



**U.S. Department of
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

ORDER

DOT 1910.8A

Subject: Notifying the Office of the Secretary of Transportation about
Transportation-Related Emergencies

1. PURPOSE: The Order establishes the policy, responsibilities, criteria, and general procedures for notifying the Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST) of significant transportation-related emergencies that are below the threshold where DOT's Crisis Management Center is activated.
2. CANCELLATION: DOT 1910.8, Notifying the Office of the Secretary of Emergency Situations, dated 8-22-91.
3. BACKGROUND: Several sources can provide initial notification and any necessary follow-up information to OST about actual or potential emergencies affecting national and international transportation systems:
 - a. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Operations Center, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Command Center, and the National Response Center operate on a 24-hour basis and constantly monitor elements of the national and international transportation systems and the news media. These centers provide information regarding aviation and maritime incidents as well as other reported incidents of an environmental nature.
 - b. Other operating Administrations monitor incidents related to specific modes including railroads, highways, waterways, motor carriers, transit systems, ports, and pipelines. Because part of their regulatory functions focused primarily on transportation safety, several Heads of Operating Administrations rely on state and local public and private entities to report information regarding significant incidents. This Order may require additional efforts on the part of operating administrations to accelerate these reporting processes.
 - c. The Office of Emergency Transportation (OET) monitors natural disasters, energy disruptions, and other major incidents of a regional, national, or international nature. This monitoring is accomplished through a network of Regional Emergency Transportation Coordinators and coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. OET also manages the Secretary's Crisis Management Center. This process is specifically addressed by DOT Order 1100.29G and relates to DOT responsibilities and functions under the Federal Response Plan.

- d. OST's Office of Intelligence and Security monitors all events related to transportation security, including terrorism, drug and illegal migrant interdiction, critical infrastructure protection, national defense, and national security. The Director is the Department's primary liaison with the intelligence and security communities and with the National Security Council.
 - e. Media and other sources outside of DOT often provide initial coverage of an incident or emerging situation.
4. POLICY: To ensure that OST can respond swiftly and effectively to transportation-related incidents, the relevant DOT organization must provide prompt notification and any necessary follow-up information to OST regarding such incidents. As technology speeds the flow of information, DOT's crisis communications network must, to the maximum extent possible, ensure prompt notifications to OST before senior Administration officials are apprised of emergencies from media or other sources.
5. CRITERIA: In general, the operating administration involved shall determine what emergencies are of sufficient importance to warrant notification to OST. As a general framework, transportation-related incidents meeting one or more of the following criteria should be reported:
- a. Involves loss of life or serious injury of a regional, national, or international significance (e.g., involving multiple casualties, DOT personnel, prominent individuals).
 - b. Poses a significant disruption to normal transportation system operations (e.g., labor strikes; lengthy closure of airport, highway, waterway, railroad, transit, or pipeline system).
 - c. Requires a significant evacuation of transportation facilities or adjacent areas, particularly residential areas.
 - d. Results in significant physical damage to the U.S. transportation infrastructure.
 - e. Involves actual or potential significant environmental damage, including incidents involving radioactive material or weapons of mass destruction.
 - f. Is international in nature and involves U.S. national interests (e.g., hijackings, major migrant and fisheries enforcement cases).
 - g. Relates to an issue that, at the time of the incident, is already attracting heightened public interest nationally, whereby the incident will clearly attract greater than normal media coverage (e.g., aviation near misses, school bus accidents, runway incursions, pipeline accidents, cruise ship safety incidents,

accidents, runway incursions, pipeline accidents, cruise ship safety incidents, rail grade crossing accidents, significant vessel sinkings/groundings, aviation security incidents, bomb threats, major crimes, possible terrorist acts, significant drug seizures, recalled products).

- h. Generates substantial local, state, or national media and public interest, including interest from major public officials.
- i. Requires the significant commitment of DOT resources or specific action of a Secretarial nature, including incidents that may require the activation of Emergency Support Function One - Transportation (ESF-1) in support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency under Federal Response Plan guidelines.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES:

- a. The Chief of Staff oversees the emergency notification and information process and serves as the Secretary's point of contact for emergency response.
 - (1) During normal working hours, the Chief of Staff has assigned the Military Assistant to the Secretary or a designated alternate as point of contact for OST.
 - (2) After normal working hours, the point of contact for OST is the Chief of Staff. In the event that the Chief of Staff is not available, notification will be made to the Deputy Chief of Staff and the Military Assistant, who will coordinate notifications to other OST officials.
- b. The heads of operating administrations shall establish and maintain the information collection and communications capabilities necessary to comply with this policy. Operating administrations are encouraged to share or consolidate resources as appropriate to reduce duplication of collection and communication functions throughout DOT.
- c. The heads of operating administrations shall provide prompt initial notification and any necessary follow-up information to OST regarding significant transportation-related incidents under their area of responsibility meeting the criteria established in paragraph 5 of this Order. The timeliness of initial reports takes priority over the completeness of the information provided. Initial reports should note that specific details are preliminary in nature or unknown, as appropriate. Follow-up reports should supplement earlier information and correct any information that was inaccurately reported initially. In general, reports should include the following information:

- (1) Source of the information.
 - (2) Summary of the incident including pertinent details regarding location, date and time, casualty estimate, and responding agencies (e.g., NTSB and others as appropriate).
 - (3) Statement of impact on transportation services or adjacent facilities.
 - (4) Statement of what DOT and other agencies are doing in the response effort.
 - (5) Recommended options for Secretarial actions, as appropriate.
 - (6) Expected time for any required follow-up reporting.
 - (7) Potential Congressional or media interest.
- d. Where incidents are intermodal in nature, the heads of operating administrations shall coordinate submission of reports with other appropriate operating administrations or offices. Due to the unique nature of the activity of the OST Office of Intelligence and Security (OIS), heads of operating administrations shall coordinate the submission of reports involving terrorism and national level intelligence matters with OIS.

7. PROCEDURES:

- a. During the normal workday, the heads of operating administrations shall ensure that notifications regarding emergencies are made to the Military Assistant by Email, telephone, fax, or pager and ensure that the communication is promptly acknowledged. Web-based notifications, using DOT's Activation Information Management System (AIM) are also encouraged if the communication can be promptly acknowledged. Due to the dynamic nature of communications technology and ONE-DOT efforts, the preferred method of notification during the normal workday will be promulgated separately.
- b. After normal working hours, the heads of operating administrations shall ensure that notifications are made to the Chief of Staff by telephone, pager, or through the FAA or Coast Guard Command Center and ensure that the communication is promptly acknowledged. If the Chief of Staff is not available, notifications shall be made to the Deputy Chief of Staff and the Military Assistant.
- c. The Heads of Operating Administrations shall ensure that information updates are provided when the situation changes significantly.

- d. The Chief of Staff will notify the Secretary.
- e. The Military Assistant shall ensure that appropriate notifications are made to the Deputy Secretary, Chief of Staff, Deputy Chief of Staff, Director of Public Affairs, Office of Emergency Transportation, Director of Intelligence and Security, and the Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs. As directed by the Chief of Staff, the Military Assistant shall coordinate the flow of information to and from OST to White House Cabinet Affairs as well as coordinate OST-led interagency conference calls.

Norman Y. Mineta
Secretary of Transportation