

National Transportation Safety Board Operating Plan Fiscal Year 2011



October 1, 2010



**National
Transportation
Safety Board**

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Background, Mission, and Mandate

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent Federal agency charged by Congress with determining the probable cause of transportation accidents, promoting transportation safety, and assisting victims of transportation accidents and their families. The NTSB investigates accidents, conducts safety studies, evaluates the effectiveness of other government agencies' programs for preventing transportation accidents, and reviews the appeals of enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the U.S. Coast Guard (Coast Guard), as well as the appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

To help prevent accidents, the NTSB develops safety recommendations based on our investigations and studies. These are issued to Federal, state, and local government agencies and to industry and other organizations in a position to improve transportation safety. Recommendations are the focal point of the NTSB's efforts to improve the safety of the nation's transportation system.

NTSB Mission		
<p>The NTSB's mission is to promote transportation safety by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining our congressionally mandated independence and objectivity; • Conducting objective, precise accident investigations and safety studies; • Performing fair and objective airman and mariner certification appeals; and • Advocating and promoting safety recommendations. <p>And to assist victims of transportation accidents and their families.</p>		
Vision	Values	Strategic Goals
<p>We identify and promote lessons learned from accident investigations to help make transportation safer.</p>	<p>The NTSB embraces the values of transparency, accountability, and integrity in our work. We are committed to these values every day and in every way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accomplish objective investigations of transportation accidents • From investigations, recommend and advocate actions that will improve transportation safety. • Outstanding stewardship of resources • Organizational excellence

Investigative Mandate

The NTSB is charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant accidents in the other modes of transportation—highway, marine, pipeline, and railroad—and with issuing safety recommendations intended to prevent future accidents. The

agency's authority is derived from Title 49 of the United States Code, Chapter 11, and is governed under 49 *Code of Federal Regulations*, Chapter VIII. The Board of the NTSB consists of five presidentially appointed members, each confirmed by the Senate for a 5-year term. One Board member is designated by the President as Chairman and another as Vice Chairman for 2-year terms. The Chairmanship requires separate Senate confirmation.

The NTSB determines the probable cause of the following:

- All U.S. civil aviation accidents and certain public-use aircraft accidents
- Selected highway accidents
- Railroad accidents involving passenger trains or any train accident that results in at least one fatality or major property damage
- Major marine accidents and marine accidents involving a public and a nonpublic vessel
- Pipeline accidents involving a fatality or substantial property damage
- Releases of hazardous materials in all forms of transportation

NTSB staff takes an unbiased approach to each accident that the agency investigates. Local authorities, industry representatives, and other agencies frequently participate as parties to NTSB investigations. Our main objective is to determine the probable cause of the accident and to extract lessons learned to prevent similar accidents in the future. NTSB investigations routinely examine all factors surrounding an accident, series of accidents, or serious incidents, thereby ensuring that regulatory agencies and the industry are provided a thorough and objective analysis of actual, as well as potential, deficiencies in the transportation system.

NTSB Goals and Strategic Objectives

Strategic Goal #1						
Accomplish Objective Investigations of Transportation Accidents						
Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Objective 1.1 Make Judicious Selections of Accidents to Investigate in Each Transportation Mode						
Output	Use of formal risk-based criteria for accident launches	HS	100%	N/A	100%	100%
		MS	100%	N/A	100%	100%
		RPH	100%	N/A	100%	100%
Objective 1.2 Appropriately Scale the Investigative Response to Accidents						
Output	Number of products, including public hearings, adopted by the Board	AS	10	6	7	6
		HS	5	4	5	4
		MS	4	5	7	5
		RPH	6	5	4	5
Efficiency	Average time (in months) to complete Board-adopted reports	AS	13	17	15	26
		HS	15	20	18	22
		MS	17	14	14	17
		RPH	17	15	13	26
Objective 1.3 Develop and Maintain State-of-the-Art Investigative and Procedural Tools for Accident Investigations						
Output	Deployment of the accident investigation portal	CIO/MS	N/A	Develop pilot portal	Pilot portal launched	Implement Enhanced portal
Objective 1.4 Ensure Effective Coordination and Delivery of Transportation Disaster Assistance to Accident Victims						
Output	Number of key tasks completed toward full implementation of the NTSB's Rail Passenger Disaster Family Assistance program	OC	N/A	Complete 4 key tasks	2 key tasks completed	Complete 2 key tasks

Strategic Goal #2

From Investigations, Recommend and Advocate Actions That Will Improve Transportation Safety

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Objective 2.2 Engage In Outreach With the Transportation Community to Advance Safety						
Outcome	Number of outcome-oriented safety results involving industry or government stakeholders following outreach efforts	RE	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
		AS	N/A	7	10	4
		HS	N/A	N/A	7	2
		MS	N/A	N/A	1	2
		RPH	N/A	N/A	5	2
Outcome	Number of times the NTSB provides, as requested, information supporting legislative and/or regulatory proposals addressing state-related safety recommendations	OC	N/A	N/A	N/A	Baseline
Output	Update and enhance NTSB public website to improve outreach	CIO	Pages enhanced	Enhance website	Website enhanced	Launch new public website
Objective 2.3 Advocate the Implementation of Safety Recommendations with the Emphasis on the Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements						
Outcome	Percentage of Federal Most Wanted List recommendations successfully implemented within the last 5 years	MD	N/A	N/A	75%	70%
Objective 2.4 Constructively Affect the Transportation Industry						
Outcome	Percentage of regional investigations that result in documented safety improvements	AS	30%	30%	32%	25%
Outcome	Successful acceptance rate of safety recommendations by DOT modal agencies/USCG (averaged over 5 years)	MD	N/A	N/A	N/A	80%

