

Each European Member State has established a **permanent** Safety Investigation Authority (SIA) capable of independently conducting a full safety investigation, either on its own or through agreements with other SIAs.

European Members States should designate a national **coordinator or coordinating agency** which will be the point of contact between the victims and relatives and the government agencies and **non-government organizations**.



## REFERENCES

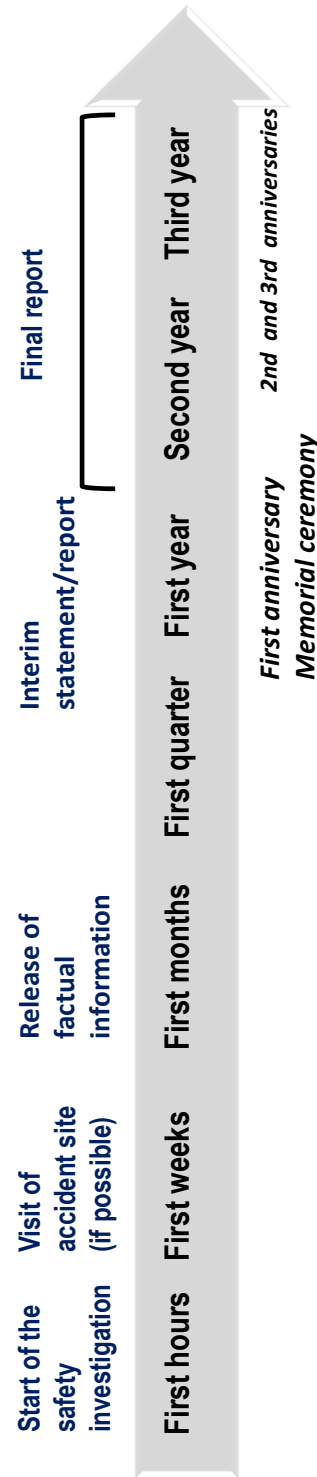
REGULATION (EU) No 996/2010 on the investigation and prevention of accidents and incidents in civil aviation.

REGULATION (EC) No 889/2002 amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2027/97 on air carrier liability in the event of accidents.

A list of victims' associations is available on the ENCASIA website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/encasia/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/encasia/index_en.htm)

Periodical briefings Authorities – Air Accident Victims and their Relatives



*Example of possible milestones regarding the communication with victims and their relatives during an investigation*



**A practical guide  
on safety investigations for**

# Air Accident Victims and their Relatives



**The sole objective of a safety investigation is the prevention of future accidents without apportioning blame or liability**

**Foreword:** This leaflet is produced by the European Network of Civil Aviation Safety Investigation Authorities (ENCASIA) for air accident victims and their relatives in order to facilitate their understanding of the role and the different phases of a safety investigation. This leaflet describes the main milestones of the investigation of accidents to commercial air transport aircraft that occur within Europe.

## PHASES OF THE SAFETY INVESTIGATION

### FIRST HOURS/DAYS

- ▷ Notification/start of the safety investigation
- ▷ Go team to accident site (including accredited representatives and advisors from other countries involved)
- ▷ Field phase: preservation and collection of evidence

### FIRST WEEKS/MONTHS

- ▷ Flight Recorders (Black Boxes) read out and validation
- ▷ Collection and validation of factual information



- ▷ Release of factual information by the safety investigation authority
- ▷ Additional technical examination, research and/or studies

### FIRST YEAR AND AFTER

- ▷ Interim statement/report released a year after the date of the accident
- ▷ Publication of the final report on the circumstances and causes of the accident. Release of safety recommendations to prevent future accidents and further improve aviation safety.

## ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS AND THEIR RELATIVES

- ▷ Information on relatives by the call centre (air carriers must set up a hotline)
- ▷ Appointment of a national coordinator who will be the main interface with victims and their relatives
- ▷ The air carrier and the national coordinator are the initial points of contact for assistance to victims and relatives after an accident
- ▷ Validation of passenger manifest (air carrier must provide within two hours the list of all the person on board)
- ▷ Dedicated personnel (air carrier's care centre)
- ▷ Provision of psychological assistance
- ▷ Financial assistance for immediate needs – 'not later than fifteen days after the identity of the natural person entitled to compensation has been established', as stipulated by Regulation (EC) No 889/2002
- ▷ Updates through face to face meetings with family members in coordination with officials
- ▷ **Arrangements for a visit to the accident site**
- ▷ **Information provided to relatives prior to official releases**
- ▷ Commemoration of the accident generally with the construction of memorial(s)
- ▷ **Explanations provided prior to the publication of the final report**



*The actions described in bold in this section are under the responsibility of or in coordination with the SIA*

## WHAT YOU SHOULD ALSO KNOW

- ▷ **Media and social media** will spread a lot of partial information in the hours/days following the accident. A lot of so-called specialists will speculate on the causes of the accident in the following days. It will take more time for safety investigators to check and validate all the pieces of information to determine the precise facts and circumstances of the accident. Only the safety investigation authority will provide victims and relatives with validated information and explanations.
- ▷ Arrangements for a **visit to the accident site** by the relatives should be made with the safety investigation authority concerned and any other authorities responsible for victim recovery and identification. However, the accident site is not always accessible.



*Sharm el-Sheikh accident memorial (January 2004)*

- ▷ After an air accident, a separate judicial investigation is also generally instituted to define responsibilities. This process is independent from the investigation conducted by the SIA.