

NTSB ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT



HIGHLIGHTING NTSB ADVOCACY IN ACTION

VOL I ISSUE I

Letter from the Editor:

Welcome to the Inaugural Issue!

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the *Spotlight*, the agency's periodic (3x yearly) newsletter developed to shine a spotlight on our advocacy activities to promote transportation safety, especially our Most Wanted List of safety improvements. The MWL safety priorities are determined by the accidents we have seen in all modes of transportation and resulting recommendations. We work hard each and every day to take the transportation safety message to state and federal legislatures, businesses, safety advocates, and the general public. We are excited to share the work we have done, and we encourage you to help us share the safety message. Critical changes are needed to reduce transportation accidents and save lives. Let's do this together!

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THE BIG STORY

NTSB Unveils 2015 Most Wanted List

The NTSB announced in January its top 10 transportation safety priorities for 2015. The NTSB's Most Wanted List of safety improvements brings attention to safety issues—identified from the NTSB's accident investigations—and the solutions recommended to address those issues.

This year's list includes the following:

- Disconnect from deadly distractions
- End substance impairment
- Enhance public helicopter safety
- Implement positive train control
- Improve rail tank car safety
- Prevent loss of control in general aviation
- Require medical fitness for duty
- Strengthen commercial trucking safety
- Strengthen procedural compliance
- Improve mass transit safety



For more details on each issue area, visit our website, www.nts.gov.

According to Chairman Hart, "The Most Wanted List is our road map for 2015. These are safety improvements for which the time is ripe for action."

This year is the first time rail tank car safety has appeared on the NTSB's Most Wanted list since it issued the first one in 1990. Its addition reflects a heightened awareness about problems in transporting crude oil and ethanol by rail.

Safety Compass Blog Roundup...

What You May Have Missed

- 01/13 Most Wanted List:
Looking Forward To A Safer 2015
- 01/23 Deflate-Gate:
Not Just An Issue For The NFL
- 02/03 Disconnect From Deadly Distractions
- 02/09 When States Repeal
Motorcycle Helmet Laws
- 02/11 Acts Of Love: A Father's Choice
- 02/12 Acts Of Love: What Color Wristband
Would You Wear?
- 02/13 Acts Of Love:
From Valentine's Day To Presidents Day
- 02/20 On The Front Lines Of Road Safety
- 02/23 As Rail Hazmats Rise, So Must Safety
- 03/04 Reviewing the "Day the Music Died"
- 03/30 Public Helicopter Operations:
Act Before an Accident

MWL: DISCONNECT FROM DEADLY DISTRACTIONS

Distracted Driving Multimodal Roundtable Kicks Off Distracted Driving Awareness Month

Distraction is a multimodal problem that requires immediate attention—this was the focus of a unique roundtable event held March 31, “Disconnect from Deadly Distractions,” hosted by NTSB. The event kicked off Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April. Approximately 40 experts from government, industry and academia—from all modes of transportation—discussed solutions for combating distracted driving/piloting, with a focus on managing the troubling issue of cell phone use. According to Member Robert Sumwalt, who moderated the roundtable, “this is a crucial time for combating distractions in transportation, especially with the variety and types of portable electronic devices (PEDs) and infotainment systems increasing.” In the last decade, the NTSB has found distraction from PEDs to be the cause of, or a contributing factor in, accident investigations in all modes of transportation. Hearty debate emerged as leading experts in the area of distraction explored the science of distraction; the role of technology and engineering; education, legislation, and enforcement issues; and corporate policy and regulation efforts. Ultimately, participants provided solutions for the future, some of which included partnering better with employers and working to change the culture/mindset related to our ability to multitask while operating a vehicle. The event resulted in a series of blogs to help bring more attention to the issue. According to one attendee, “Great topics, great number of participants, but this is just the beginning to solve this problem.” To view the complete roundtable discussion, see the web cast or the blogs on the topic, at ntsb.gov.



