7-1 PROGRAM TRACKING AND REPORTING SUBSYSTEM (PTRS) ACTIVITY CODES.


B. Maintenance: 3702, 3703, 3761.

C. Avionics: 5702, 5703, 5761.

7-2 GENERAL. This volume supplements Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Order 8020.11, Aircraft Accident and Incident Notification, Investigation, and Reporting, for investigations of incidents, occurrences, and accidents.

7-3 COORDINATION REQUIREMENTS. This task requires coordination with unit supervisors, the Regional Operations Center (ROC), the appropriate Flight Service Station (FSS), Accident Investigation Division (AVP-100) Air Safety Investigators, and National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigators, as applicable.

A. Field Offices. For the purposes of this section, the term “field office” will be used to describe various FAA offices: Flight Standards District Offices (FSDO), certificate management offices (CMO), International Field Offices (IFO), and the generic term certificate-holding district offices (CHDO).

B. Post-Accident Assistance Team (PAAT). For an accident involving a Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 121 air carrier certificate holder, a PAAT is available for support. The manager of the affected regional Flight Standards division (RFSD) or the office manager may contact the Safety Analysis and Promotion Division (AFS-900) division manager regarding the need for a PAAT. Paragraph 7-16 further describes the type of support provided by the PAAT.

C. The FAA Inspector-in-Charge (IIC). The term “FAA IIC” in this guidance applies to an FAA aviation safety inspector (ASI) assigned by the respective field office of jurisdiction for the accident or incident. The term also applies to an AVP-100 Air Safety Investigator that is serving in the capacity of IIC. FAA IICs and NTSB investigators have duties and responsibilities per Order 8020.11, and Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations (49 CFR) part 831, § 831.8. Refer to Order 8020.11, chapter 4 for complete details.

D. Correlation Between an Occurrence, an Accident, and an Incident. Until the investigation identifies an event as an accident or incident, it will be regarded as an occurrence. The advantage of labeling an event as an occurrence is that it allows for an assessment of the risk and investigation of the facts for an accurate classification of the event without generating
unnecessary reports. No matter how the event is ultimately classified, assigned personnel must in all cases take appropriate action to address any deviations from regulations or other standards.

E. Notification of Occurrences. The Air Traffic Organization (ATO) Quality Assurance Group (QAG) will forward notification of an occurrence via the Air Traffic Quality Assurance (ATQA) database, the Comprehensive Electronic Data Analysis and Reporting (CEDAR) database, email notices, or other means to the respective Flight Standards Service office of jurisdiction for the investigation. However, ATQA is the system that Flight Standards Service personnel will utilize to enter and close out electronic forms used during the investigation of accidents.

F. ATQA Training. All personnel authorized to use ATQA must complete the web-based ATQA introductory training course FAA27100094, Pilot Deviation Reporting, found on the electronic Learning Management System (eLMS) employee training site. To access the course, personnel may have to contact the eLMS Help Desk (405-954-4568) and request that the course be added to their learning plan. After completing the FAA eLMS training course, a user ID and password to access the ATQA site may be obtained by completing the following steps:

1) From any Aviation Safety (AVS) computer system, open the ATQA program website, http://atqa.faa.gov/reportingsystem/logon.jsp.

2) Click on “Request An Account” from the top right of the screen.

3) Complete the registration form, click on “Submit,” and select “FSDO Inspector” or “Administrative Staff.”

4) Look for your registration information via your email account.

5) Log on to http://atqa.faa.gov/reportingsystem/logon.jsp and change your password as requested. ATQA Help Desk support is available 24 hours a day to help users with application issues. Users can also email their questions to 9-AWA-ATQA-Helpdesk@faa.gov.

7-4 REFERENCES, FORMS, AND JOB AIDS.

A. References (current editions):

- Title 14 CFR Part 120.
- Title 49 CFR Parts 830 and 831.
- National and office policies specific to accident/incident investigation.
- Office standard operating procedures (SOP), for accident standby telephone availability.
- FAA Order 1270.1, Freedom of Information Act Program (FOIA).
- FAA Order 8020.11, Aircraft Accident and Incident Notification, Investigation, and Reporting.
• FAA Order 8900.1, Flight Standards Information Management System (FSIMS):
  • Volume 6, Chapter 1, Section 6, Alcohol or Drug Testing of Flight Crewmembers.
  • Volume 11, Flight Standards Programs.
  • Volume 12, International Aviation.
  • Volume 14, Compliance and Enforcement.
  • Volume 16, Unmanned Aircraft Systems.