Objective 2.5 Improve Investigative Readiness by Identifying Emerging Safety Issues						
Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Output	Successful NTSB public meetings (hearing, symposium, forum) held to advance industry awareness of issues identified on the Emerging Issues List	MD	5	N/A	3	5
Objective 2.6 Maintain a Fair and Expeditious Appeals Process for Airmen and Mariners						
Outcome	Percentage of total cases disposed of during the fiscal year (FY)	ALJ	77%	75%	80%	75%
Efficiency	Percentage of emergency opinions and orders submitted on time	GC	100%	95%	100%	95%
Efficiency	Percentage of non-emergency opinions and orders submitted on time	GC	97%	85%	100%	85%
Output	Total number of non-emergency enforcement backlog cases on hand	GC	23	<40	13	<40
Strategic Goal #3						
Outstanding Stewardship of Resources						
Objective 3.1 Employ Project Management Best Practices to Maximize the Effective Use of Agency Resources While Maintaining High Quality						
Efficiency	Percentage of new employee ethics and conflicts review requests responded to within 14 days	GC	85%	75%	93.6%	75%
Outcome	Unqualified audit opinion of financial statements received	CFO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Objective 3.2 Effectively Use the Allocated Funds to Execute the Mission						
Efficiency	Ensure all contract requirements are awarded within NTSB-established Procurement Award Lead Times	AD	96%	75%	93%	75%
Output	Achieve cost recovery for NTSB Training Center within 10% of the FY2010 aggregate level	AD	N/A	N/A	N/A	Within 10% of FY2010 aggregate level
Efficiency	Ensure that office operations are managed within allocated budget	All	At or below allocation	N/A	At or below allocation	At or below allocation

Objective 3.3 Utilize Effective Information Technology to Accomplish the Organization's Mission						
Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Output	Deployment of applications using SharePoint platform	CIO	N/A	N/A	7 applications deployed	10 applications deployed
Strategic Goal #4						
Promote (or Achieve or Maintain) Organizational Excellence						
Objective 4.1 Integrated Long-Range Planning in all Elements of NTSB Business						
Output	Number of air carrier and general aviation annual reviews completed	RE	2	N/A	2	1
Output	Publish updated IT strategic plan	CIO	Plan published	Publish 2010 plan	Plan published	Publish 2011 updated plan
Output	Publish annual report to Congress	MD	Report published	Publish 2009 report	Report Published	Publish 2010 report
Objective 4.2 Align and Improve Human Capital Planning						
Outcome	Reduce rate of work-related injuries and illnesses per 100 employees	AD	2.30	2.00	0.78	2.00
Output	Develop and publish updated Strategic Human Capital Plan	AD	Plan published	N/A	N/A	Publish updated plan
Outcome	Improvements in Labor Management Relations based on survey results	AD	N/A	N/A	N/A	Baseline
Objective 4.3 Maintain a Competent and Effective Workforce Through Targeted Training and Employee Development						
Output	Ensure Diversity Resources Guide is used to fill 100% vacancies; at least 2 nontraditional external recruitment sources used per vacancy	All	N/A	Use guide to fill 80% of vacancies	80% usage of guide	Use guide to fill 100% of vacancies
Outcome	Implement NTSB Strategic Training and Development Plan	MD	N/A	Develop Plan	Plan Developed	Implement Plan
Objective 4.4 Foster Effective Internal Communications						
Outcome	Percentage of employees who are satisfied with effectiveness of communications in their Office (Internal Perception)	All	Various	N/A	N/A	≥75%
Outcome	Percentage of employees who are satisfied with effectiveness of communications with other NTSB Offices (External Perception)	All	Various	N/A	N/A	≥75%

NTSB Strategic Goal #1: Accomplish Objective Investigations of Transportation Accidents

Objective 1.1 - Make Judicious Selections of Accidents to Investigate in Each Transportation Mode

To Achieve This Objective

Because the resources available to the NTSB do not permit the investigation of every accident in every mode, the agency will judiciously evaluate the significance of accidents to determine the level of investigative effort needed in each occurrence; this determination may mean deciding not to conduct an investigation in some cases. This selection process requires careful monitoring of accident events in each mode and a careful evaluation of safety issues by technical experts in each modal office. After this evaluation is complete, we will select accidents to which we will launch on a case-by-case basis to ensure that investigations provide the maximum potential value for increasing transportation safety. To determine success for this strategic objective, the NTSB will ensure that selected modes use formal launch criteria in the determination of whether to launch.

Relationship to Strategic Goal

Given limited agency resources, judicious selection of accidents in modes for which the NTSB does not have a legislative mandate to investigate all accidents is extremely important. Using an objective, risk-based approach, the NTSB will decide which accidents are appropriate for team launch an investigation. This approach is the hallmark of our first strategic goal to accomplish objective investigations.

Performance Measure

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Output ¹	Use of formal risk-based criteria for accident launches	HS	100%	N/A	100%	100%
		MS	100%	N/A	100%	100%
		RPH	100%	N/A	100%	100%

¹ Output performance measures are specific products or deliverables that are the end result of a set of activities. Outcome performance measures indicate public benefits or results that assess quality and effectiveness of an agency's performance. Efficiency measures are indicators of agency productivity.

Evaluation of Performance Measure

In recent years, the NTSB has developed and published formal criteria for evaluating each decision to launch. The agency utilizes a rigorous internal process to ensure that every such decision adheres to these criteria, and we will continue to monitor the extent to which the formal criteria are utilized throughout this FY.

Objective 1.2 - Appropriately Scale the Investigative Response to Accidents

To Achieve This Objective

In all modes, the agency will evaluate and refine our capacity to establish the appropriate scope of investigative activity and respond appropriately in both the on-scene and follow-up phases of accident investigations. Included in these scoping assessments will be a determination of the level of documentation and report development required for each case. Specifically, the production of reports in a timely manner ensures that necessary recommendations can be developed and issued to produce the maximum safety outcomes in the transportation industry. Because regulatory agencies need time to implement our recommendations, the NTSB works diligently to ensure that our process requires the minimum amount of time without compromising investigative quality. Where appropriate, the NTSB will make use of expedited report formats with added emphasis on electronic publication. Using state-of-the-art processes to publish our investigative findings will enhance timeliness and, thus, our impact on the transportation industry.

Relationship to Strategic Goal

To achieve target performance measures and best utilize our resources, the NTSB will have to focus on appropriately scaling its investigations and accident reports. By improving our processes, the agency can also compensate for some of the impact of staff reductions in recent years and continue to promote increased safety in the nation's transportation system. In particular, the effectiveness of this objective relates to quality, quantity, and timeliness. The appropriate scaling of the NTSB's response to accidents will assist in achieving Strategic Goal 1 and in identifying and addressing issues that produce the greatest possible safety outcome for the U.S. transportation system.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Output	Number of products, including public hearings, adopted by the Board	AS	10	6	7	6
		HS	5	4	5	4
		MS	4	5	7	5
		RPH	6	5	4	5
Efficiency	Average time (in months) to complete Board-adopted reports	AS	13	17	15	26
		HS	15	20	18	22
		MS	17	14	14	17
		RPH	17	15	13	26

Evaluation of Performance Measures

The NTSB will evaluate the achievement of these performance measures by counting the number of major investigative reports presented to and adopted by the Board at NTSB Board meetings in FY 2011. Timeliness will be determined by calculating the average number of months from the date of an accident to Board adoption for all reports presented to the Board. The success of these interrelated measures is critical to the ultimate effectiveness of the NTSB. The agency strives to achieve completion of investigative products within 18 months of the date of the accident. To accomplish this, we assess the complexity of the investigations and staff workload to set the target level as appropriate. By conducting quality and timely investigations and factual analysis, and producing quality and timely reports, the NTSB establishes a reliable basis for developing thoughtful and comprehensive recommendations that will prevent accidents and improve transportation safety.

