.
11. Provide families, at their request, with referrals to mental health professionals and support groups in the family member's local area.
12. Provide additional support to affected special needs or other demographically or culturally diverse populations as deemed necessary.

VICTIM SUPPORT TASK 4 - Department of Health and Human Services, Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response-Victim Identification Services

1. At the time of an accident and following notification by the NTSB, activate the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) and the appropriate DMORT team personnel, supplies, and equipment to assist in the management of victim identification.
2. Assign a representative to the JFSOC to address DMORT-related issues.
3. Assign the necessary DMORT team members to assist the medical examiner with victim identification and mortuary services. The configuration of team and skills required will be determined by the details of the accident and the capabilities of the local medical examiner.
4. Follow the "DMORT SOP for NTSB Activations."
5. Provide, if necessary, a morgue facility, a DMORT Portable Morgue Unit (DPMU), and the necessary equipment and supplies to augment the local medical examiner's capabilities.
6. Monitor status of all incoming ante-mortem records - to include dental, medical and DNA data - to ensure that all records have been received. If not, take steps to obtain the records and radiographs.
7. Employ a standard ante mortem questionnaire and disposition of remains form that can be adapted to meet local medical examiner and State requirements. The disposition of remains form will be used to obtain directions from the lawfully authorized next of kin (NOK) regarding what he or she desires the medical examiner to do with remains that may later be identified as those of his or her family member. Information collected from family members is strictly confidential and is ultimately under the control of the medical examiner



8. Using a specially trained FAC team, interview family members (both on and off site) for information regarding ante mortem identification and disposition of remains.
9. Co-ordinate with the medical examiner to integrate qualified personnel who are providing assistance to the medical examiner's office into the morgue operation.
10. If necessary, assist the medical examiner in notifying family members of positive identification, including an explanation of how identification was determined.
11. Ensure the accuracy of the chain of custody by performing a check of documentation and remains prior to their release to the designated funeral director.
12. Assist the medical examiner with the re-association of remains following the identification process. This may occur weeks, months or even longer after the accident.
13. Using information gathered from the ante mortem interview - provide the NTSB with contact information for the NOK (addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses) and the NOK's relationship to the victim.

Support of VST 4 - Department of Defence-Victim Identification Services (As required)

1. Provide the use of a military installation, such as the Charles C. Carson Centre for Mortuary Affairs located at the Dover Air Force Base, to support mortuary operations.
2. Provide resources from the Office of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner (OAFME) and Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) to assist in the identification effort and to conduct appropriate DNA comparison testing on specimens submitted by the medical examiner. OAFME / AFDIL personnel may be asked to travel to the accident site to assist with victim identification.
3. Provide available medical and dental records and DNA reference samples of fatally injured passengers who may have ante mortem records based on prior or current military service.

VICTIM SUPPORT TASK 5 - Department of State / Assisting Families of Foreign Victims (As required)

1. Assign a representative to the JFSOC to co-ordinate DOS-related issues with other members of the operations centre staff. Assist in obtaining dental and medical records and DNA reference samples from foreign families. Respond to family member requests for information and assistance as appropriate. Provide additional personnel as needed for accidents involving significant numbers of foreign passengers, particularly those involving international flights.
2. Provide official notification to foreign governments of citizens involved in the accident - to take place after obtaining necessary info re foreign passengers from air carrier.
4. Assist air carrier in notifying US citizens who may reside or are travelling outside the United States that a member of their family has been involved in an aviation accident
4. Provide interpretation/translation services (via DOS staff or a contracted provider) to facilitate communications with the victim's family and all interested parties. For family briefings held at the FAC or similar location or activity, provide simultaneous interpretation/translation services in multiple languages as needed



5. Provide logistical and communications support, to the extent practicable, in establishing contact with foreign authorities and individuals abroad to aid the air carrier and Federal support staff in fulfilling their duties under the laws referenced above.
6. Assist foreign air carrier employees and families of foreign victims with entry into the United States and with the extension or granting of visas to eligible applicants.
7. Facilitate necessary consulate and customs services for the return of remains and personal effects to the country of destination.
8. Assist the medical examiner in acquiring the necessary information to facilitate the identification of foreign victims and to complete death certificates.

VICTIM SUPPORT TASK 6 - Department of Homeland Security/ Federal Emergency Management Agency-Communications (As required)

1. Assign a rep to the JFSOC to co-ordinate with local and State officials concerning emergency management related issues.
2. Provide voice and data communication assets to facilitate communication from the accident site to the NTSB Communications Centre.
3. Upon request of NTSB Office of Public Affairs, provide personnel to assist in public information dissemination, to include assistance in establishing / staffing external media support centres at accident site, wreckage hangar, FAC, airport and other areas that may attract media interest.

