



**National
Transportation
Safety Board**

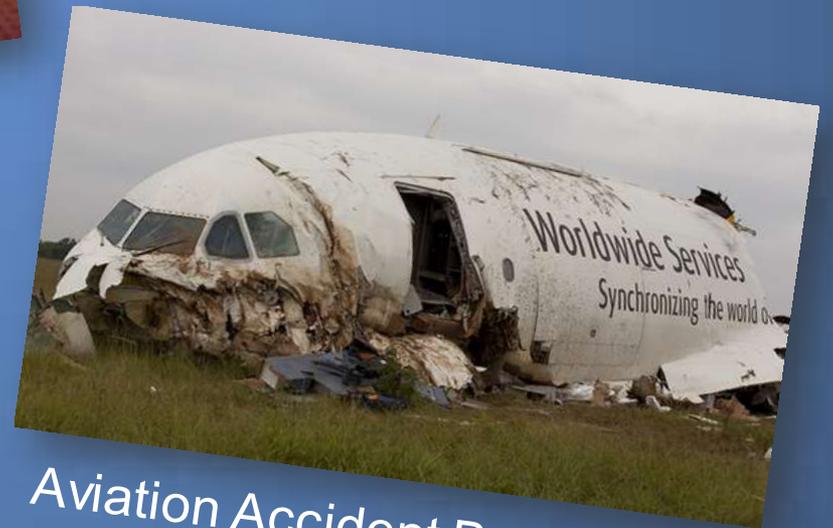
Managing Communications Following a Major Aviation Accident or Incident

Robert Sumwalt

Presented at NTSB Training Course for Junta de Investigacion de Accidentes de Aviacion Civil
Buenos Aires, Argentina
April 14 & 15, 2016



June 2014



Aviation Accident Board Meeting
September 2014





September 2015 – Letter of Intent to Assist Argentina
with Rail Investigations



NTSB Accepted Observer Status to ACRM (AIG Regional Conference)





- NTSB is an independent federal agency
 - investigate transportation accidents
 - determine probable cause
 - issue safety recommendations



Facilities

- Headquartered in Washington, DC
- 4 Regional Offices
- NTSB Training Center



The Board



Earl Weener



Bella Dinh-Zarr
Vice Chairman

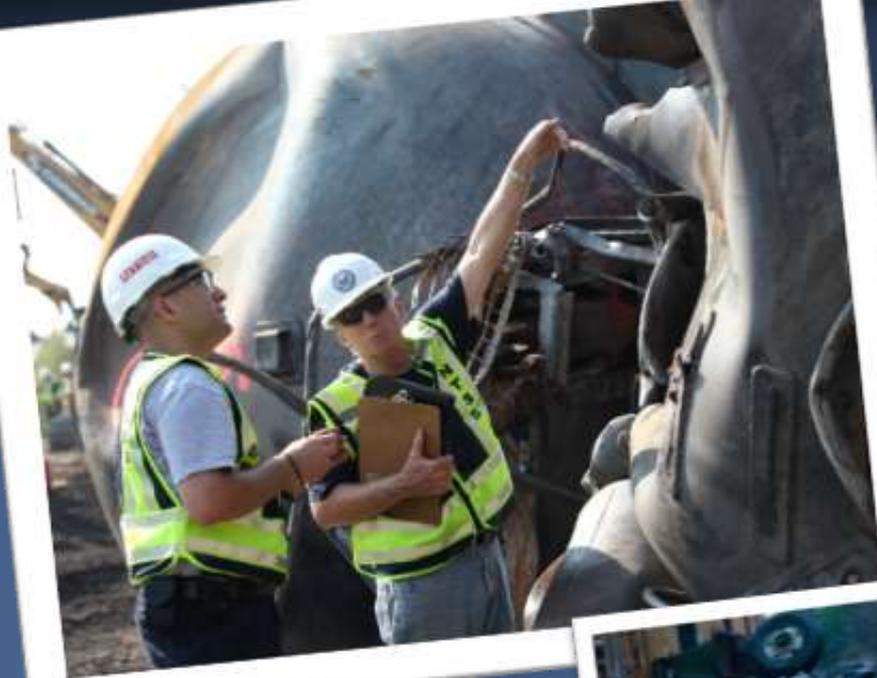


Chris Hart
Chairman



Robert Sumwalt







Our greatest virtues:
Independence
Credibility

Communicating in the Wake of a Transportation Disaster



**The way a crisis is publically handled can
either make or break you.**



Lac-Mégantic, Quebec

July 6, 2013



Could this be you?