Objective 1.3 - Develop and Maintain State-of-the-Art Investigative and Procedural Tools for Accident Investigations

To Achieve This Objective

During FY 2011, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) will partner with the Office of Marine Safety (MS) to develop and enhance a portal in SharePoint that provides a common place for collecting, storing, and using accident investigation data, including photos, documents, and other information pertinent to the investigative process. The enhanced portal will also explore the inclusion of other standard products and processes and a means of tracking and managing resources allocated to an accident investigation in participating offices. If the portal also demonstrates the viability for implementation of standard accident investigation portals, the project will then yield a requirements document for development of such portals agency-wide.

Relationship to Strategic Goal

Continuous improvement of work processes and supporting tools will enhance the NTSB’s ability to determine the root causes of accidents and thus to improve transportation safety. Specifically, technology deployments such as the SharePoint portal—which supports collaboration; structured processes; and the ability to capture, process, and share data and information in the most efficient manner—will serve to leverage limited human capital resources across the organization.

Performance Measure

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Output	Deployment of the accident investigation portal	CIO/MS	N/A	Develop pilot portal	Pilot portal launched	Implement Enhanced portal

Evaluation of Performance Measure

This performance measure will be considered a success with the implementation of one enhanced portal in MS, which will aid in the development of requirements to facilitate the creation of standard accident portals for each of the other modal offices.

Objective 1.4 - Ensure Effective Coordination and Delivery of Transportation Disaster Assistance to Accident Victims

To Achieve This Objective

In addition to our investigative response, the NTSB coordinates public and private support responses in the wake of transportation disasters for all modes of transportation. The Transportation Disaster Assistance (TDA) Team stands ready to help survivors, families of victims, communities, and commercial carriers deal with transportation disasters. Moreover, TDA staff provides an Incident Command Liaison to efficiently coordinate the agency’s response and investigation with the on-scene emergency responders. In addition, TDA responsibilities have been expanded even further based on new legislative requirements, such as in the Rail Passenger Disaster Family Assistance Act of 2008. This Act requires that the NTSB complete four key tasks to support rail disaster assistance:

- (1) Participate in a Department of Transportation rail task force
- (2) Draft a Federal response plan for rail disasters
- (3) Recruit and select a TDA rail specialist

(4) Develop a rail training plan for the high-speed rail passenger industry

Relationship to Strategic Goal

The NTSB’s role in transportation disaster assistance is key to the agency’s core mission. The development of an implementation plan will further enhance our ability to respond to the victims, their families, and others impacted by transportation disasters.

Performance Measure

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Target	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Output	Number of key tasks completed toward full implementation of the NTSB’s Rail Passenger Disaster Family Assistance program	OC	N/A	N/A	Complete 4 key tasks	2 key tasks completed	Complete 2 key tasks

Evaluation of Performance Measure

Providing effective assistance to the victims and family members impacted by major transportation disasters is critical to the NTSB’s mission. Implementation of the provisions of the Rail Passenger Disaster Family Assistance Act of 2008 will be measured by the completion of the remaining two of four key tasks. These tasks are to recruit and select a TDA rail specialist and to develop a rail training plan for the high-speed rail passenger industry. This program, when fully implemented, will ensure that victims and their families impacted by major rail disasters are properly assisted.

NTSB Strategic Goal #2: From Investigations, Recommend and Advocate Actions That Will Improve Transportation Safety

Objective 2.1 - Provide Objective and Independent Advice on Transportation Safety Issues

The NTSB will work with Congress and its staff to advance transportation safety issues that are exposed by our accident investigations. Advising Congress is critical in ensuring that legislators fully understand both the nature and the impact of our work. To this end, we will conduct in-person outreach with elected officials and committee staffers, participate in hearings and round-table discussions, and provide timely responses to verbal or written inquiries. Congress may hold

hearings, propose legislation, or take other legislative actions to improve the safety of any mode of transportation. Our objective and independent advice, provided in a timely manner, supports these efforts.

Objective 2.2 - Engage In Outreach with the Transportation Community to Advance Safety

To Achieve This Objective

To promote the agency's mission and lessons learned from accident investigations, the NTSB will continue to actively participate in public and industry activities consistent with our mission, such as hearings, forums, seminars, symposia, and other industry events, as well as responding to requested legislative and/or regulatory proposals addressing state-related safety recommendations, which may include the state most wanted list of recommendations. The NTSB will also participate in activities with investigative agencies from other countries to maintain our important relationship with them.

In addition, during FY 2011, CIO will partner with the Office of Communications (OC) to redesign the NTSB's public website at www.nts.gov, using the existing technology platform while working to establish a SharePoint environment for future support of the website. The redesigned website will continue to address issues raised in a recent survey of public website customers, including improving content, timeliness of communication, improving search capabilities, providing consistent and clear navigation, and facilitating interaction with customers through the deployment of improved web functionality.

Relationship to Strategic Goal

Our participation in these activities will promote the agency mission and stress the importance of a robust safety culture within the transportation industry. Mainly, the NTSB influences transportation safety through the quality of our products and our reputation. Outreach on issues important to the NTSB is achieved through multiple channels that include attending and speaking at conferences, participating in transportation-related professional organizations and events, creating targeted public relations initiatives, supporting congressional liaison activities, as well as, responding to requests from state advocates and legislatures, and presenting products and information on our public website.

