

SAFETY

General Aviation Fatal Accidents



Federal Aviation
Administration

FY 2008 Performance Target

"Reduce the number of general aviation and nonscheduled Part 135 fatal accidents to 325."

Flight Plan Objective and Performance Target

Objective 2: Reduce the number of fatal accidents in general aviation.

Performance Target: By FY 2009, reduce the number of general aviation and nonscheduled Part 135 fatal accidents from the 1996-1998 average of 385 per year to no more than 319 accidents per year. This measure will be converted from a number to a rate in FY 2009. The targets for FY 2009-2012 are under development.

	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Target	349	343	337	331	325
Actual	340	354	301 ¹	313 ²	

¹ Final result revised in FY 2008 from original preliminary estimate of 297.

² Preliminary estimate revised in FY 2008 from original estimate of 314.

Definition of Measure

Unit of Measure: Total number of fatal general aviation accidents.

Computation: A count of the number of general aviation fatal accidents during the fiscal year. The first baseline of 379, against which future targets were set, was established based on data from the years 1996 to 1998. However, due to a switch in NTSB reporting from calendar to fiscal year and the addition of previously unrecorded fatal accidents, the baseline has been revised to 385.

Formula: N/A

Scope of Measure: This measure includes on-demand (non-scheduled FAR Part 135) and general aviation flights. General aviation comprises a diverse range of aviation activities, from single-seat homebuilt aircraft, helicopters, balloons, single and multiple engine land and seaplanes, to highly sophisticated extended range turbojets.

Why the FAA Chooses this Measure

The FAA and general aviation community developed the general aviation fatal accident goal as an overall measure of the impact of improved safety. Since it does not use a measure of activity to take into account changes in activity levels from year to year, the goal reflects a target based on projected growth in activity as reported in FAA's annual general aviation forecasts.

Source of the Data

The data on general aviation fatalities come from the National Transportation Safety Board's [Aviation Accident Database](#). Aviation accident investigators under the auspices of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) develop the data.

Statistical Issues

There is no major error in the accident counts. Random variation in air crashes results in a significant variation in the number of fatal accidents over time.

In FY 2009 FAA will use a fatal accident rate rather than the number of fatal accidents as the performance measure because the use of a rate measure will take into account variation in activity levels from year to year. Unlike commercial aviation activity that is reported regularly to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the carriers, general aviation flight hours are based on an annual voluntary survey conducted by the FAA.

The general aviation community and the General Aviation Joint Steering Committee of the Safer Skies initiative recommended development of a data collection program that will yield more accurate and relevant

data on general aviation demographics and utilization. Improved survey and data collection methodologies have been developed.

As a result of these efforts, the FAA, working with the General Aviation Manufacturers Association, has made several improvements to the survey. First, the sample size has been significantly increased. Second, a reporting sheet has been created to make it much easier for organizations with large fleets to report. Third, the agency worked with the Aircraft Registry to improve the accuracy of contact information. As a result, a survey was completed in FY 2004 that, for the first time, creates a statistically valid report of general aviation activity that the GA community agrees on. Each year since 2004, significant improvements have been made which in turn, substantially improved the accuracy of the data.

Completeness

NTSB and FAA's Office of Accident Investigation meet regularly to validate information on the number of accidents. Initial results are considered preliminary. Accident data are considered preliminary. NTSB usually completes investigations and issues reports on accidents that occur during any fiscal year by the end of the next fiscal year. Results are considered final when all those accidents have been reported in the NTSB press release published by May. FY 2007 results will therefore be final after the 2009 press release. In general, however, accident numbers are not likely to change significantly between the end of the fiscal year and the date they are finalized.

Reliability

FAA uses performance data extensively for program management and personnel evaluation and accountability. Most accident investigations are a joint undertaking between FAA and NTSB. NTSB has the statutory responsibility, but, in fact, most of the accident investigations related to general aviation are conducted by FAA Aviation Safety Inspectors without NTSB direct involvement. FAA's own accident investigators and other FAA employees participate in all accident investigations led by NTSB investigators.