Lessons from the Ashes: Improving Aviation Safety through Accident Investigation

Robert Sumwalt
10-Gallon Limit Asks

Merry Christmas From The G

Plane Crashes Near Airport

Air Crash Kills Two

Flood Of Bills Sent To Nixon

West To Push 2nd Med School

Limiting Gas Frustrating To Columb
NTSB Vital statistics

• 398 FTEs
• $110.4 Budget
  – Emerging developments in transportation industry
• 15th consecutive year of “clean” financial audit opinion
The Board

Earl Weener  Robert Sumwalt  Bella Dinh-Zarr
Office of Managing Director

Dennis Jones
Managing Director

Sharon Bryson
Deputy Managing Director
Office of General Counsel

Kathy Silbaugh, Esq.
General Counsel
In the past year

**ALJ Office**
- 237 new cases received
- 33 hearings
- 44 ALJ decisions
  - 121 emergency cases

**Decisions Appealed to the Board**
- Issued 17 Opinion & Orders
  - 12 affirmed
  - 0 reversed
  - 2 modified
  - 3 remanded
Agency wide: 2017

• 70 Board adopted products
  – Accident reports
  – Accident briefs
  – Safety Studies
  – Special Investigation Reports
  – Safety Alerts
  – Recommendation letters

• Over 1,200 accident briefs approved under delegated authority (all modes)

• 185 Safety Recommendations issued

• 118 Safety Recommendations closed acceptably
UAS Support for Investigations
Office of Research & Engineering - 2017
449 recorder readouts
Office of Aviation Safety - 2017

- 1298 domestic accidents investigated
- Accredited Representative to 164 foreign accident investigations
American 383, October 28, 2016

Rejected takeoff
Evacuation
Southwest Airlines flight 1380
Passenger smartphone photos

You see our shadow
Pilot History

- Multiple arrests, convictions, and imprisonment for drugs possession and distribution, and driving while impaired.
- Diagnosed with “major depression”
- ADHD
Pilot’s Medications

• Prescribed 13 medications
  Many likely not impairing
• Toxicology: 5 likely impairing medications
  Three prescription
  Cyclobenzaprine, diazepam, oxycodone
  Two over-the-counter
  Dextromethorphan, diphenhydramine
These air tour operations … require this.

FAA Medical Certificate
But, for commercial air tour balloon operations...
The pilot’s pattern of poor decision-making that led to the initial launch, continued flight in fog and above clouds, and descent near or through clouds that decreased the pilot’s ability to see and avoid obstacles.

Contributing to the accident were:

(1) the pilot’s impairing medical conditions and medications, and;

(2) the Federal Aviation Administration’s policy to not require a medical certificate for commercial balloon pilots.
NTSB recommendations to FAA:

• Require medical certificates for commercial balloon operators

• Better surveillance and oversight for commercial balloon operators
March 11

March 19

March 23
Two critical elements of accident investigations

**Independence**
- the investigation is independent of outside influences

**Transparency**
- allowing the public to see inside the investigative processes so a reasonable person can draw the same conclusions as you did
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"The most important single aspect of the National Transportation Safety Board must be its total independence from those governmental agencies it oversees in regard to their transportation regulatory functions. If the Board is under pressure from any administration to pull its punches or to tone down its reports or to gloss over Government errors in transportation safety, then its watchdog function has been fatally compromised."
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What Makes NTSB?

• Our Mission
• And…
Our People
Gerencia de las comunicaciones y procesos de investigación

NTSB TRAINING
14 y 15 de abril de 2016
2017 FEVS

When needed I am willing to put in the extra effort to get a job done.

290 responses
99% POSITIVE
Agency Overall

Project Detail

Accident Num: CEN17MA183
Accident/Start Date: 5/15/2017
Date Notified: 5/15/2017

Location: Teterboro
State: New Jersey
Keys Num: 95175

Description: Lear 35 crashed short of runway on approach

Lead Agency/Company:
External POC:

Primary Issues:
Part 135 operations and pilots

Staffing

Product: [Browse]
Status & Milestones:

4/10/2018 10:01:49 AM hopj
- Product Status changed from "Report planning meeting held. Initial staff draft due 4/24." to "Initial Staff Draft due 4/24. Board Meeting tentatively scheduled for 9/11/2018."

3/7/2018 7:59:41 AM hopj
- Product Status changed from "Report planning meeting held. Initial staff draft due mid-to late-April." to "Report planning meeting held. Initial staff draft due 4/24."

3/6/2018 9:52:39 AM hopj
- Product Status changed from "Analysis planning meeting held 1/30. Docket released 2/7. Report 2/12."

Notes:

Add New Note

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