VICTIM SUPPORT TASK 7 - Department of Justice-Assisting Victims of Crime (As required)

1. Provide to the NTSB, upon request, an FBI **Disaster** Squad with sufficient personnel to obtain fingerprint identification of accident fatalities. This team will work with the medical examiner and the DMORT personnel at the morgue location.
2. Provide to the NTSB, upon request, an FBI **Evidence** Response Team (ERT) and other FBI Laboratory assets to assist with victim recovery operations under direction of the medical examiner.
3. Provide to the NTSB, upon request, FBI Office for Victim Assistance Rapid Deployment Team (VARDT) members to assist the NTSB TDA in unique circumstances, such as simultaneous accident responses.
4. Perform the following responsibilities only if the air carrier disaster is 'officially' declared a criminal act:
 - a. Co-ordinate Federal assistance and serve as the liaison between the air carrier and family members
 - b. Provide an FBI toll-free number for family members to obtain info on the victim recovery /identification effort, investigation and other concerns. This number will typically be provided to families 'on site' during the initial family briefing and in subsequent briefings. Co-ordinate with the air carrier for it to provide said toll-free number to families not travelling to the accident city



- c. Establish a special web page for the victims' families for the purpose of sharing updated information and maintaining ongoing communication with victims and families throughout the duration of the investigation.
- d. Review with the air carrier logistical family support with special consideration toward security, quality of rooms and facilities, and privacy for family members.
- e. Oversee the establishment and management of the JFSOC and the FAC. Information on FAC operations can be found in appendix B.
- f. Integrate local and Federal government officials and air carrier staff to form a JFSOC to facilitate close coordination of services and activities.
- g. Assist the air carrier, if requested, with finding NOK that have not been notified of their family member's involvement.
- h. Conduct daily coordination meetings with the air carrier and local and Federal government representatives to review daily activities, resolve problem areas, and to synchronize future family support operations and activities. Examples of information needed at the daily coordination meeting are in appendix D.
- i. Provide and co-ordinate family briefings for family members at the accident city and for those who remain at home. Conduct in-person family briefings at the FAC. Conduct briefings for off-site families via telephone conference bridges.
- j. Provide information to victims and families regarding their rights and available services related to their status as victims of a Federal crime.
- k. Maintain contact with family members to keep them informed about the progress of the investigation and to continue to meet their future needs.

COORDINATING INSTRUCTIONS

1. The point of contact for this plan is the Director / Transportation Disaster Assistance / National Transportation Safety Board. The telephone number is (202) 314-6185. The office fax number is (202) 314-6638. The backup fax number is 202-314-6293. E-mail address is assistance@ntsb.gov.
2. Upon implementation and until NTSB TDA personnel are present at the JFSOC - calls should be directed to the NTSB communications centre. The Communications centre will pass any information or messages to the appropriate NTSB TDA staff member.
3. Supporting agencies should appoint the same individual or individuals to the JFSOC for each aviation accident. The focused efforts of a group of experienced personnel who understand the complex issues of an aviation disaster response will lead to improved delivery of services to victims and their families. Agencies are not precluded from designating and training alternate personnel as long as inexperienced personnel are partnered with experienced personnel during the response.
4. It is recommended that all Federal personnel involved at the accident site wear clothing (e.g. hats, shirts, and / or jackets) identifying their agency or group. This is helpful for families and those involved in supporting the operation



5. Agencies providing support to victims and their family members under this plan are requested to submit an AAR to the Director, NTSB TDA - within 60 days of completion of their tasks. The report is critical for capturing lessons learned, taking corrective actions, and updating plans. A sample format is provided in appendix E.
5. Other than media releases by the air carrier regarding the progress of family notification and the release of passengers' names as described in VST 2, item 9 - all media inquiries and releases pertaining to the NTSB TDA operation will be referred to the NTSB Office of Public Affairs
6. The NTSB will advise and assist the local medical examiner regarding any media affairs related to his or her area of responsibility. Support organisations may provide press releases or briefings on their specific mission/actions during the accident response. There are no restrictions on victims or family members meeting with the media if they so desire.
7. Due to differences among air carriers and air carrier underwriter policies - and among aviation accidents, consideration for reimbursement of costs associated with an agency's participation in an aviation disaster response will be made after discussions with the air carrier and its insurance underwriter.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A - Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act of 1996, Foreign Air Carrier Family Support Act of 1997, AIR 21, and Vision 100

