

**STATEMENT OF BOBBIE R. ALLEN, DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF SAFETY,
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD, DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION**

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, it is vital to the effective operation of a centralized team concept of accident investigation that a "go team" be on standby alert at all times. This team must be prepared to depart for the scene of a major air carrier accident on short notice. The National Transportation Safety Board has four such teams.

However, personnel shortages in various specialist fields make it impossible for the Bureau to staff more than two complete teams at the present time. In these critical shortage areas, the specialists involved are required to serve double and triple duty from team to team.

One of these four teams was on the alert and was launched when notification of the Hendersonville accident was received on July 19. Notification of the Piedmont accident was first received about 12:30 p.m. on July 19 from a Government agency press officer who in turn had obtained it from news sources.

Immediate calls by our office to the FAA Communications Center and the airline concerned quickly established the approximate scope of the tragedy and it was abundantly clear that a major team investigation was required. Action was taken to notify the investigation team members.

Following the notification a Government aircraft with a major portion of the team aboard departed Washington National Airport for the accident site. The team was accompanied by National Transportation Safety Board member Gov. John H. Reed, and Mr. Marion F. Roscoe, Deputy Director of the Bureau of Aviation Safety. Mr. Thomas R. Saunders was the investigator in charge of the team.

During the same period that our team members were being notified of the accident, action was also taken to alert representatives of interested organizations such as the FAA, airline, airframe, powerplant and equipment manufacturers, pilots, flight engineers, dispatchers, and air traffic controllers associations.

In view of the fact that the Hendersonville accident involved a mid-air collision between an air carrier aircraft and a private aircraft we also notified the Air Transport Association, the National Business Aircraft Association, and the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association.

In every case we invited their participation and they responded magnificently by assigning qualified aeronautical experts to assist in the investigation.

During the first few hours following an accident, the many people who are to participate in the investigation are converging on the site from widely dispersed areas of the country. For example, Boeing Aircraft Co., personnel came from Seattle, Wash.; Cessna Aircraft Co., personnel came from Wichita, Kans.

The working procedures of the Bureau are so well established, and known through the industry, however, that it is not uncommon for the investigation to be organized and in full operation within a few hours after the accident occurs. In this case, the first organizational meeting at the accident site took place during the early evening hours following the noontime accident.