

[§ 701]

(5) Ascertain what will best tend to reduce or eliminate the possibility of, or recurrence of, accidents by conducting special studies and investigations on matters pertaining to safety in air navigation and the prevention of accidents.

Temporary Personnel

(b) The Board may, without regard to the civil-service laws, engage, for temporary service in the investigation of any accident involving aircraft, persons other than officers or employees of the United States and may fix their compensation without regard to the Classification Act of 1949, as amended; and may, with consent of the head of the executive department or independent establishment under whose jurisdiction the officer or employee is serving, secure for such service any officer or employee of the United States.

Conduct of Investigations

(c) In conducting any hearing or investigation, any member of the Board or any officer or employee of the Board or any person engaged or secured under subsection (b) shall have the same powers as the Board has with respect to hearings or investigations conducted by it.

In carrying out its duties under this title, the Board is authorized to examine and test to the extent necessary any civil aircraft, aircraft engine, propeller, appliance, or property aboard an aircraft involved in an accident in air commerce. In the case of any fatal accident, the Board is authorized to examine the remains of any deceased person aboard the aircraft at the time of the accident, who dies as a result of the accident, and to conduct autopsies or such other tests thereof as may be necessary to the investigation of the accident: *Provided*, That to the extent consistent with the needs of the accident investigation, provisions of local law protecting religious beliefs with respect to autopsies shall be observed.

Aircraft

(d) Any civil aircraft, aircraft engine, propeller, appliance, or property aboard an aircraft involved in an accident in air commerce, shall be preserved in accordance with, and shall not be moved except in accordance with, regulations prescribed by the Board.

Use of Records and Reports as Evidence

(e) No part of any report or reports of the Board relating to any accident or the investigation thereof, shall be admitted as evidence or used in any suit or action for damages growing out of any matter mentioned in such report or reports.

Use of Agency in Accident Investigations

(f) Upon the request of the Board, the Administrator is authorized to make investigations with regard to aircraft accidents and to report to the Board the facts, conditions, and circumstances thereof, and the Board is authorized to utilize such reports in making its determinations of probable cause under this title.