Member Sumwalt moderates roundtable on “Disconnect from Deadly Distractions”

MWL: PREVENT LOSS OF CONTROL IN FLIGHT IN GENERAL AVIATION

GA Safety a Focus at Sun ‘n Fun Expo for Plane Enthusiasts



Board Member Earl Weener, along with a contingent of NTSB staff, participated in the Sun ‘n Fun International Fly-in & Expo (<http://www.sun-n-fun.org/>) event in Lakeland, Florida, on April 21–26, a highly popular event for aviation enthusiasts. The event features a variety of educational seminars, career fairs, air shows, safety events, vendors, and much more. In a presentation before attendees on April 25, Weener reviewed recent general aviation accident data and discussed NTSB’s “Prevent Loss of Control in Flight in General Aviation” safety priority. NTSB investigates about 1,500 general aviation flight accidents each year. Although general aviation accidents have been trending downward since 2007, fatal accident rates have remained relatively constant, according to 2012 data, the most recent available. NTSB aviation staff also used the event to unveil a new video safety alert for mechanics on the topic of preventing misrigging mistakes.

MWL: IMPROVE RAIL TANK CAR SAFETY

Chairman’s Texas Multimodal Advocacy Visit

As a result of several accident investigations in recent years involving ships in the Houston Ship Channel and rail tank cars, Chairman Christopher Hart made a special visit to Texas April 15–17 to visit shipping and rail tank car manufacturers and employers. His stops included the US Coast Guard, the Houston Ship Channel, GBW Railcar Services, the Greenbrier facility, and BNSF facilities in various locations in Texas. The Houston Ship Channel, part of the Port of Houston, is one of the United States’ busiest seaports. The channel is the conduit for ocean-going vessels between Houston-area terminals and the Gulf of Mexico, and serves an increasing volume of inland barge traffic. The NTSB is currently investigating three accidents that occurred in the channel. The Chairman also visited rail tank car facilities to discuss rail car safety—one of NTSB’s Most Wanted List safety priorities—and to observe rail tank car manufacturing operations. At Greenbrier and GBW, Chairman Hart got a first-hand look at one of the tank car service facilities at the center of pending federal regulation. The Chairman also visited BNSF Railway facilities; BNSF is the second largest freight railroad network in North America, second to the Union Pacific Railroad, and is one of seven North American class I railroads. The NTSB has launched to three accidents involving BNSF trains since September 2013.



Chairman Hart visits rail tank car manufacturers

Critical changes are needed to reduce transportation accidents and save lives.

GENERAL ADVOCACY



Weighing In On ‘Deflate-Gate’

NTSB chimed in during the “deflate-gate,” the NFL’s football deflation, scandal prior to the Super Bowl, using the opportunity to remind the public to check their vehicle tire pressure regularly. Poorly inflated tires have been the cause of crashes investigated by NTSB. Data from the National Highway Traffic Safety

Administration confirm that nearly 11,000 tire-related crashes claim nearly 200 lives each year. At least two prominent media outlets, Sports Illustrated and USA Today, picked up the important tire-inflation message relayed through the NTSB blog on its website. They shared it with their readers, who were busy weighing in—or laughing about—the controversial football-pressure debate. But tire-inflation is no laughing matter. “The NTSB takes no position on football inflation issues. Tire maintenance is another matter,” Director of Highway Safety Don Karol told blog readers.

NTSB Testimony Helps Thwart Repeal of Motorcycle Helmet Law



NTSB testifies before Nebraska lawmakers.

NTSB testified before Nebraska lawmakers in February, urging them not to repeal a law requiring mandatory motorcycle helmets. Nebraska State Senator Dave Bloomfield had proposed legislation (Nebraska L.B. 31) that would repeal Nebraska’s helmet law for motorcyclists, with the justification that motorcyclists should have the right to choose. Nebraska lawmakers have tried several times to repeal the motorcycle helmet law since its inception in 1989. NTSB Safety Advocate Nicholas Worrell told legislators that getting rid of helmet laws typically leads to an increase in the fatality rate among motorcyclists. He cited that more than 80 people had died in motorcycle accidents in Nebraska between 2009 and 2013. “States that have repealed motorcycle helmet laws (saw) an increase in fatalities and injuries over the years. If this law is enacted, then they [Nebraska] will see an increase in fatalities,” Worrell said. The message must have been heard loud and clear, because Nebraska L.B. 31 failed to pass. The repeal, however, will more than likely be reintroduced next year.

OUTREACH EFFORTS

Lifesavers: Saving Lives is a Group Effort



Jennifer Morrison presents at the Lifesaver’s National Conference.

