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Title 49 —Transportation

Subtitle B —Other Regulations Relating to Transportation

Chapter VIII —National Transportation Safety Board

Part 837 Production of Records in Legal Proceedings

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PART 837—PRODUCTION OF RECORDS IN LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 1101 *et seq.*; 40101 *et seq.*; 5 U.S.C. 301.

Source: 62 FR 27703, May 21, 1997, unless otherwise noted.

§ 837.1 Purpose and scope.

- (a) This part sets forth procedures to be followed when requesting material for use in legal proceedings (including administrative proceedings) in which the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB or Board) is not a party, and procedures to be followed by the employee upon receipt of a subpoena, order, or other demand (collectively referred to here as a demand) by a court or other competent authority or by a private litigant. "Material," as used in this part, means any type of physical or documentary evidence, including but not limited to paper documents, electronic media, videotapes, audiotapes, etc.
- (b) The purposes of this part are to:
 - (1) Conserve the time of employees for conducting official business;
 - (2) Minimize the possibility of involving the NTSB in controversial issues not related to its mission;
 - (3) Maintain the impartiality of the Board among private litigants;
 - (4) Avoid spending the time and money of the United States for private purposes; and
 - (5) To protect confidential, sensitive information, and the deliberative processes of the Board.

§ 837.2 Applicability.

This part applies to requests to produce material concerning information acquired in the course of performing official duties or because of the employee's official status. Specifically, this part applies to requests for: material contained in NTSB files; and any information or material acquired by an employee of the NTSB in the performance of official duties or as a result of the employee's status. Two sets of procedures are here established, dependent on

the type of material sought. Rules governing requests for employee testimony, as opposed to material production, can be found at 49 CFR part 835. Document production shall not accompany employee testimony, absent compliance with this part and General Counsel approval.

§ 837.3 Published reports, material contained in the public accident investigation dockets, and accident database data.

- (a) Demands for material contained in the NTSB's official public docket files of its accident investigations, or its computerized accident database(s) shall be submitted, in writing, to the Public Inquiries Branch. Demands for specific published reports and studies should be submitted to the National Technical Information Service. The Board does not maintain stock of these items. Demands for information collected in particular accident investigations and made a part of the public docket should be submitted to the Public Inquiries Branch or, directly, to our contractor. For information regarding the types of documents routinely issued by the Board, see 49 CFR part 801.
- (b) No subpoena shall be issued to obtain materials subject to this paragraph, and any subpoena issued shall be required to be withdrawn prior to release of the requested information. Payment of reproduction fees may be required in advance.

§ 837.4 Other material.

- (a) ***Production prohibited unless approved.*** Except in the case of the material referenced in § 837.3, no employee or former employee of NTSB shall, in response to a demand of a private litigant, court, or other authority, produce any material contained in the files of the NTSB (whether or not agency records under 5 U.S.C. 552) or produce any material acquired as part of the performance of the person's official duties or because of the person's official status, without the prior written approval of the General Counsel.
- (b) ***Procedures to be followed for the production of material under this paragraph.***
 - (1) All demands for material shall be submitted to the General Counsel at NTSB headquarters, Washington, DC 20594. If an employee receives a demand, he shall forward it immediately to the General Counsel.
 - (2) Each demand must contain an affidavit by the party seeking the material or his attorney setting forth the material sought and its relevance to the proceeding, and containing a certification, with support, that the information is not available from other sources, including Board materials described in §§ 837.3 and part 801 of this chapter.
 - (3) In the absence of General Counsel approval of a demand, the employee is not authorized to comply with the demand.
 - (4) The General Counsel shall advise the requester of approval or denial of the demand, and may attach whatever conditions to approval considered appropriate or necessary to promote the purposes of this part. The General Counsel may also permit exceptions to any requirement in this part when necessary to prevent a miscarriage of justice, or when the exception is in the best interests of the NSTB and/or the United States.