Appendix B - Family Assistance Centre Operations

Appendix C - Joint Family Support Operations Centre

Appendix D - Joint Family Support Operations Centre Daily Status Report Information

Appendix E - Sample - After Action Report Format

Appendix F - Victim Identification Information

Appendix G - Victim Support Tasks—Checklists

Appendix H - Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix I - Internet Resources for Mass Fatality Response

Appendix J - References

Appendix K - List of Acronyms

Note - to view the above appendices see the on-line version of this document - found at:

<https://www.nts.gov/tda/TDADocuments/Federal-Family-Plan-Aviation-Disasters-rev-12-2008.pdf>

Note - to view your own air carrier's (airline's) 'filed plan' (as applicable / if your airline has one?) follow the below link and (when the page opens) type into the search box something like / similar to **'ABCX Airways Family Assistance Plan'** - using your own airline's name instead of 'ABCX Airways':

<https://www.regulations.gov/#!home>



USA - Department of Transportation

TITLE 14 - AERONAUTICS AND SPACE [14 CFR]

PART 243 - PASSENGER MANIFEST INFORMATION [14 CFR 243]

Note to reader of this information article:

What follows below is not part of the Federal Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disasters - but is an associated document which should be read (at least by the 'interested reader) in conjunction with said Family Assistance Plan



<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title14-vol4/xml/CFR-2014-title14-vol4-part243.xml>

USA - Department of Transportation

TITLE 14 - AERONAUTICS AND SPACE [14 CFR]

PART 243 - PASSENGER MANIFEST INFORMATION [14 CFR 243]

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 40101, 40101nt, 40105, 40113, 40114, 41708, 41709, 41711, 41501, 41702, 41712, 44909, 46301, 46310, 46316; section 203 of Pub. L. 101-604, 104 Stat. 3066 (22 U.S.C. 5501-5513), Title VII of Pub. L. 104-264, 110 Stat. 3213 (22 U.S.C. 5501-5513) and Pub. L. 105-148, 111 Stat. 2681 (49 U.S.C. 41313.)

Source: Docket No. OST-95-950, 63 FR 8280, Feb. 18, 1998, unless otherwise noted (Still in force as at 2014)

§243.1 - Purpose

The purpose of this part is to ensure that the U.S. government has prompt and adequate information in case of an aviation disaster on covered flight segments

§243.3 - Definitions

Air piracy means any seizure of or exercise of control over an aircraft, by force or violence or threat of force or violence, or by any other form of intimidation, and with wrongful intent.

Aviation disaster means:

- (1) An occurrence associated with the operation of an aircraft that takes place between the time any passengers have boarded the aircraft with the intention of flight and the time all such persons have disembarked or have been removed from the aircraft, and in which any person suffers death or serious injury, and in which the death or injury was caused by a crash, fire, collision, sabotage or accident;
- (2) A missing aircraft - or
- (3) An act of air piracy



Contact means a person not on the covered flight or an entity that should be contacted in case of an aviation disaster. The contact need not have any particular relationship to a passenger.

Covered airline means:

(1) Certificated air carriers, and

(2) Foreign air carriers, except those that hold Department of Transportation authority to conduct operations in foreign air transportation using only small aircraft (i.e., aircraft designed to have a maximum passenger capacity of not more than 60 seats or a maximum payload capacity of not more than 18,000 pounds).

Covered flight segment means a passenger-carrying flight segment operating to or from the United States (i.e., the flight segment where the last point of departure or the first point of arrival is in the United States). A covered flight segment does not include a flight segment in which both the point of departure and point of arrival are in the United States.

Full name means the given name, middle initial or middle name, if any, and family name or surname as provided by the passenger.

Passenger means every person aboard a covered flight segment regardless of whether he or she paid for the transportation, had a reservation or occupied a seat (except for the crew). For the purposes of this part, passenger includes but is not limited to revenue and non-revenue passengers, a person holding a confirmed reservation, a standby or walk-up, a person rerouted from another flight or airline, an infant held upon a person's lap and a person occupying a jump seat. Airline personnel who are on board but not working on that particular flight segment would be considered passengers for the purpose of this part.

United States means the States comprising the United States of America, the District of Columbia, and the territories and possessions of the United States, including the territorial sea and the overlying airspace.

