

Chapter 1 Summary of investigation activities in 2012

1. Accident investigation activities

When aircraft, railway or marine accidents/incidents occur, the JTSB designates an investigator-in-charge and accident investigators to conduct investigations to determine the cause of the accident or incident. When and where accidents or incidents will occur is unpredictable. Therefore, we are ready at all times to undertake investigation activities quickly when accidents or incidents occur.

Various accidents and incidents occurred in 2012. 18 accidents occurred in the aircraft field. One of these was in January when a privately owned Max Enterprise Axis R503 was running on the runway after landing and the aircraft hit the ground because its aft fuselage was lifted up by a gust of wind from behind on the left. Another was in March, when a Boeing 777-200 operated by Japan Airlines performed a go-around and the lower part of its aft fuselage made a tail strike with the surface of the runway. We investigated a total of 39 aircraft accidents in 2012, including 21 cases carried over from 2011. We also investigated 23 serious aircraft incidents in 2012, of which ten cases newly occurred in 2012 and the remaining 13 cases had been carried over from 2011.

We completed investigations into 15 aircraft accidents and seven serious aircraft incidents, and published investigation reports on these cases.

Of the investigation reports published in 2012, we stated our opinion to the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism concerning a serious incident involving a Boeing 737-800, operated by Air Nippon Co., Ltd., on January 27, 2012. On September 28, we made recommendations to the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism concerning an accident involving a privately owned Piper PA-46-350P.

In addition, on June 29, we made safety recommendations to the Federal Aviation Administration of the United States of America concerning a serious incident involving a McDonnell Douglas MD-90-30, operated by Japan Airlines International.

20 accidents occurred in the railway field in 2012. One of these accidents was a fire breaking out from under the floor of a train car during a stop at Tateyama Station on Tateyama Line of the Toyama Chihou Tetsudou Inc. in January, and another was a train derailment in which the train ran into earth and sand accumulated on the tracks between Oppama Station and Keikyu-Taura Station on Main Line of Keikyu Corporation in September. We investigated a total of 36 railway accidents, including 16 cases carried over from 2011. We also investigated seven serious railway incidents in 2012, of which five cases newly occurred in 2012 and the remaining two cases had been carried over from 2011.

We completed investigations into 13 railway accidents and one serious railway incident, and published investigation reports on these cases.

In the investigation reports published in 2012, we made recommendations to the Hokkaido Railway Company on November 30, 2012 concerning a serious incident which occurred on its Sekisho Line.

We launched investigations into 981 accidents in the maritime field in 2012. One of these accidents was when a crew member died of dyspnea in February when he inhaled a harmful gas in the cargo tank of the chemical tanker KYOKUHO MARU No. 2 and another was in September when the 25,074-gross-ton, Panamanian registered cargo ship NIKKEI TIGER collided with the fishing vessel HORIEI MARU. We investigated a total of 1,771 marine accidents in 2012, including 790 cases carried over from 2011. We also investigated 268 marine incidents in 2012, of which investigations of 165 cases were launched in 2012 and the remaining 103 cases had been carried over from 2011.

We completed investigations into 978 marine accidents and 158 marine incidents, and published investigation reports on these cases.

In the investigation reports published in 2012, we made recommendations to Shogakukan-Shueisha Productions Co., Ltd. and the Shizuoka Prefectural Board of Education on January 27, 2012 concerning an accident in which a cutter (unnamed) capsized. On August 31, 2012, we made safety recommendations to the owner and the operator of the pure car carrier VEGA LEADER concerning an accident in which its longshoremen sustained injuries. In total, we issued recommendations in six cases, opinions in four cases and safety recommendations in two cases.

Accident investigators must have diversified knowledge because they are responsible for investigating accidents and incidents and at the same time drafting proposals as well as recommendations and opinions concerning the measures to be taken to prevent the recurrence of accidents and incidents and to mitigate damage caused by such accidents and incidents, inviting comments from the parties related to the causes. Therefore, they actively participate in seminars at home and abroad in an effort to improve their professional knowledge and attend international conferences to share relevant information on accident investigations with foreign countries.

We will continue to conduct thorough investigations to determine the causes of aircraft, railway and marine accidents and incidents and publish investigation reports as quickly as possible, and then, based on the results of the investigations, we will make recommendations or state opinions, as necessary, to relevant administrative organizations and the parties related to the causes, thereby striving to prevent a recurrence of such accidents and incidents.