The effective presentation of data is an important aspect of outreach. Products and information presented on the NTSB public website include a database of over 140,000 aviation accidents (1962–present), a database of NTSB safety recommendations (1967–present), the NTSB's Most Wanted List, numerous dockets, safety reports, and other information relating to transportation safety and NTSB mission activities. The collection and maintenance of this body of information in one easily accessible place allows researchers, industry analysts, colleges and universities, regulatory and law making bodies, and others around the world to use the NTSB's knowledge and products in a timely and cost-effective manner. An updated public website with enhanced features will further improve the ability of our stakeholders to use NTSB's data and information.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Outcome	Number of outcome-oriented safety results involving industry or government stakeholders following outreach efforts	RE	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
		AS	N/A	N/A	10	4
		HS	N/A	N/A	7	2
		MS	N/A	N/A	1	2
		RPH	N/A	N/A	5	2
Outcome	Number of times the NTSB provides, as requested, information supporting legislative and/or regulatory addressing state-related safety recommendations	OC	N/A	N/A	N/A	Baseline
Output	Update and enhance NTSB public website to improve outreach	CIO	Pages enhanced	Enhance website	Enhanced website	Launch new public website

Evaluation of Performance Measures

Outreach activities include participation in or presentation to a transportation industry group at industry events, symposiums, conferences, associations and safety advisory committees. The NTSB’s modal offices will track participation in these events and ensure that safety outcomes are achieved that will benefit the industry. Successful completion of this performance measure will be based not only on participation but also on safety results. The second performance measure will establish a baseline of requested information that we provide responses to regarding state-related safety recommendations. The third performance measure for this objective will be considered complete upon implementation of the redesigned and enhanced NTSB public website.

Objective 2.3 - Advocate the Implementation of Safety Recommendations with the Emphasis on the Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements

To Achieve This Objective

The Office of the Managing Director (MD) will use the NTSB’s Most Wanted List to implement recommendations that affect or enhance transportation safety at the national level or have a high level of public visibility/interest. Implementation of these recommendations will increase public trust in the nation’s transportation system. The Federal portion of the Most Wanted List

addresses issues to be addressed by Federal agencies. The MD will engage in conference calls and meetings with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) modal agencies, the Coast Guard and other recipients of safety recommendations to foster a better understanding of the need for the safety improvements recommended.

Relationship to Strategic Goal

The NTSB outreach efforts described above will promote transportation safety. We will advocate implementation of our recommendations—particularly those included on the Most Wanted List—with these safety stakeholders. Advocacy efforts by all NTSB offices contribute to achieving the agency’s mission.

Performance Measure

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Outcome	Percentage of Federal Most Wanted List recommendations successfully implemented within the last 5 years	MD	N/A	N/A	75%	70%

Evaluation of Performance Measure

As the NTSB’s most important product, safety recommendations are vital to the agency’s basic accident-prevention role. The safety recommendation process is the NTSB’s instrument for initiating change to, and improvement in, the nation’s transportation system. The NTSB established and administers our Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements to highlight recommendations that would have the greatest impact on transportation safety at the national and state levels, if implemented, and that represent actions that the agency believes will build a more positive and secure transportation system. This performance measure calculates changes made as a result of successful implementation of safety recommendations. Implementation of these closed recommendations can be defined as acceptable action(s) taken by the DOT modal agencies, the Coast Guard and other recipients of safety recommendations. The MD will calculate the percentage those safety recommendations on the Federal portion of the Most Wanted List that have been closed acceptably within the last 5 fiscal years (2006 through 2010) compared to the total recommendations closed for the same timeframe.

Objective 2.4. - Constructively Affect the Transportation Industry

To Achieve This Objective

It is not enough to merely conduct accident investigations, the NTSB must also use the information gained from those investigations to identify and promote lessons learned to help make transportation safer. For example, in general aviation investigations, corrective actions can often be taken locally, and safety results are the way that the Office of Aviation Safety (AS) documents these improvements. The NTSB's safety recommendations only effect change when they are implemented. Therefore, in developing appropriate and realistic recommendations, the NTSB must consider history as well as an organization's incentives for adopting regulations and must follow up with recipients when action is not timely or complete. Such action has often proven key in accomplishing our goal. To that end, we will work diligently to influence the adoption rate of recommendations by DOT modal agencies and the Coast Guard.

Relationship to Strategic Goal

The NTSB's recommendations are derived from thorough investigations of accidents. Therefore, the NTSB is able to expose safety issues that other Federal, state, and local transportation safety organizations have overlooked or underappreciated. By thoroughly documenting causes in our accident reports and making recommendations, the NTSB helps direct the focus of other transportation safety organizations toward reducing accidents and improving transportation safety. This objective will address the actions taken to improve transportation safety as a result of our investigations and recommendations, especially those taken by direct recipients of our recommendations, such as regulatory agencies. All of the NTSB's modes make significant contributions to this strategic objective.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Outcome	Percentage of regional investigations that result in documented safety improvements	AS	30%	30%	32%	25%
Outcome	Successful acceptance rate of safety recommendations by DOT modal agencies/Coast Guard (averaged over 5 years)	MD	N/A	N/A	N/A	80%

Evaluation of Performance Measures

For AS, the Electronic Accident Data Management System (eADMS) database will be used to document the percentage of regional investigations that are closed with a safety improvement indicated in the "safety results" block. As an agency, often we will use our safety

recommendations database to track the acceptance rate of recommendations over a 5-year period. This period allows ample time for modal agencies to implement most recommendations. Moving forward, the 5-year period will be extended by 1 year annually to encompass a new 5-year time period. The MD will calculate the safety recommendations for the DOT modal agencies and the Coast Guard over the previous 5 fiscal years.

Objective 2.5 - Improve Investigative Readiness by Identifying Emerging Safety Issues

To Achieve this Objective

Emerging safety issues might include trends that are beginning to be seen across accidents or the introduction of new design technologies. However, other issues, some of which may still be developing, can have the potential to be identified as causes of accidents or to complicate the investigation of future accidents. Each investigative office contributes topics to the *Emerging Issues List*, by identifying potential factors in accident investigations and safety studies. To increase the NTSB's impact on transportation, public meetings are held with industry to share insight and enhance awareness of the topics on the *Emerging Issues List*. Some recent examples of emerging issues include unmanned aircraft systems, light sport aircraft, event data recorders for all vehicles, aging drivers, liquefied and compressed gas transport, cruise ship evacuation, positive train control technology, and remote control locomotive operations.

Relationship to Strategic Goal

By identifying emerging issues before they become causes or contributing factors in accidents, the NTSB increases the likelihood that its recommendations will prevent future accidents and save lives. Also, by maintaining a focus on emerging trends and issues, staff can be equipped with the resources and knowledge needed to ensure readiness for future investigations.