THE
SITUATION
ROOM

"THE MOST DESPISED PERSON IN QUEBEC"
Railway chief speaks to CNN about disaster

CNN

IMMIGRANT JOBS REALLY LIKE? MORGAN SPURLOCK FINDS OUT WHA

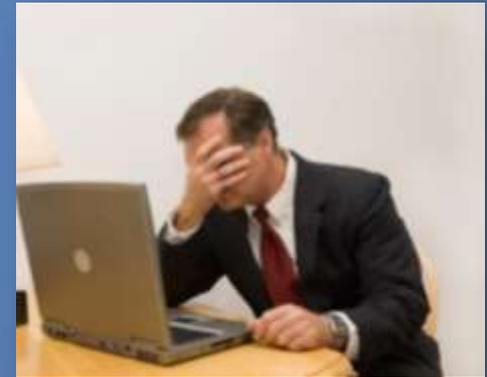
CNN.com



NTSB

Could this be you?

- Reputations suffer
- Credibility destroyed
- Confidence shattered



Could this be you?

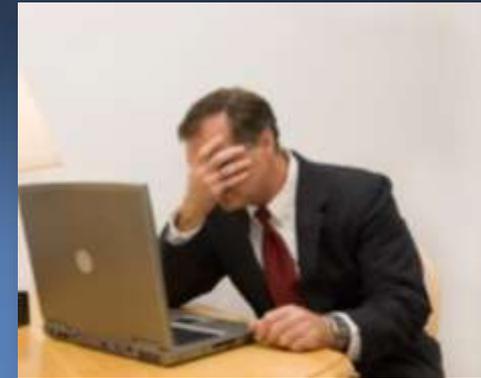
Your organization may survive after a poorly handled crisis, but your career may not.



Could this be you?

Your organization may survive after a poorly handled disaster, but your career may not.





Could this be
YOU?

