

Subject: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES FOR
HANDLING NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PURPOSE.

To establish uniform procedures within the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) for acting upon and responding to safety recommendations (hereafter referred to as “recommendations”) issued by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), and for reviewing the relationships between NTSB and DOT periodically. Effectively managing NTSB recommendations in a timely manner will further our common objective to promote safety and expedite the closure of NTSB recommendations.

2. CANCELLATIONS.

This Order cancels DOT 2000.1D, DOT Procedures for Handling National Transportation Safety Board Recommendations, dated April 22, 1994.

3. BACKGROUND.

- a. Title III of the Transportation Safety Act of 1974 and the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 vest authority in the NTSB to investigate transportation accidents; determine the probable cause of accidents; make recommendations to the Secretary or Heads of Operating Administrations (OAs) for preventing and investigating accidents, or for otherwise promoting safety; and request assistance in its accident investigation functions from OAs.
- b. Separate from any authority derived from NTSB, DOT also has independent authorities to investigate transportation accidents.
- c. To promote transportation safety effectively, the Secretary must ensure that relationships are established and maintained between NTSB and the OAs and that prompt and full consideration is given to every NTSB recommendation.

4. REFERENCES.

- a. 49 U.S.C. § 1135 – Secretary of Transportation’s responses to safety recommendations; paragraphs (a)–(c).

5. POLICY.

- a. All newly issued NTSB recommendations will be responded to in writing not later than 90 days after receipt, in accordance with 49 U.S.C. § 1135, and within 30 days for urgent recommendations as defined by NTSB, in accordance with section 7.

- b. OAs shall provide regular updates in writing to NTSB on the status of each open safety recommendation.
- c. All replies will be coordinated with each affected OA before any action is taken or substantive reply made to NTSB.
- d. Actions proposed in response to NTSB recommendations will be pursued in an efficient and timely manner. The completion timeframe of these actions shall consider DOT authorities, DOT safety priorities, and the nature of the activities (e.g., regulatory action, guidance update, policy change).

6. RESPONSIBILITIES.

- a. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy (OST-P) will:
 - 1) Monitor compliance with this Order by working with the OAs and NTSB to ensure that procedures for handling NTSB recommendations are satisfied properly and expeditiously.
 - 2) Maintain records of the status of all open recommendations addressed to DOT.
 - 3) Request additional information from OAs on open recommendations to inform DOT decision making as needed.
 - 4) Manage NTSB recommendations addressed to DOT broadly or to the Secretary of Transportation specifically.
- b. The OAs will:
 - 1) Designate an NTSB liaison officer to ensure that responsibilities prescribed in this Order are carried out. OST-P will maintain contact information of all NTSB liaison officers.
 - 2) Evaluate and respond to NTSB recommendations as described in section 7 of this Order.
 - 3) Perform periodic reviews of status changes to recommendations with a goal to close out open recommendations.
 - 4) Meet at least quarterly with designated representatives of NTSB to resolve open recommendations in a timely manner.
 - 5) Report at least quarterly to OST-P on the status of responses to NTSB recommendations.

- 6) Report any current or potential issues of serious disagreement between the OA and NTSB to OST-P, including recommendations at an impasse due to implementation challenges or regulatory costs, in order to ensure that DOT leadership through OST-P is aware of areas of disagreement on how to address the recommendation.
- 7) Provide information upon request to OST-P on how the OA is responding to recommendations.
- 8) Provide OST-P the status and intended next steps for every open NTSB recommendation as of the end of the fiscal year. This status update shall be provided in writing annually to OST-P no later than December 1 of each calendar year. OAs and OST offices will assess the status of NTSB recommendations issued to DOT with OST-P to ensure complete consideration.

7. ADDRESSING NEWLY ISSUED NTSB RECOMMENDATIONS.

- a. Upon receipt of a recommendation transmitted by the Chair of NTSB to the Secretary or the Head of an OA, the addressee or his/her designee shall transmit an initial response within 90 days, or 30 days for an urgent recommendation, to NTSB covering the merits of the recommendation.
- b. If a newly issued action has already been completed, a full description of that action addressing the objective of the recommendation is to be provided to NTSB. In all other cases where action on the recommendation is incomplete, the reply to NTSB will indicate intention to:
 - 1) Initiate and conduct procedures for adopting the recommendation in full, with a justifiable timeline;
 - 2) Initiate and conduct procedures for adopting the recommendation in part, or for adopting alternative actions which would achieve in whole or in part the objective of the NTSB recommendation. Such response shall explain the reasons for such a decision and a timetable for implementation; or
 - 3) Identify barriers that prevent adopting the recommendation. The response shall explain the reasons for such barriers.
- c. An NTSB recommendation addressed to DOT broadly or the Secretary of Transportation specifically shall be coordinated by OST-P with applicable OAs and Secretarial Offices.
 - 1) At OST-P's direction, OAs may be formally assigned to take action to address a recommendation and provide content for responses provided by DOT to address recommendations within their purview.

- 2) OST-P will, at a minimum, send the initial response to NTSB and send the request to close out the recommendation.

8. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS.

It is the intent of this Order to establish only the minimum requirements for formal communication within DOT, and between DOT and NTSB, on certain matters affecting transportation safety.

9. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Order is effective July 28, 2026.



Sean P. Duffy