Performance Measure

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Outcome	Successful NTSB public meetings (hearing, symposium, forum) held to advance industry awareness of issues identified on the Emerging Issues List	MD	5	N/A	3	5

Evaluation of Performance Measure

Each investigative office will research, develop, and submit emerging issues to the Office of Research and Engineering (RE) for analysis. RE will continue to analyze emerging issues from all the modes and provide appropriate visibility through website publication. Agency-wide, the indication of success for this performance measure will be the successful completion of specific actions, such as external hearings and forums that will advance industry awareness of emerging safety issues. The MD will be responsible for tracking those actions.

Objective 2.6 - Maintain a Fair and Expeditious Appeals Process for Airmen and Mariners

To Achieve This Objective

Airmen cases are generally assigned for hearing to the administrative law judge whose circuit includes the geographic region in which the events underlying the certificate action occurred. The Office of Administrative Law Judges (ALJ) currently considers whether the assignment of a case according to region would negatively impact the amount of time it would take to hear the case. Under this initiative, schedule considerations are taken into account when assigning cases to ensure a more even distribution of cases among our judges for more efficient use of judicial resources. Additionally, this initiative will prevent undue delays in hearing cases that result from spikes in cases coming from the regional offices that would be assigned to the judge depending on the circuit in which it falls. This helps the agency to effectively utilize our human capital resources and prevent unnecessary delay in the scheduling and disposition of cases.

An emergency action is an enforcement action taken by the FAA when the administrator determines that public interest and air safety require the immediate suspension or revocation of an operator's certificate leaving the operator without use of the certificate during appeal process. The NTSB seeks to efficiently manage both emergency and non-emergency appellate dockets for those appeals to the full NTSB Board by providing timely decisions at the Board level as well. To do so, the Office of General Counsel (GC) will submit to the Board Members draft opinions and orders for notation in emergency appeals within no more than 21 days from the date of receipt, or one week prior to the expiration of the agency's statutory 60-day deadline, whichever date occurs earliest, thereby ensuring efficient and timely satisfaction of one of the NTSB's core statutory responsibilities. Furthermore, the GC will submit to the Board Members draft opinions and orders for notation in nonemergency appeals within 3 months of the case being fully briefed by the litigants, and thus ready for consideration by the Board. The GC will also keep the backlog of non-emergency enforcement cases at a reasonable level, thereby meeting this important statutory responsibility in a timely manner.

Relationship to Strategic Goal

Considering timeliness and ALJ staff resources when assigning cases in the manner described above will facilitate the expeditious hearing of cases. Because in emergency cases, the certificate holder is precluded from using the certificate during the appeal process, every effort will be

made to limit the amount of time certificate holders receiving a favorable decision from the NTSB are deprived of the use of their certificates. With respect to non-emergency cases, this method of assignment will avoid situations in which cases languish due to uneven workloads among the judges at any particular time. Use of these strategies by the ALJ will contribute significantly to a fair and expeditious appeals process.

The GC is primarily responsible for managing the NTSB’s enforcement appellate docket once cases are appealed to the full NTSB Board. The GC must keep the docket at that level timely and responsive to litigants. These performance measures address the accuracy and efficiency with which the GC supports agency functions by thorough planning and careful monitoring of its enforcement appeals activities.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Outcome	Percentage of total cases disposed of during the fiscal year	ALJ	77%	75%	80%	75%
Efficiency	Percentage of emergency opinions and orders submitted on time	GC	100%	95%	100%	95%
Efficiency	Percentage of non-emergency opinions and orders submitted on time	GC	97%	85%	100%	85%
Output	Total number of non-emergency enforcement backlog cases on hand	GC	23	<40	13	<40

Evaluation of Performance Measures

The ALJ will monitor the scheduling of hearings and the workload of each judge and will make adjustments in case assignments or will transfer cases as needed to facilitate workflow. However, extensive discovery considerations, legitimate scheduling conflicts with the parties and other witnesses, lack of courtroom space, a spike in incoming cases or emergency cases that tax the availability of judges to hear cases, or potential retirements that result in a personnel decrease for this office could impact the performance of this measure.

A database will be maintained by the paralegal manager of the enforcement program within the GC showing all processing dates for each enforcement case. Satisfying these objectives will result in the timely processing of all appeals before the full Board, thus preventing a backlog of cases. Timely processing of cases in this fashion will serve the interest of transportation safety and give appellants a fair and prompt adjudication in matters before the NTSB.

NTSB Strategic Goal #3: Outstanding Stewardship of Resources

Objective 3.1 - Employ Project Management Best Practices to Maximize the Effective Use of Agency Resources While Maintaining High Quality

To Achieve This Objective

The GC will respond to requests for ethics advice or to perform conflict reviews for new employees to enhance the ability of the NTSB to expeditiously employ highly qualified personnel. A member of the NTSB ethics staff conducts an interview and briefing with each potential employee as part of the final screening and clearance process before a final job offer is made. The intent of the briefing is, first, to acquaint the individual/applicant with the requirements of the Standards of Conduct and the particular concerns/ethics issues that tend to arise for employees of the NTSB. The individual, after being briefed about financial conflicts of interest and the criticality of impartial action by the NTSB and its employees, is asked about (1) financial interests (investments) that could create a conflict of interest and (2) relationships (former employers, etc.) that could create issues with regard to the employee's impartiality.

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) will direct, manage, and provide policy guidance and oversight of financial management. Overall, the CFO's main responsibility is to ensure that the agency's financial condition is accurately reflected by its financial statements. This will be evidenced by receiving an unqualified opinion of NTSB financial statements by our independent auditor. The CFO will work diligently to ensure the most favorable auditing result for this year.

Relationship to Strategic Goal

Ensuring that new employees undergo an ethics review is critical to maintaining objectivity in our work. With new hires coming on board on a regular basis, the GC will strive to utilize the best project management tools and techniques to ensure this process occurs efficiently and effectively.

Timely submission of financial statements for a clean audit opinion allows the CFO to provide quality and accuracy to stakeholders. The measure also demonstrates NTSB's ability to utilize and control budgetary resources efficiently and effectively.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Efficiency	Percentage of new employee ethics and conflicts review requests responded to within 14 days	GC	85%	75%	93.6%	75%
Outcome	Unqualified audit opinion of financial statements received	CFO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Evaluation of Performance Measures

The GC will maintain a log of incoming requests for new employee orientation and track the time it takes to accomplish the ethics counseling and conflict reviews. The office will be able to identify those accomplished within the target time period. Finally, the CFO will prepare and present financial statements in an auditable condition to the oversight entity or its representatives for an audit opinion.

