

**National Transportation Safety Board  
Generic Approval of NTSB Witness and Passenger Questionnaires**

**B. STATISTICAL METHODS**

**1. Sampling Universe, Sampling Methods, and Expected Response Rate.**

As explained below, the NTSB intends to provide witness and/or passenger questionnaires to people who may offer first-hand observations of transportation events. In order to maximize the number of responses, in general, the NTSB will send the questionnaire to all witnesses and/or passengers for whom the NTSB has electronic mail addresses. If distributed electronically, the electronic version of the questionnaire will consist of a fillable document in portable document format (PDF). If the NTSB distributes the questionnaires at a gathering that several witness and/or passengers attend, such as an on-site investigative update, the NTSB will provide instructions concerning how to transmit completed copies of the questionnaire. For all other witnesses and/or passengers, the NTSB will send the questionnaire via postal mail or express mail service. For passengers residing in the United States, the NTSB will include a postage-paid return envelope.

The NTSB expects to receive approximately 50 percent of the questionnaires completed and returned. The NTSB does not plan to contact witnesses and/or passengers to request completion of the questionnaire if the NTSB does not receive a completed questionnaire in response to its original request. The NTSB will consider all completed questionnaires it has received by the time it creates a factual report for which it would use the information, and include the questionnaires in the public docket for the investigation. If the NTSB receives questionnaires following its release of the factual report, it may also include those questionnaires in the public docket, even though the description of the total data received in the factual report will not reflect the receipt of a questionnaire provided after the report's release.

**2. Procedures for Collection of Information.**

The NTSB often obtains contact information on passengers from several sources. In aviation investigations, the NTSB will receive the passenger manifest from the operator. In addition, the NTSB may obtain information from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, from local hospitals or other medical facilities, or information from family members. For all investigations, NTSB investigators may become aware of bystanders simply because investigators arrive at the site of a transportation event and are able to identify potential witnesses. When possible, the NTSB will send the questionnaire to all witnesses and/or passengers for whom the NTSB has electronic mail addresses. If distributed electronically, the electronic version of the questionnaire will consist of a fillable document in portable document format (PDF). If the NTSB distributes the questionnaires at a gathering that several witness and/or passengers attend, such as an on-site investigative update, the NTSB will provide instructions concerning how to transmit completed copies of the questionnaire. For all other witnesses and/or passengers, the NTSB will send the questionnaire via postal mail or express mail service. For passengers residing in the United States, the NTSB will include a postage-paid return envelope.

**3. Methods to maximize response rates and deal with issues of non-response.**

The NTSB will request responses to witness and/or passenger questionnaires on a voluntary basis. If the NTSB becomes aware of an intentionally inaccurate response to question(s) on the questionnaire, the NTSB may choose to exclude the erroneous questionnaire. Such an assessment will be based on whether the NTSB has reason to believe the information provided in a completed questionnaire is purposefully misleading or untruthful. If the NTSB receives any response that the NTSB believes may warrant further investigation, the NTSB may contact the respondent and to discuss the event, via a telephone call. The NTSB anticipates witnesses' ability to recollect crash-related events may have diminished by the time they complete the questionnaire; therefore, the NTSB may receive some questionnaires that contain inadvertently incorrect information. The NTSB may note this source of potential imprecision in its report. For purposes of describing witnesses' memories of the safety briefing prior to takeoff and the evacuation of the aircraft immediately following the accident, the NTSB's report will benefit from a general overview and understanding of witnesses' conduct at the commencement and conclusion of the event. When appropriate, the NTSB will describe in its survival factors report the degree to which it believes the data provided in the questionnaires were useful. The NTSB utilizes multiple techniques for assessing the data provided in the questionnaires. These validation techniques include comparing the feedback on the questionnaires with other data the NTSB has obtained, such as hospital records, reports from other passengers or crew, feedback from first responders, and the like.

#### **4. Tests of procedures or methods.**

The circumstances of this information collection do not lend themselves to tests of procedures or methods by which the NTSB will obtain information in this collection. The NTSB does not plan to test formally the procedures or methods it will use in obtaining the information, but will compare the feedback it receives on the questionnaires to other sources of data, as described above.

#### **5. Name and telephone number of individual(s) consulted; Name of person who will collect and/or analyze information collected.**

The NTSB has not consulted with anyone concerning distribution of the questionnaire. Given the generic nature of this proposed information collection, the NTSB cannot identify which of its investigators might oversee distribution, collection, and analysis of such questionnaires. Based on the unpredictable nature of transportation events, the person gathering and analyzing the data could be any investigator from the Offices of Aviation Safety, Highway Safety, Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations, or Marine Safety who collects factual information in furtherance of investigations.