

Status of NTSB's Efforts to Implement Recommendations By GAO and an Independent Information Security Auditor

Management Practices			
Area	Past finding	Recommendation	Status
Communication	NTSB lacked upward communications mechanisms central to forming effective partnerships within the organization.	Develop mechanisms to facilitate upward communication from staff to management	●
Strategic planning	Without a more comprehensive strategic plan, NTSB could not align staffing, training, or other aspects of human resource management to its strategic goals.	Develop a revised strategic plan	●
Information technology (IT)	Without an IT plan, NTSB was not ensuring that its management of information technology is aligned to fully and effectively support its mission.	Develop an IT plan	●
Knowledge management	Without a knowledge management initiative or program, NTSB was not ensuring that its knowledge management was aligned to fully and effectively support its mission.	Develop a knowledge management plan	●
Organizational structure	NTSB lacked a workforce development strategy that considered the agency's organizational structure.	Align organizational structure to implement strategic plan	●
	NTSB lacked a workforce development strategy that considered the agency's balance of supervisory and non-supervisory positions.	Eliminate unnecessary management layers	●
Human capital management	NTSB was not ensuring that its human capital management was aligned to fully and effectively support its mission.	Develop a human capital plan	●
Training	NTSB had not developed a strategic training plan.	Develop a strategic training plan	●
	NTSB had not established a core curriculum for investigators.	Develop a core curriculum for investigators	●
Financial management	NTSB had violated the Anti-Deficiency Act by improper use of funds to purchase accident insurance for employees on official travel.	Correct violation of the Act related to purchasing accident insurance for employees on official travel	●
	NTSB had violated the Anti-Deficiency Act by not obtaining budgetary authority for the net present value of its 20-year lease of its training center.	Correct violation of the Act related to agency's lease of the training center	●
	Without a full cost accounting system, NTSB lacked sufficient information to plan the allocation of staff time or to effectively manage staff workloads.	Develop a full cost accounting system to track time employees spend on each investigation and in training	●

Legend

- Fully implemented
- Significant progress
- Limited progress

Accident Investigation Mission and Safety Studies

Area	Past finding	Recommendation	Status
Accident selection	Without detailed, risk-based criteria for selecting which accidents to investigate in some modes, NTSB lacked assurance and transparency that it was managing resources in a manner that ensured a maximum safety benefit.	Develop board orders for all modes articulating risk-based criteria for selecting which accidents to investigate	
Recommendation close-out	NTSB's process for changing the status of recommendations prevented expedient delivery of information about recommendation status to affected agencies.	Computerize related documentation and use concurrent reviews	
Report development	NTSB faced challenges to efficiently developing its reports that contributed to its investigations of major accidents routinely taking longer than 2 years complete.	Identify better practices in the agency and apply them to all modes	
Safety studies	NTSB's limited use of safety studies to proactively examine and highlight safety issues may limit the effectiveness of its efforts to improve transportation safety.	Increase utilization of safety studies	

Training Center Utilization

Area	Past finding	Recommendation	Status
Training center utilization	NTSB had the ability to provide more courses geared to NTSB staff to replace some external courses.	Maximize the delivery of core investigator curriculum at its training center	
	NTSB's training center was underutilized and the agency lacked a comprehensive strategy for addressing this issue.	Develop plans to increase utilization of the training center	

Information Security

Area	Past finding	Recommendation	Status
Information security—FISMA	NTSB only partially met or did not meet Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002 (FISMA) and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) requirements in six areas	Ensure that the CIO monitors all key corrective actions and provides the necessary funding and human resources	
Information security—Access controls	28 active users of NTSB's general support system had retained an active user account but had left the agency.	Remove access authorities to NTSB's systems from personnel who are no longer NTSB employees	
	In most instances, auditors were unable to obtain documentation to support the original access granted to NTSB employees for the agency's general support system.	Maintain documentation supporting the initial access granted to a user	
	NTSB had not performed the required annual review of users' access authorities for the general support system.	Develop detailed operational procedures to guide system security officers and system owners in the process of recertifying users	

Legend

- Fully implemented
- Significant progress
- Limited progress

Information Security (Cont.)

Area	Past finding	Recommendation	Status
Information security—Access control (cont.)	NTSB was unable to readily identify a person's access authorities granted through the general support system to the agency's mission systems.	Develop a process to properly analyze and complete the annual recertification of users' access authorities	●
	NTSB did not implement a control to require the system to automatically disable inactive accounts after a period of non-use.	Implement a control to automatically suspend an account after a period of non-use	●
Information security—Privacy Act	NTSB did not take actions required by the Privacy Act and related Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memoranda to safeguard personally identifiable information.	Update the Plan of Action and Milestone to reflect current status of NTSB's actions to address Privacy Act and OMB Memoranda	●
	NTSB was not complying with OMB requirements for compliance with the Privacy Act, such as conducting a privacy assessment of its information systems or performing periodic reviews of contracts and recordkeeping practices.	Comply with requirements of the Privacy Act and policy set forth by OMB Memoranda	●

Sources:

Findings and recommendations from:

- GAO, *National Transportation Safety Board: Preliminary Observations on the Value of Comprehensive Planning, and Greater Use of Leading Practices and the Training Academy*, GAO-06-801T (Washington, D.C.: May 26, 2006);
- GAO, *National Transportation Safety Board: Progress Made, Yet Management Practices, Investigation Priorities, and Training Center Use Should Be Improved*, GAO-07-118 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 30, 2006); and
- Leon Snead & Company, P.C., *National Transportation Safety Board: Compliance with the Requirements of the Federal Information Security Management Act, Fiscal Year 2007*, a special report prepared at the request of NTSB, Sept. 24, 2007.

Status based on GAO analysis of information provided by NTSB.

Legend

- Fully implemented
- Significant progress
- Limited progress