U.S. citizen means United States nationals as defined in 8 U.S.C. 1101(a) (22)

§243.5 - Applicability

This part applies to covered flight segments operated by covered airlines. (See §243.3 of this part)

§243.7 - Information collection requirements

(a) For covered flight segments, each covered airline shall:

(1) Collect, or cause to be collected, the full name for each passenger who is a U.S. citizen. U.S.-citizen passengers for whom this information is not obtained shall not be boarded;

(2) Solicit, or cause to be solicited, a name and telephone number of a contact from each passenger who is a U.S. citizen; and

(3) Maintain a record of the information collected pursuant to this section.

(b) The covered airline operating the flight segment shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with paragraph (a) of this section.

§243.9 - Procedures for collecting and maintaining the information

Covered airlines may use any method or procedure to collect, store and transmit the required information, subject to the following conditions:

(a) Information on individual passengers shall be collected before each passenger boards the aircraft on a covered flight segment.



- (b) The information shall be kept until all passengers have disembarked from the covered flight segment.
- (c) The contact information collected pursuant to section 243.7(a)(2) of this part shall be kept confidential and released only to the U.S. Department of State, the National Transportation Safety Board (upon NTSB's request), and the U.S. Department of Transportation pursuant to oversight of this part. This paragraph does not pre-empt other governments or governmental agencies that have an independent, legal right to obtain this information.
- (d) The contact information collected pursuant to section 243.7(a) (2) of this part shall only be used by covered airlines for notification of family members or listed contacts following an aviation disaster. The information shall not be used for commercial or marketing purposes.

§243.11 - Transmission of information after an aviation disaster

- (a) Each covered airline shall inform the Managing Director of Overseas Citizen Services, Bureau of Consular Affairs and the United States Department of State immediately upon learning of an aviation disaster involving a covered flight segment operated by that carrier. The Managing Director may be reached 24 hours a day through the Department of State Operations Center at (202) 647-1512.
- (b) Each covered airline shall transmit a complete and accurate compilation of the information collected pursuant to §243.7 of this part to the U.S. Department of State as quickly as possible, but not later than 3 hours, after the carrier learns of an aviation disaster involving a covered flight segment operated by that carrier.
- (c) Upon request, a covered airline shall transmit a complete and accurate compilation of the information collected pursuant to §243.7 of this part to the Director, Family Support Services, National Transportation Safety Board.

§243.13 - Filing requirements

- (a) Each covered airline that operates one or more covered flight segments shall file with the U.S. Department of Transportation a brief statement summarizing how it will collect the passenger manifest information required by this part and transmit the information to the Department of State following an aviation disaster. This description shall include a contact at the covered airline, available at any time the covered airline is operating a covered flight segment, such contact being consultable concerning information gathered pursuant to this part.
- (b) Each covered airline shall file any contact change as well as a description of any significant change in its means of collecting or transmitting manifest information on or before the date the change is made.
- (c) All filings under this section should be submitted to OST Docket 98-3305, Dockets Facility (SVC-121.30), U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590. The statement shall be filed by July 1, 1998, or, for covered airlines beginning operations after July 1, 1998, prior to the date a covered airline operates a covered flight segment.

§243.15 - Conflict with foreign laws

- (a) If a covered airline obtains a waiver in the manner described in this section, it will not be required to solicit, collect or transmit information under this part in countries where such solicitation or collection would violate applicable foreign law, but only to the extent it is established by the carrier that such solicitation or collection would violate applicable foreign law.



(b) Covered airlines that claim that such solicitation, collection or transmission would violate applicable foreign law in certain foreign countries shall file a petition requesting a waiver in the Docket Facility, on or before October 1, 1998, or on or before beginning service between that country and United States. Such petition shall include copies of the pertinent foreign law, as well as a certified translation, and shall include opinions of appropriate legal experts setting forth the basis for the conclusion that collection would violate such foreign law. Statements from foreign governments on the application of their laws will also be accepted.

(c) The U.S. Department of Transportation will notify the covered airline of the extent to which it has been satisfactorily established that compliance with all or part of the data collection requirements of this part would constitute a violation of foreign law.

(d) The U.S. Department of Transportation will maintain an up-to-date listing in OST Docket 98-3305 of countries where adherence to all or a portion of this part is not required because of a conflict with applicable foreign law.

§243.17 - Enforcement

The U.S. Department of Transportation may at any time require a covered airline to produce a passenger manifest including emergency contacts and phone numbers for a specified covered flight segment to ascertain the effectiveness of the carrier's system. In addition, it may require from any covered airline further information about collection, storage and transmission procedures at any time

If the Department finds a covered airline's system to be deficient, it will require appropriate modifications, which must be implemented within the period specified by the Department. In addition, a covered airline not in compliance with this part may be subject to enforcement action by the Department.