



## RESEARCH BRIEF

### Research Request:

#### **Emergency Response Teams (August 2017)**

### Research Response:

The emergency response team can be broken down into two groups. The first group will participate as a party to the NTSB investigation and the second group will assist with personnel and family support, security, media relations, and relations with others affected by the accident.

The size of Emergency Response Teams will likely vary with the circumstances of each accident. Sometimes it may not be necessary to send a Go-Team; however if a Go-Team is activated it will usually include a corporate executive responsible for the aviation department who can make decisions and advise senior management on developments, personnel in flight ops and maintenance who can provide information on crews, scheduling, training, the aircraft, and maintenance programs, and support personnel such as media relations, human resources, and legal.

Some operators will contract a vendor such as Fireside Partners (there are multiple vendors available) for ERP support services which can include family liaison support (hotel, crash site access, grieving support processes, personal effects) and assistance with next of kin notifications.

Below are a list of activities that may be required and should be considered when determining on-site support.

#### **Parties to an investigation**

- ⇒ If the NTSB is dispatched to investigate the accident, the company will want to ask to be a party to the investigation and should send the following:
- ⇒ Party coordinator/spokesperson
  - The party coordinator must be able to speak for and make decisions for the organization they represent

⇒ Employees with expertise in the technical areas, (structures, systems, operations, etc.) The investigators will want information on crew (qualifications & experience), aircraft records including maintenance programs, and standard operations to include scheduling and training.

- The representative could be the Chief Pilot, Director of Ops, and/or Director of Maintenance.
- Party Specialists must be a full-time employee of the party (no consultants)

### **Notification and support for affected families**

- ◆ High priority objective of all personnel is to honorably and supportively relate to surviving passengers and crew, and all affected family members. Company management should take steps immediately to notify the families, offer counseling and other support, make needed arrangements and keep them informed.
- ◆ Notification is best conducted in person by a team of two people comprised of public safety officials or clergy. There is great stigma attached to persons making death notifications, so it is not recommended that family friends participate in that process. They will be much more beneficial to the family in the follow-on support role. Those participating in the notification should be excluded from participating in follow-on support.
- ◆ Family support may take a variety of forms. It often includes arranging transportation for family members to visit the site, and hospital if their loved one is an injured survivor of the accident. It may require providing short term funds, handling pet care and home security issues, providing counseling on finances and insurance benefits, arranging for obituaries, mortuary services, and other such support.
- ◆ For airlines and charter air carriers, volunteers from Human Resources or Customer Service are typically trained to perform service as a notifier or family liaison. Family assistance programs are required for these organizations.
- ◆ Although, the Company is not required to use this model, it is strongly recommended because it is the standard in the industry and it provides the resources to best accomplish the tasks of supporting survivors and the families of those involved in an aircraft accident

### **Security**

- ◆ Initial security expected to be provided by local or state police until the site is declared safe.
- ◆ Police authority may continue until the completion of the field portion of the accident investigation, or may shift to Company responsibility — coordinate with Company Security on-site or Corporate.
- ◆ Be sure to hire “off-duty” police officers for site security responsibilities — they have

arrest authority (in U.S.). Outside U.S., have Corporate coordinate security with embassy personnel, and local military/law enforcement agencies.

### **Media Relations**

- ◆ Spokesperson to provide factual information only. Incident may require a spokesperson on-site. No company personnel will release any information related to the investigation.
- ◆ The company's public relations department, if there is one, should prepare to handle press or other inquiries. If no such department exists, a key executive should be prepared to handle external and internal inquiries. Those with public relations responsibilities should help prepare the company's response in advance. The key components of a company's response to an accident are as follows:
  - ⇒ The company's policy statement on the aircraft's use
  - ⇒ Authoritative information on business aircraft accident rates, company flying safety awards and pilot safety records
  - ⇒ Set procedures for handling intercompany relationships if the accident involves an aircraft used under time sharing, joint ownership or interchange agreements, or when passengers from another company are on board
- ◆ Parties and group members are prohibited from speaking about investigative findings with the news media or public

### **Insurance Company**

- ◆ An insurance manager or agent can be included in the Emergency Response Team. Whether they're on the team or not, the insurance company should be notified as soon as possible so that they can assist with on-site efforts such as:
  - ⇒ Hiring security
  - ⇒ Salvage Recovery and storage
  - ⇒ Dealing with third party claims
  - ⇒ Paying the company for hull damage or loss

### **Coroner/Mortuary**

- ◆ Should be referred to family members for personal effects (Have Human Resources personnel coordinate this).
- ◆ Human Resources personnel will coordinate transportation to burial site.
- ◆ Human Resources personnel will contact local mortuary to support affected family members.