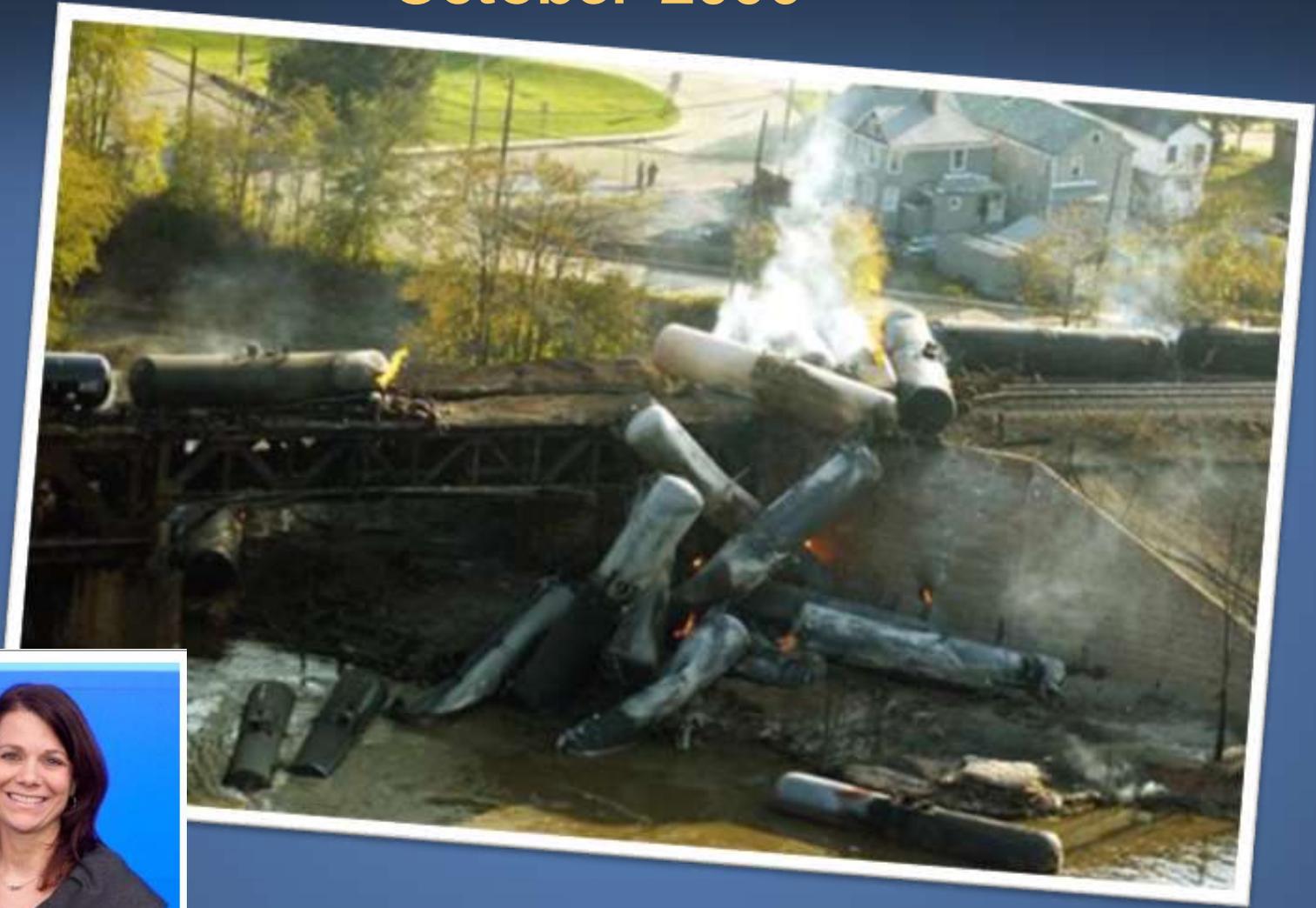


NTSB



Pennsylvania

October 2006



Lauren Peduzzi



NTSB

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania May 2015



Peter Knudson



NTSB



NTSB



**National
Transportation
Safety Board**

Role of the On-Scene Board Member

Robert Sumwalt

Media Briefings



Family Briefings



Meeting with Elected Officials





**National
Transportation
Safety Board**

Transportation Disaster Assistance (TDA)

Peter Knudson
Robert Sumwalt



National Transportation Safety Board
Transportation Disaster Assistance Division

SPC 04/12
4/2012

Transportation Disaster Assistance Point Paper

What is the NTSB?

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged with investigating and determining the probable cause of all civil aviation accidents in the United States and selected accidents in rail, highway, marine, and pipeline operations. The NTSB has no authority to regulate the transportation industry, which is the responsibility of the Department of Transportation. Safety recommendations developed from NTSB investigations are aimed at preventing accidents from reoccurring and are issued to public and private organizations in a position to improve transportation safety.

What is TDA?

The NTSB's Transportation Disaster Assistance Division (TDA) coordinates the resources of federal, state, and local agencies, transportation carriers, and the American Red Cross, in order to meet the needs of family members and survivors following a transportation accident. TDA also serves as the primary resource for investigative information for family members and survivors.

What gives TDA its authority?

Three federal laws provide the legal mandates under which TDA operates:

- Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-264)
- Foreign Air Carrier Family Support Act of 1997 (Public Law 105-148)
- Rail Passenger Disaster Family Assistance Act of 2006 (Public Law 110-432)

These pieces of legislation and the associated Federal Family Assistance Plans for Aviation and Rail Passenger Disasters outline the responsibilities of the NTSB, the transportation carrier, the American Red Cross, and supporting federal agencies following an accident where the following criteria apply:

Legislated Aviation Accidents

- Accidents in US or territories
- Major domestic and foreign air carriers (Part 121/129)
- Major loss of life

Legislated Rail Accidents

- Accidents in US
- Interstate rail passenger carrier (Amtrak)
- Inter- and intrastate high speed rail passenger carriers
- Major loss of life
- Exceptions: subways and light commuter, tourist, historic, scenic, or excursion rail carriers

How are families assisted after an accident?

Federal, state, and local agencies, transportation carriers, and the American Red Cross work together with the guidance of TDA to ensure that the needs of family members and survivors are being addressed. Typical family assistance operations required under these pieces of legislation involve the following areas:

Family Assistance Center

The Family Assistance Center (FAC) is a secure meeting place established by the transportation carrier for family members, survivors, and friends to obtain services and receive information about the investigation. The FAC remains open throughout the on-scene work. Personnel from TDA, the American Red Cross, the transportation carrier, and federal, state, and local agencies staff the FAC.

Daily Family Briefings

While on-scene, TDA coordinates briefings for family members, survivors, and friends at the FAC. These family briefings provide information on the progress of the investigation, local agency responsibilities (such as victim identification), and available family assistance services. Following the on-scene phase, TDA maintains contact with families and survivors throughout the NTSB investigative process.