NTSB was widely represented at the Lifesaver’s National Conference on Highway Safety Priorities in Chicago—or simply “Lifesavers”—held in March. Conference attendees included law enforcement officers, state transportation officials, federal government officials, and safety advocates. Lifesavers is the largest gathering of national highway professionals in the United States. Each year, the conference provides a forum for the presentation of proven countermeasures and initiatives that address today’s critical highway safety issues. In addition to having a booth, which was visited by many advocates in the highway safety business, NTSB staffers led two seminars, including one that gave attendees insight into how NTSB investigates accidents and works with crash investigators. See the NTSB blog, “First-Hand Insights Into Working with the NTSB On-Scene”.



NTSB Office of Highway staff with NHTSA Administrator Mark Rosekind at the Lifesavers Conference.



MWL PROGRESS REPORT (government and industry actions making a difference)

Disconnect from Deadly Distractions

- Feedback from participants of NTSB's first public multimodal roundtable to discuss distracted driving was universally favorable, with the vast majority citing the importance of this meeting in bringing new public attention to the distraction dialogue.

End Substance Impairment

- In January, two more states—Delaware and Rhode Island—made ignition interlock devices mandatory for first-time offenders convicted of driving under the influence.

Enhance Public Helicopter Safety

- The FAA held its International Rotorcraft Safety Conference April 21-23, which focused on ways to reduce the number of fatal helicopter accidents. The event included presentations by the NTSB and survivors of helicopter accidents or near-accidents, as well as an FAA-led discussion of patterns in fatal helicopter accidents.

Implement Positive Train Control in 2015

- In April, Sen. Dianne Feinstein introduced the Positive Train Control Safety Act with Sens. Barbara Boxer, Richard Blumenthal, Chuck Schumer, Kirsten Gillibrand, and Chris Murphy. This bill would require railroads implement PTC by 2018, require trains carrying crude oil use tracks with PTC technology, improve rail inspection practices, and enhance safety at grade crossings and work zones.

Improve Rail Tank Car Safety

- The DOT announced on May 1 new rules intended to improve the safety of rail tank cars carrying crude oil and other flammable liquids. The final rule, developed by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and Federal Railroad Administration, in coordination with Canada, focuses on safety improvements designed to prevent accidents, mitigate consequences in the event of an accident, and support emergency response.

Make Mass Transit Safer

- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Deputy General Manager Rob Troupe announced April 23 that he has ordered four additional early-action safety items in response to a Jan 12 incident that occurred in a DC tunnel. The additional safety measures were the result of its collaborative review with NTSB following the incident, which resulted in the death of one person.

Loss of Control in Flight in General Aviation

- The NTSB issued four video safety alerts for general aviation pilots and mechanics: Mastering Mountain Flying, Understanding the Flight Experience; Pilots: Perform Advanced Preflight After Maintenance; and Mechanics: Prevent Misrigging Mistakes. To view these alerts, visit NTSB.gov.

Require Medical Fitness for Duty

- On April 23, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration published its Medical Examiner's Certification integration final rule. This rule requires commercial driver medical examiners to use a new, more comprehensive "long" form starting December 22, 2015, and as of June 22, 2018, report results of all exams to FMCSA by midnight of the next calendar day. FMCSA will then transmit driver ID, exam results, and restriction info from these exams to state driver's licensing agencies.

Strengthen Commercial Trucking Safety

- NTSB Chairman Christopher Hart testified before the Senate Committee on "Oversight and Reform of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration" in Washington, DC. He told senators about the critical importance of strengthening commercial trucking safety, as the number of crashes continues to rise.

Strengthen Procedural Compliance

- The NTSB is working with Airlines for America to produce a training video on the importance of following company procedures to ensure safe flights, such as the callout procedures required before landing.

Upcoming Events

May

- Global Youth Traffic Safety Month
- Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month
- National Bicycle Month
- National Safe Boating Week (May 16-22)
- National Tire Safety Week (May 24-30)
- Click It or Ticket Mobilization – NHTSA (May 18-31)

June

- National Safety Month
- Ride to Work Day (June 15)

July

- Family, Career and Community Leaders of America / Washington DC (Jul 5-9)

August

- Governors Highway Safety Association Annual Meeting: Drunk, Drugged and Distracted – Reaching High-Risk Drivers (Aug 29-Sep 2)

About the *Spotlight*

The *Spotlight* is released periodically by the National Transportation Safety Board's Safety Advocacy Division, Office of Communications. For more information on NTSB advocacy efforts or to send comments related to the *Spotlight*, contact NTSB Spotlight staff at: Spotlight@NTSB.gov.

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