



**The transport authorities' handling  
of recommendations by the Swedish  
Accident Investigation Authority**

**Summary  
Report 2014:11**



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Publisher: Brita Saxton

Publication date: 2014-11-11

# Summary

## Background and purpose

The Swedish Accident Investigation Authority is tasked by law and regulation with investigating serious accidents, and near-accidents, in connection with travel and transport by air, sea, rail, road, and other activities (including military activities). The Authority must attempt, to the greatest possible extent, to clarify the course of events and causes of any transport incident, as well as any damage, injuries, or other effects. The Authority must, when necessary, also issue recommendations to the relevant inspecting authority or other affected agencies and actors in Sweden and abroad to serve as the basis for decisions regarding the appropriate measures to be taken.

The overarching purpose of this study is to investigate the transport authorities' handling of the recommendations issued by the Swedish Accident Investigation Authority. This includes determining the types of recommendations that the Authority issues to the transport authorities, clarifying whether the transport authorities have transparent routines for evaluating and following up those recommendations, mapping the extent to which the transport authorities follow the recommendations, and analysing whether the recommendations could be better formulated.

## Method and execution

Recommendations issuing from 39 investigations conducted during the period from 1 January 2014 to 30 June 2014 were compared and studied. Interviews were then conducted with representatives from the Swedish Accident Investigation Authority and from the respective transport authorities, i.e. the LfV Group, the Swedish Maritime Administration, the Swedish Transport Administration, and the Swedish Transport Agency. At the Swedish Transport Agency interviews were conducted with the Civil Aviation and Maritime Department as well as with the Road and Rail Department.

## Results and conclusions

All the transport authorities have more or less established routines in place for handling accident investigations and recommendations from the Swedish Accident Investigation Authority. This includes reading and responding to circulated proposals and providing answers in terms of how the recommendations will be dealt with. Most of the transport authorities emphasize that they read the circulated proposals carefully, offering their viewpoints in their responses to them. Measures are adopted and reported to the Authority in recommendation responses.

Based on the recommendation response, the Swedish Accident Investigation Authority assesses whether the recommendation can be considered to have been attended to properly. Follow-up to determine whether the recommendation has actually been attended to properly is the responsibility of the involved transport authority. One common feature of such follow-ups is that the focus is on whether promised actions have been taken, and not on whether a given effect having been achieved. The ways in which such follow-ups occur can vary from one authority to another. There are also differences in how the Swedish Transport Agency's Maritime and Civil Aviation Department and Road and Rail Department handle recommendations vis-à-vis the transport authorities over which they exercise oversight.

The Swedish Accident Investigation Authority's recommendations are generally perceived as relevant and clear. Many of the transport authorities find that the Authority's investigations and recommendations have a

favourable impact on safety, and some stress that the investigations are, in and of themselves, more valuable than the recommendations.

All the transport authorities agree, as does the Swedish Accident Investigation Authority, that the recommendations must describe effects, not solutions. The recommendation recipient itself is best able to analyse its own activities and determine what actions are appropriate. Several transport authorities find that the Authority has recently become more focused on systems thinking, and that its recommendations are consequently better formulated from a systems standpoint than was formerly the case.

The transport authorities generally feel that they currently enjoy satisfactory cooperation and excellent relations with the Swedish Accident Investigation Authority, and that there have been improvements in these areas in recent years. Most of the transport authorities also indicate that, currently, the Authority usually embrace the comments submitted. No special handover meetings are held when the Authority has completed a report, so there is no established forum in which the authorities can obtain clarifying information. However, the transport authorities find that they can contact the Authority whenever necessary, for example, to ask about a recommendation.

However, there are several areas in which improvements could be made, for example:

- Create a joint follow-up process for handling recommendations
- Improve the various parts of the learning process, for example, by shortening the work process, developing the organisational aspects of the investigations, creating a joint approach to formulating effective goals, and improving the handover of recommendations
- Clarify roles and responsibilities in the follow-up process by fostering greater consistency between different parts of the Swedish Transport Agency in terms of handling recommendations, reviewing the tools used by the inspecting authority, and considering the extent to which an authority should be given the responsibility for determining whether the desired effects of the implemented measures have been achieved



Transport Analysis is a Swedish agency for transport policy analysis. We analyse and evaluate proposed and implemented measures within the sphere of transport policy. We are also responsible for official statistics in the transport and communication sectors. Transport Analysis was established in April 2010 with its head office in Stockholm and a branch office in Östersund.