

Awareness and Responsibility as an Organization for Transportation Safety



Investigations of accidents and incidents by the Japan Transport Safety Board (JTSB) is done to determine the causes through accumulating and analyzing factual information, and to recommend measures to prevent recurrence. It is also important to identify increasingly complex accident factors and to contribute to mitigating their impact at the time of an accident. In order to achieve these goals, however, the JTSB must enhance its essential competence more than ever before. In other words, we must be able to collect detailed factual information, analyze and decipher it quantitatively, and disseminate safety information with clear explanations, as well as be able to collect and understand knowledge on the causes of factors of accidents that are common worldwide.

The first step in gathering factual information is called the initial investigation. It is important to collect information that may lead to the cause of an accident as soon as possible at the scene and conduct appropriate oral interviews with persons involved in the accident while their memories are fresh. In addition, we try to make use of scientific and quantitative data as much as possible in our oral interviews.

On the other hand, in analyzing the factual information we have accumulated, we are not relying solely on experience, but promoting more scientific and quantitative methods. Flight Data Recorder (FDR) and Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) records for aircraft and Voyage Data Recorder (VDR) and Automatic Identification System (AIS) records for ships are of course employed. Furthermore, recently video records are often available and useful for analyses. In addition, the Director for Information Technology of the Accident Investigation, which covers all three modes of transportation—aircraft, railway, and marine—has been established to make full use of digital technology, including dimensional and shape measurements using 3D laser scanners (fixed and handheld types), elemental analysis using precision scanning electron microscopes, and image diagnosis using X-ray CT imaging equipment, to improve our investigation capabilities, and have obtained some useful outcomes.

The products of the JTSB, which investigates the causes of accidents and recommends measures to prevent recurrence, will be made public in the form of an investigation report.

It is important that the content of the report is easy to understand for the public and fully understandable for the victims of the accident and their families. In this sense, we hold monthly press conferences with the chairperson of the board to provide information on the status of investigations into accidents and incidents of high public interest, and to ensure that the information is widely known through the media. Furthermore, through cross-sectional analysis of the individual investigation reports accumulated by the JTSB, we publish the “JTSB Digest” and “Analysis Digest Local Office Edition” to help prevent recurrence of accidents and raise awareness and promote their use at workshops and seminars.

Furthermore, many accidents and incidents are common international issues, and information sharing and cooperation in investigation with accident investigation agencies of other countries is essential. For this purpose, the International Transportation Safety Association (ITSA) holds a meeting once a year, attended by the chairpersons of accident investigation authorities from each country. In particular, Japan has taken the lead in establishing the International Railway Accident Investigation International Forum (RAIIF), which brings together railroad accident investigators from around the world, and held its first meeting in Tokyo in the fall of 2024. The second edition of the forum is already scheduled to be held in Taiwan in 2025.

We believe that the activities of the JTSB are gradually gaining recognition in society as an organization that supports transportation safety in Japan, and the committee members and secretariat staff, while confirming the significance of their activities, will continue to make further efforts with awareness and responsibility to meet your expectations.

We appreciate your continued understanding and cooperation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "武田展雄" (Takeda Nobuo), in a bold, cursive style.

March 2025
TAKEDA Nobuo
Chairperson
Japan Transport Safety Board