Objective 3.2 - Effectively Use the Allocated Funds to Execute the Mission

To Achieve This Objective

The Office of Administration (AD) will initiate, coordinate, and generate the NTSB’s annual procurement forecast to assist in proper acquisition planning. Additionally, the office will assess the NTSB’s contracting requirements to identify effective and innovative solutions to acquisition issues to ensure that the NTSB receives the best value of goods and services in a timely manner. By maximizing the use of the NTSB Training Center space, the AD will offset some of the costs of renting and maintaining the space. The training center will offer training rooms and/or common areas in the NTSB Training Center to other organizations on a reimbursable basis, as well as coordinate the use of training space with the Training Office to enhance the center’s utilization rate. In all of the above, the AD will work collaboratively with the appropriate NTSB offices to maximize cost recovery efforts at the Training Center.

In addition, the CFO will support sound financial management for all offices by leading the agency’s effort to manage allocated budgets. To that end, the CFO will issue reports on a quarterly basis to offices that detail actual spending versus budgeted amounts. In turn, all offices will manage to allocated budgets once the respective budgets are distributed by the CFO. This best practice is a hallmark of sound internal financial management.

Relationship to Strategic Goal

The AD is responsible for ensuring that procurement activities are efficient and cost effective. The Procurement Award Lead Times (PALT) calculation goal will assist the NTSB in more effective use of allocated funds.

By providing training services to customers and acquiring reimbursable funds generated through increased use of the Training Center, the NTSB will continue to reduce the direct and indirect costs of delivering educational content, and help contribute to the facility's cost recovery efforts. The Training Center will offer training rooms and/or common areas in the NTSB Training Center to other organizations on a reimbursable basis, which will not only reduce the cost of renting space but also improve our space utilization rate.

Monitoring and efficiently using Federal funds by developing an efficient and effective budgeting process and allocating adequate funding are key factors in maintaining outstanding stewardship of public resources.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Efficiency	Ensure all contract requirements are awarded within NTSB established Procurement Award Lead Times	AD	96%	75%	93%	75%
Output	Achieve cost recovery for NTSB Training Center within 10% of the FY2010 aggregate level	AD	N/A	N/A	N/A	Within 10% of FY10 aggregate level
Efficiency	Ensure that office operations are managed within allocated budget	All	At or below allocation	N/A	At or below allocation	At or below allocation

Evaluation of Performance Measures

To achieve the PALT percentage goal regarding contract requirements, the number of assignments awarded within established PALT is divided by the total number of assignments. This measurement will be calculated each quarter to capture the year-to-date percentage. In addition, our mandate is to ensure that cost recovery efforts for the Training Center improve each and every year. Internal tracking mechanisms developed by the AD will continue to ensure close monitoring of Training Center revenues and expenses and ongoing review by NTSB management will help ensure that cost recovery continues to grow over time.

The CFO will direct, manage, and provide policy guidance and oversight on financial management, will ensure that budget allocations occur in a timely manner to internal offices, and will evaluate offices on managing to those budgets.

Objective 3.3 - Utilize Effective Information Technology to Accomplish the Organization’s Mission

To Achieve This Objective

During FY 2010, the CIO developed and deployed seven applications to support mission and administrative functions, to meet ongoing needs, and to acclimate NTSB employees in the use of SharePoint, including one to monitor operating plan performance measures for the agency. The CNS (Correspondence Control, Notation and Safety Recommendations) application recently finished final acceptance testing and entered production implementation in September 2010. This SharePoint application provides a workflow-driven solution that allows for concurrent review of NTSB products to include correspondence and accident reports. During FY 2011, the NTSB will deploy three additional SharePoint applications as the flexibility and applicability of SharePoint becomes even more widely understood at the agency.

Relationship to Strategic Goal

The deployment of such Information Technology (IT) products as SharePoint optimizes NTSB resources, improves productivity, and strengthens communications throughout our agency, promoting outstanding stewardship of resources. Technology continues to drive efficiency in government, and the NTSB strongly advocates improving that efficiency.

Performance Measure

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY010 Results	FY11 Target
Output	Deployment of applications using SharePoint platform	CIO	N/A	N/A	7 applications deployed	10 applications deployed

Evaluation of Performance Measure

As SharePoint is more widely used within the NTSB, additional applications will be developed and deployed. So far, our experience is that SharePoint provides a user-friendly platform that allows collaboration among offices and the ability for those offices to monitor information efficiently. During FY 2011, the NTSB will ensure that at least three additional SharePoint applications are deployed to benefit the agency.

NTSB Strategic Goal #4: Organizational Excellence

Objective 4.1 - Integrated Long-Range Planning in all Elements of NTSB Business

To Achieve This Objective

RE will perform large-scale studies and reviews on issues of interest to the NTSB regarding transportation safety, employing appropriate research methods and using state-of-the-art computational tools to conduct statistical and advanced data analysis to produce comprehensive annual reviews of general aviation and air carrier aviation.

The Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 requires the CIOs of Federal agencies to develop plans to support the strategic direction of their agencies. In late FY 2007, the CIO completed and posted the NTSB's first IT strategic plan. This plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis, as it has been in FY 2008 through 2010, to adapt to changes in NTSB goals and objectives or changes to specific IT mandate requirements. The CIO will solicit staff input to the development of our IT strategic plan and will distribute the completed plan to all members of the CIO team. We will also ensure that staff members know and understand their roles in ensuring that our annual objectives are met.

The MD will continuously foster and encourage an atmosphere of planning to ensure that the agency is following best practices in the government for continuous improvement. To that end, the office will ensure that high visibility reports are consistent with best practices in planning and performance management. One such example is the annual report, which will include performance measurement data and analysis from the planning process to complement its contents.

Relationship to Strategic Goal

By completing annual aviation and air carrier reviews, RE will offer the NTSB, other governmental agencies, and the transportation industry the basic data and analysis by which to effect improvements in transportation safety. These annual reviews have been an excellent statistical reference for many stakeholders, and their successful completion involves long-term planning, content development, and publishing over extended time periods. They are an important example of long-range planning for the agency.

The IT strategic plan will be the framework used to leverage IT, as appropriate, to achieve the mission in the most effective, efficient, and productive means possible. The implementation of the plan is another example of organizational excellence.

