

A Message from the Chairman

on the 10th Anniversary of the Japan Transport Safety Board



The Japan Transport Safety Board (JTSB) will mark the 10th anniversary of its foundation in October 2018 since it was established as a merger of the Aircraft and Railway Accidents Investigation Commission and a part of the Japan Marine Accident Inquiry Agency for identifying the causes of accidents. Since its establishment, the JTSB has made utmost organization-wide efforts to further enhance transportation safety and protect the life and living of people by conducting investigations immediately after accidents or serious incidents in the traffic fields of “aviation,” “railway” and “marine,” greatly related to the daily lives of people, and determining their causes to prevent the recurrence of accidents and incidents.

As a specific program, the JTSB had released 10,738 investigation reports by March 2018 since its foundation. Among recent examples, the JTSB released a report on a light plane crash into private houses in Chofu, Tokyo (which occurred in July 2015), in July 2017, a report on the derailling of a bullet train from the tracks of the Kyushu Shinkansen Line (which occurred in April 2016) in the wake of the Kumamoto Earthquake in November 2017, and a report on the capsizing of the crab-fishing boat Daifuku-maru (which occurred in December 2016) in November 2017.

To enhance transportation safety, the JTSB gives recommendations, safety recommendations or opinions on the occasion of releasing reports to heads of administrative agencies and parties relevant to the causes of accidents and incidents when it finds policies or measures necessary to prevent the recurrence thereof and reduce damage. Since its establishment until March 2018, the JTSB has issued 31 recommendations, 33 safety recommendations and 22 opinions. Administrative agencies and parties relevant to the causes of accidents and incidents have taken reform and other measures based on them.

In the meantime, however, many major and minor accidents and incidents have frequently occurred. Accidents and incidents, which drew strong social attention, occurred in 2017, such as “a fire helicopter’s crash in Nagano Prefecture (in March),” “a serious incident involving a bullet train of West Japan Railway Company’s Tokaido-Sanyo Shinkansen Line (in December)” and “a collision between a U.S. naval Aegis-guided destroyer and a Philippine-flagged container ship (in June).”

Taking those situations into account, the JTSB has steadily implemented and reviewed the Duties Improvement Action Plan, compiled in March 2012, to review its work, and has enhanced and upgraded investigations into accidents and incidents to accurately and promptly determine their causes. Based on the timely and appropriate transmission of information based on knowledge gained through the progress, the JTSB has striven to prevent the recurrence of accidents and incidents as much as possible.

For the timely and appropriate transmission of information, the chairman of the JTSB has held press conferences on a regular basis since August 2011 to provide wide-ranging information such as reports on progress in accident investigations. The board established the “Accident Victim Information Liaison Office” in April 2012 from the viewpoint of care for accident victims and has since continued offering them

information on investigations of accidents and incidents as needed. In the same year, furthermore, it began to compile the “JTSB Digest,” introducing accident cases, analyses based on a variety of statistics and so forth, and published 26 issues through 2017. For accidents and incidents involving ships, the JTSB started publishing the “Analysis Digest Local Office Edition” consisting of investigations and analyses about locally unique themes in 2010.

In 2013, the JTSB began to make public the “Japan-Marine Accident Risk and Safety Information System (J-MARISIS)” readily accessible on the Internet to check waters where marine accidents and incidents frequently occur and investigation results. The board has since developed the program in stages as it released the “Global Version of J-MARISIS” in 2014 to contribute to the safety of international navigation by ships and began operating the “Mobile Version of J-MARISIS” accessible via smartphones and tablets in 2015.

To enhance and upgrade investigations of accidents and incidents, the JTSB has carried out training programs, including the dispatch of accident investigators to Cranfield University of Britain, and introduced cutting-edge technologies such as the utilization of drones to photograph accident sites and visualized outlines of accidents by means of computer graphics while reinforcing its organization through an increase in the number of accident investigators and other measures.

The “JTSB Annual Report 2018” gives brief descriptions of accidents and incidents that occurred and became subject to investigation in 2017, and an outline of investigation reports published in 2017, with additional statistics and other data. I expect that the Annual Report will provide useful lessons for improving safety in your various activities.

I hope I can count on your continued understanding and support in connection with JTSB activities in future.



Kazuhiro Nakahashi
Chairman
Japan Transport Safety Board
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