Personal Effects

The collection, processing, and return of personal effects are the responsibility of the transportation carrier and the local medical examiner or coroner.

Crisis Counseling Services

Professional crisis counseling services are available through the American Red Cross to family members, survivors, and friends while on-scene at the FAC. Upon their return home, short-term crisis intervention services are also available through local chapters of the American Red Cross with coordination by TDA.

Victim Recovery and Identification

Victim recovery, identification, and death certification are the responsibility of the local medical examiner or coroner. TDA can coordinate technical expertise to assist in this process.

Assisting Families of Foreign Citizens

The Department of State secures translation services, provides official notification to foreign governments, assists with visa services, and facilitates consular services.

National Transportation Safety Board
Transportation Disaster Assistance Division
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, SW
Washington, DC 20594

www.ntsb.gov/tda
202-314-6185
assistance@ntsb.gov

NEWS @ NTSB



NTSB

U.S. Family Assistance Legislation

- Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act of 1996
- Foreign Air Carrier Family Support Act of 1997
- Rail Passenger Disaster Family Assistance Act of 2008



Fundamental Concerns of Family Members

Notification of Involvement



What happened and is my loved one involved?

Victim Accounting



Where is my loved one?

Information and Resources



How do I get information and support?

Personal Effects



Where are their belongings?

The TDA plan is the responsibility of the carrier

- Having a DOT-approved family assistance plan is required of airlines and passenger railroads operating in the US.
- When an accident occurs, implementing the plan is the responsibility of the carrier. (the airline or railroad)

NTSB coordinates and provides additional resources to the airline/rail carrier and local government to help victims and their families.

NTSB DOES NOT provide the actual family support activities.



Asiana flight 214



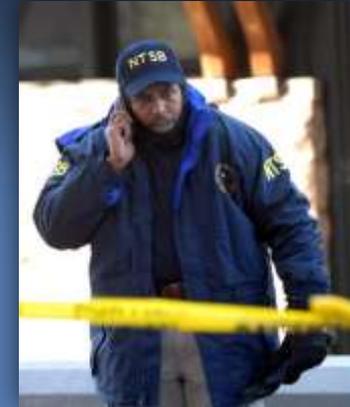
- July 6, 2013
- San Francisco, California
- 3 Fatalities



Coordination with the Local, State, Federal Family Assistance Response Community & Transportation Industry



Facilitating victim recovery and identification; East Coast Jets Flight 81; Owatonna, MN



Asiana 214



NTSB

Victim Services/Disaster Mental Health Support



Asiana 214

Coordinate Family Briefings



Amtrak Train 188



Comair 5191



NTSB

Coordinate Site Visits



Continental Connection 3407



Asiana 214



Continental Connection 3407



**National
Transportation
Safety Board**

Case Study of Crisis Communications Following a Rail Accident

Robert Sumwalt
Peter Knudson



Amtrak 188
May 12, 2015
Philadelphia, PA
8 Fatalities



NTSB



NTSB

106 MPH

- 'Reckless' speed
- 50-mph limit
- Toll rises to 7
- Engineer mum

"THERE'S NO WAY in the world that he should have been going that fast into the curve."

That was the incredulous response of Philadelphia's mayor to news that engineer Brandon Beaman's (r.) Amtrak train was traveling 106 mph in a 50-mph zone, causing Tuesday night's horrific derailment.

**PAGES
2,3,4,5,6,7**



DAILY NEWS
**AMTRAK
HORROR**



NTSB



Peter coordinated over 100 TV interviews





NTSB

Robert's Crisis Communications Tips

- Be prepared
- Display command presence
- Show compassion
- Demonstrate transparency
- Stay in your lane
- Remember your message



Crisis Communications Tip

BE PREPARED



NTSB

Be prepared

- Know the facts
- Identify your talking points
- “Murder board”



Crisis Communications Tip

DISPLAY COMMAND PRESENCE



NTSB

Command Presence

- Be in control; control the environment
- Don't be overrun by the media



Command Presence

Please raise your hand.
When I call on you, state your
name, your media affiliation,
and ask your question.
Thank you.



P.S. – Don't be defensive!



NTSB

Crisis Communications Tip

SHOW COMPASSION



NTSB

At approximately 9 this morning, a flight operated by ...