The development of plans demonstrates the effectiveness of the MD to strategically achieve the agency's goals through development and execution of various reports and plans to internal and external stakeholders. This office takes a proactive approach of demonstrating an atmosphere of

continuous improvement by engaging in long-range planning, with improvements shown over time. Critical aspects of organizational excellence in all government agencies are proper long-range planning and the reporting of such plans via the annual report and the operating plan.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Output	Number of air carrier and general aviation annual reviews completed	RE	2	N/A	2	1
Output	Publish updated IT strategic plan	CIO	Plan published	Publish 2010 plan	Plan published	Publish 2011 updated plan
Output	Publish annual report to Congress	MD	Report published	Publish 2009 report	Report published	Publish 2010 report

Evaluation of Performance Measures

The first performance measure will be considered achieved with the completion of the carrier and general aviation annual reviews. The next performance measure will be considered achieved with the publishing of the annual update to the IT strategic plan. Finally, the annual report to Congress will be published by July 1, 2011. Completion of these significant outputs will constitute full success for these performance measures. Our evaluation of the overall planning process at the NTSB involves ensuring that best practices in project management and planning occur with all published plans and that a strong linkage is evident between various component plans and the overall *NTSB Strategic Plan*.

Objective 4.2 - Align and Improve Human Capital Planning

To Achieve This Objective

We are committed to improving workplace safety and health conditions for NTSB workers while reducing the financial costs to U.S. taxpayers. The NTSB will focus on efforts to reduce the loss workday injury rate, and it will achieve this objective by promoting employee programs that reduce workplace-related injuries and illnesses. The NTSB will provide the necessary training to ensure that all employees know about workplace hazards and can minimize the chance of work-related injuries. In addition, the agency will continue to foster and encourage an atmosphere of health and well being and to advocate such programs as the Federal Occupational Health program to assist employees in their health-related goals

We will continue to commit to investing in training, developing, and retaining employees, our most important and valuable asset, and will take steps to enhance our recruitment and hiring processes. We will select well-qualified applicants to fill vacancies and expand the NTSB's technical capabilities, as hiring such individuals is crucial to accomplishing our investigative mission. In addition, we will develop the skill sets of current staff through formal and informal training, as well as invest in cross-training to build individual employee skills and strengthen the NTSB's workforce. We will ensure successful achievement of these efforts through the implementation of the [*NTSB Strategic Human Capital Plan*](#), an agency human resource plan that supports human capital efforts. This *plan* has eight key strategies to ensure that our workforce is competent, that our management team is fully aligned, and that human capital strategies are implemented using a project-management approach. During FY 2011, the human capital plan will be updated to reflect the strategic objectives contained in the [*2010-2015 NTSB Strategic Plan*](#).

In December 2009, an executive order regarding labor management forums at government agencies was issued. This order mandates that agencies develop suggested measurements and metrics to evaluate the state of labor management relations. We will evaluate the labor management climate at the NTSB by conducting an agency-wide survey.

Relationship to Strategic Goal

The workplace injury measure shows progress in reducing workplace injuries and illnesses, which in turn leads to improved productivity and quality of life for the NTSB workforce and lower costs for the NTSB. By providing safety courses, risk assessments, health and wellness services and seminars, the Safety and Health Office continues to optimize a workplace that reduces injuries, thereby effectively controlling agency costs.

The AD works to support enhanced human capital planning with such activities as expanding the marketing of the NTSB as an employer of choice; expanding recruitment initiatives to achieve a more diverse, high-quality workforce; and properly aligning people with mission-related core competencies. Human capital planning focuses on working with program offices to close workforce gaps in agency mission-critical occupations, identifying effective performance management tools, and developing effective employee and labor management considerations. These efforts achieve the objective of improving human capital planning, which directly cascades up to organizational excellence. Finally, a hallmark of an excellent organization is motivating employees to achieve their best results in a positive and productive workplace climate. Although NTSB enjoys excellent labor-management relations, the organization can achieve even more breakthrough productivity by continuing to evaluate those relations and enhance human capital planning.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Outcome	Reduce rate of work-related injuries and illnesses per 100 employees	AD	2.30	2.00	0.78	2.00
Output	Develop and publish updated Strategic Human Capital Plan	AD	Plan published	N/A	N/A	Publish updated plan
Outcome	Improvements in Labor Management Relations based on survey results	AD	N/A	N/A	N/A	Baseline

Evaluation of Performance Measures

AD staff will monitor work-related injuries and illnesses and run periodic reports to ensure that progress is maintained at or below the specified target level. Continued education and employee reinforcement of good safety practices will help achieve this objective. In addition, the AD will publish an updated *Strategic Human Capital Plan* during the fiscal year, in full alignment with the goals and objectives contained in the revised agency strategic plan. Finally, the agency will utilize a web-based survey instrument to evaluate labor management relations at the agency and will analyze the survey results to develop recommendations for improvement.

Objective 4.3 - Maintain a Competent and Effective Workforce through Targeted Training and Employee Development

To Achieve This Objective

The NTSB will ensure that staff has regular opportunities to participate in the advanced technical training and professional development essential to maintain and advance their critical investigative skills. The agency will work to build our management and leadership skills for the long term to ensure that the NTSB is prepared to renew the agency's leadership ranks. Our management team will ensure that all staff members have the opportunity to pursue training opportunities that will contribute to the development of their management, leadership, and job-specific skills. In addition, we will ensure that management and leadership development is an integral part of annual performance plans. *The Strategic Human Capital Plan* and the *Strategic Training and Development Plan*, which operate in tandem, have committed to additional specific performance measures pertaining to training and development. The *Strategic Training and Development Plan* summarizes the models and best practices relied upon by the NTSB in reviewing, strategically aligning, improving, and charting a course for its training and

development program. As the NTSB embarks on efforts to improve its strategic management of human capital, training and development will play a key role in the strategies employed.

To foster workforce diversity, the NTSB has published the *NTSB Diversity Resources Guide*—a recruitment handbook for the agency—which has specific strategies and guidance designed to ensure the most diverse pool of applicants for external job vacancies as well as positions at the senior executive service level. All managers are required to use the guide in filling positions. In addition, the agency has a Special Emphasis Program, which sponsors speaking events on a regular basis with a range of cultural awareness topics. The NTSB will continue to utilize all effective means to foster workforce diversity and promote employee development at all levels of the organization.

