

SUPPORTING STATEMENT B

National Transportation Safety Board NTSB Form 6120.1: Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident/Incident Report

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

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

As explained below, the NTSB intends to send the pilot/operator aircraft accident/incident report form to all surviving pilots or operators who are involved in an aircraft accident or incident. The NTSB has conducted this information collection for several years. In recent years, the NTSB has collected approximately 1,500-1,600 forms from pilots or operators on an annual basis. In previous years, however, the NTSB collected as many as 1,800 responses to the form. Given the unpredictable nature of aviation accidents and incidents, and in the interest of including a broad approximation, the NTSB stated it would receive approximately 1,800 responses in its notices in the *Federal Register*.

Under 49 C.F.R. § 830.15, completion of the form is mandatory. The NTSB plans to send the form via electronic mail to all pilots or operators for whom the NTSB has electronic mail addresses, or a website address that contains a fillable portable document format (PDF) version of the form. For pilots or operators for whom the NTSB does not have an email address, the NTSB may send the form via postal mail. In most cases, pilots and operators use the fillable PDF version of the form is available on the NTSB website. Given the regulatory requirement for completing the form, the NTSB expects a response rate of almost 100 percent; the only potential respondents who will not respond are pilots who have not survived an accident and have no surviving representative who will do so on their behalf.

2. Procedures for Collection of Information.

The NTSB obtains contact information for pilots and operators from several sources, including self-reporting by pilots or operators or reports from witnesses, airports, and the Federal Aviation Administration. The NTSB then contacts pilots and operators and, after determining it will commence an investigation, the NTSB requests completion of the form. For each of the pilots or operators for whom the NTSB has electronic mail addresses, the NTSB will send the forms via electronic mail. For passengers for whom the NTSB does not have an electronic mail address, the NTSB will then send the form via postal mail or express mail transportation service, with instructions for returning the questionnaire to the NTSB in the form of a scanned document electronic mail, or a paper copy of the document via facsimile, postal mail, or express mail transportation service. In addition, a fillable PDF copy of the form is available on the NTSB website; the NTSB will encourage respondents to utilize this fillable copy as much as possible, and send the completed form to the appropriate NTSB investigator via electronic mail.

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

Pilots or operators are required to complete the form upon the request of the NTSB. 49 C.F.R. § 830.15. The NTSB may pursue a civil penalty against a pilot or operator who does not

complete the form. 49 U.S.C. § 1155.

If the NTSB becomes aware of an intentionally inaccurate response to question(s) on the form, or receives a form that is partially completed, the NTSB may contact the respondent to make additional inquiries. The NTSB is generally successful in receiving completed, accurate forms.

Staff from the NTSB Office of Aviation Safety uses multiple techniques for assessing the data provided in the forms. These validation techniques include comparing the feedback on the forms with other data the NTSB has obtained, such aircraft records, maintenance records, reports from other passengers or crew, records from the Federal Aviation Administration, and the like.

The NTSB has recently begun using a new interface for collecting data on the form. This new interface improves the quality of the data collected on the form by allowing investigators to validate electronically and import data from the pilot or operator providing the information. In addition, the new interface will link with the NTSB's official public database to validate location, aircraft, airport, and weather details of an accident or incident. Further, the interface now will have automated data consistency checks prior to public release of database information.

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 forms 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 form. Various NTSB investigators from the Office of Aviation Safety will distribute and receive completed copies of the forms. Transportation Safety Analyst Loren Groff, from the NTSB Office of Research and Engineering, performs analysis of the data collected on the forms.