Before I go any further, on behalf of the NTSB, I would like to extend our condolences to the families and friends of the victims of this tragic accident.

- Don't *read* this – speak from the heart!
- Show that you care!
- Show compassion!



Crisis Communications Tip

DEMONSTRATE TRANSPARENCY



NTSB



NBC News Investigation of Crumb Rubber



NTSB

The way you answer *does matter*

What was the speed of the airplane as it departed the runway?

“I can’t answer that.”

If you are the investigator

“One of the many things the investigation will do is develop a complete timeline of events, including speeds throughout the accident sequence.”

If you are the operator

“The NTSB is conducting the investigation, so that question would best be directed to them.”



Crisis Communications Tip

STAY IN YOUR LANE



NTSB

“Stay in your lane”



Don't talk about things that are outside of your area.



Crisis Communications Tip

REMEMBER YOUR MESSAGE



NTSB



NEW DEVELOPMENTS

NTSB Interviewed Amtrak 188 Engineer



MYSTERY ON THE TRACKS

INSIDE THE AMTRAK INVESTIGATION

TSARNAEV SENTENCED TO DEATH

JEB BUSH'S ROUGH WEEK



NTSB

The Pivot – your best friend.

- When asked a question that you are not prepared to answer, pivot to your message.





NEW DEVELOPMENTS

NTSB Investigator on Amtrak Crash

abc NEWS

MYSTERY ON THE TRACKS

INSIDE THE AMTRAK INVESTIGATION

YSANNAEV SENTENCED TO DEATH

JOE BUSH'S ROUGH WEEK



NTSB



Good Luck!



NTSB

NTSB Most Wanted List



Robert Sumwalt

2016 NTSB Most Wanted List

- Disconnect from Deadly Distractions
- Reduce Fatigue-Related Accidents
- Improve Rail Transit Safety Oversight
- Promote Collision Avoidance Technologies in Highway Vehicles
- Strengthen Occupant Protection
- Prevent Loss of Control in General Aviation
- Promote Completion of Rail Safety Initiatives
- End Substance Impairment in Transportation
- Require Medical Fitness for Duty
- Expand use of Recorders to Enhance Transportation Safety



NTSB

2016 NTSB Most Wanted List

- Disconnect from Deadly Distractions
- Reduce Fatigue-Related Accidents
- **Improve Rail Transit Safety Oversight**
- Promote Collision Avoidance Technologies in Highway Vehicles
- Strengthen Occupant Protection
- Prevent Loss of Control in General Aviation
- **Promote Completion of Rail Safety Initiatives**
- End Substance Impairment in Transportation
- Require Medical Fitness for Duty
- Expand use of Recorders to Enhance Transportation Safety



2016 NTSB Most Wanted List

- Disconnect from Deadly Distractions
- Reduce Fatigue-Related Accidents
- Improve Rail Transit Safety Oversight
- Promote Collision Avoidance Technologies in Highway Vehicles
- Strengthen Occupant Protection
- Prevent Loss of Control in General Aviation
- Promote Completion of Rail Safety Initiatives
- End Substance Impairment in Transportation
- Require Medical Fitness for Duty
- Expand use of Recorders to Enhance Transportation Safety



Disconnect from Deadly Distractions



Chatsworth, California
September 2008



NTSB

Implement Positive Train Control



Philadelphia
May 2015



NTSB

Implement PTC / Reduce Fatigue-Related Accidents



New York City
December 2013



NTSB

Improve Rail Tank Car Safety



Casselton, North Dakota
December 2013



NTSB

Improve Rail Tank Car Safety



Casselton, North Dakota
December 2013



NTSB

Improve Rail Transit Safety Oversight



Washington, DC
June 2009



NTSB

Improve Rail Transit Safety Oversight



L'Enfant Plaza Metro Station
January 2015



NTSB

Require Medical Fitness for Duty



Goodwell, Oklahoma
June 2012

Pop Quiz

NTSB is a division of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

- a. True
- b. False



Pop Quiz

NTSB is a division of the U.S.
Department of Transportation.

- a. True
- b. False



Pop Quiz

Select the most correct answer

NTSB investigations are for the purpose of:

- a. apportioning blame
- b. finding fault
- c. determining liability
- d. all of the above
- e. none of the above



Pop Quiz

Select the most correct answer

NTSB investigations are for the purpose of:

- a. apportioning blame
- b. finding fault
- c. determining liability
- d. all of the above
- e. none of the above**







National Transportation Safety Board