Relationship to Strategic Goal

The agency’s training and employee development programs are designed to foster the growth and realize the full potential of the NTSB workforce. The agency needs the most highly qualified and well-trained workforce possible to achieve its mission. Our products are developed by people, and the quality of our products is a direct reflection of the skills and professionalism of our workforce. Therefore, a highly trained, diverse, and motivated workforce directly leads to organizational excellence.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Output	Ensure Diversity Resources Guide is used to fill 100% of vacancies; at least 2 nontraditional external recruitment sources used per vacancy	All	N/A	Use guide to fill 80% of vacancies	80% of guide utilized	Use guide to fill 100% of vacancies
Outcome	Implement NTSB Strategic Training and Development Plan	MD	N/A	Develop Plan	Plan Developed	Implement Plan

Evaluation of Performance Measures

The *NTSB Diversity Resources Guide* serves as the agency’s foundation for its diversity outreach strategies. In the guide, the agency details a series of specific actions to undertake when posting and filling a job vacancy that increase the chance of obtaining a diverse applicant pool. The guide discusses nontraditional recruitment sources which can be helpful in many cases, depending upon the specific requirements of the position in question. These actions ensure that the NTSB employs a broad approach when soliciting interest in working at our agency.

The NTSB faces serious challenges in developing and maintaining our current workforce due to a high degree of retirement-eligible employees and rapidly changing technology requiring highly specialized knowledge. Implementing our training initiatives found in the *Strategic Training and Development Plan* will ensure equal opportunity in promoting the most diverse workforce possible.

Objective 4.4 - Foster Effective Internal Communications

To Achieve This Objective

The NTSB will pursue a comprehensive strategy aimed at improving the quality of communication and cooperation across office boundaries, throughout the organization. Communications, cooperation, and teamwork will be included in managing performance evaluations. Our internal communications plan outlines a number of strategies and action steps to improve communication within the organization, at the internal—individual office level, as well as external—across all offices. One method the agency uses to evaluate improved communications is the biennial (formally annual) communications survey. The results from these surveys have shown noted improvement over the 3-year period, and the agency expects positive communications to continue to grow at all levels of the organization.

Relationship to Strategic Goal

Productive communication is critical to the efficient and effective operation of the NTSB and the achievement of our agency’s goal of organizational excellence. We are fully aware that an excellent organization promotes and fosters effective internal and external communications. The key component of this organizational excellence—ensuring that NTSB has enhanced communications—contributes to the agency’s strategic goals.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure Type	Measure	Office	FY09 Results	FY10 Target	FY10 Results	FY11 Target
Outcome	Percentage of employees who are satisfied with effectiveness of communications in their Office (Internal Perception)	All	Various	N/A	N/A	≥75%
Outcome	Percentage of employees who are satisfied with effectiveness of communications with other NTSB Offices (External Perception)	All	Various	N/A	N/A	≥75%

Evaluation of Performance Measures

In FY 2011, the communications survey, our primary vehicle for measuring improved internal communications, will be conducted for the fourth time, as explained above. The data collected in the past revealed great improvements in communication since 2007. As we strive to continue this trend, all offices have been tasked with a target of achieving 75 percent or greater satisfaction levels of communication for their offices.

Environmental Analysis

External Factors

The NTSB is affected by numerous external factors that are beyond our control but with which we must deal on a frequent basis. These external factors include employee attrition, major transportation disasters, new technologies, and the economic climate.

Employee attrition is a key factor that could affect the agency's ability to achieve its performance goals. Anticipated retirements may have a significant impact on the NTSB over the next several years. Approximately 21 percent of the workforce is eligible to retire, and pending retirements will affect institutional knowledge. The maturing workforce that remains in service may require additional information technology training to function successfully in the future environment of new hardware and software platforms and new networking capabilities. Aggressive marketing, outreach, and recruitment initiatives will be necessary to continue to attract highly skilled, diverse candidates to the NTSB.

The occurrence of one or more catastrophic transportation accidents could also severely affect the NTSB's ability to achieve our strategic goals. When catastrophic accidents occur, there is often a high level of industry, political, and public concern to determine the cause. This concern, combined with the complexity that often accompanies the investigation of transportation disasters, will require the time and attention of an undetermined number of the most skilled and experienced investigators at the agency.

Further, technology is another external factor that affects our work—both the internal technology we use and the ever-evolving technology employed in the safety community. We have a requirement to remain abreast of the evolution of new types of components, systems, software, operations, and training. Finally, a difficult economic climate increases the challenge of enacting safety improvements at every level of government as well as in private industry. As our recommendation recipients' priorities change to deal with economic uncertainty, the NTSB will maintain its focus on implementing safety improvements by continuously improving our advocacy and disaster assistance capabilities and supporting the ultimate goal of increasing the safety of the transportation networks.

Internal Factors

Human Capital Management

The average age of NTSB employees is 48.6 years, almost 2 years older than the government-wide average. The NTSB workforce also includes considerably fewer employees under the age of 35, which is likely due to the need for specialized staff who possess broad industry knowledge in addition to investigative or related skills. Developing this diverse skill set usually occurs over a period of years, which is why employees who joined the NTSB workforce midway through their careers dominate among investigative and some other occupational specialties at the NTSB.

Although historical trends at the agency indicate that only a portion of employees eligible to retire actually do so, the time needed to cultivate future leaders warrants serious attention to ensure continuity of leadership. In addition, because many of our personnel occupy positions requiring unique expertise, the failure to anticipate and prepare for their eventual retirement could leave the NTSB severely hampered in our ability to accomplish our investigative mission. To be successful, the NTSB relies on the outstanding skills and professionalism of our employees.

NTSB workforce departures constitute the one internal factor that could affect our ability to achieve organizational goals. Because retirements will affect institutional knowledge, the training of successors is of paramount importance. As stated above, to function successfully, the aging workforce likely will require updated training in a future environment that includes advanced management tools, new hardware and software platforms, and updated networking capabilities. Aggressive marketing, outreach, and recruitment initiatives will be necessary to attract highly skilled and diverse candidates to staff the next generation of employees and managers.

Summary

The performance objectives presented in this plan are designed to strengthen and reinforce our business approach. By continuing to progress toward our goals, accomplish our mission, conduct thorough accident investigations, and issue clear, fact-based recommendations aimed at preventing future accidents, the NTSB will encourage stakeholders to implement its recommendations. This will lead to safer waters, airways, highways, railways, pipeline systems, and transport of hazardous materials, consistent with our agency's mission. It will also help to ensure public confidence in the nation's transportation system.

In this plan, the demand for speed and efficiency is balanced against our commitment to independence, excellence, and the safety of the nation's transportation systems. We will continue to improve our administrative and human capital management resources to enhance employee skills, which contribute to the effective operation of the NTSB and to improving the overall safety of the U.S. transportation system.