NOTE: In accordance with Volume 1, Chapter 3, Section 4, newly hired or newly assigned ASIs will be considered qualified to complete job functions and/or tasks associated with their specialty when all training requirements, airman qualifications, and certifications have been satisfactorily completed, verified, and documented.

NOTE: The FAA expects the FAA office of responsibility to assign an ASI who is deemed trained and knowledgeable in the duties and responsibilities of an FAA IIC and will complete all accident investigation responsibilities per Order 8020.11.

B. Forms. Refer to Order 8020.11, Appendix A, for a complete listing.

  • FAA Form 8020-9, Aircraft Accident/Incident Preliminary Notice.
  • FAA Form 8020-23, FAA Accident/Incident Report.

C. Job Aids. None.

7-5 GENERAL.

A. Definitions. Refer to 49 CFR part 830, §§ 830.2 and 830.5 for additional information.

1) Aircraft Accident. An aircraft accident is an occurrence associated with the operation of an aircraft that:

   • Takes place between the time the first person boards the aircraft with the intention of flight and the time the last person has disembarked;
   • Results in death or serious injury; or
   • Causes substantial damage to the aircraft.

2) Unmanned Aircraft Accident. This is an occurrence associated with the operation of any public or civil unmanned aircraft system that takes place between the time that the system is activated with the purpose of flight and the time that the system is deactivated at the conclusion of its mission, in which:

   • Any person suffers death or serious injury; or
   • The aircraft has a maximum gross takeoff weight of 300 pounds or greater and sustains substantial damage.
NOTE: The above definition reflects the NTSB definition of an accident involving an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS). Note that the FAA has distinct report requirements pertaining to UAS operations under 14 CFR part 107; refer to part 107, § 107.9 and Volume 16, Chapter 5, Section 2 for additional information.

3) Aircraft Incident. An aircraft incident is an occurrence, other than an accident, associated with the operation of an aircraft that affects or could affect the safety of operations. While this definition is broad, NTSB regulations contain a listing of 12 occurrences for which the NTSB specifically requires incident reports.

4) Serious Injury. A serious injury is any injury that:

- Requires hospitalization for more than 48 hours, within 7 days from the date an injury was received;
- Results in a fracture of any bone (except simple fractures of fingers, toes, or nose);
- Causes severe hemorrhages and/or nerve, muscle, or tendon damage;
- Involves second- or third-degree burns, or burns affecting more than 5 percent of the body surface; and
- Involves damage to any internal organ.

5) Substantial Damage. Substantial damage is a damage or failure that adversely affects the structural strength, performance, or flight characteristics of the aircraft, and would normally require major repair or replacement of the affected component. Refer to 49 CFR § 830.2 for detailed information.

NOTE: ASIs are urged to fully consider all aspects of 49 CFR § 830.2 before making a final “substantial damage” determination that would classify the occurrence as an accident.

B. Consistency. The Flight Standards Service Compliance Policy promotes aviation safety and protects the public interest by validating compliance with regulatory requirements and other standards. To generate consistency in Compliance Actions (CA) across the National Airspace System (NAS), Flight Standards Service employees will commit to critical thinking and collaborative interdependent activities. See Volume 14, Chapter 1 for additional guidance.

C. Fair and Equal Treatment. Agency actions, from investigation to disposition, must ensure fair and equal treatment for all involved individuals.

7-6 AUTHORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

A. Title 49 of the United States Code (49 U.S.C.). The NTSB and the FAA are both governed by 49 U.S.C. The NTSB is responsible for conducting investigations into each civil aircraft accident in the United States and is the agency assigned to execute the U.S. Government’s responsibilities under the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Convention, Annex 13, Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation. The products of an NTSB
B. **FAA Responsibilities in the U.S. NAS.** The FAA has responsibilities for the safety of operations in the NAS and for the safety of U.S. aircraft and operators outside the NAS. Title 49 U.S.C. § 1132(c) requires the NTSB to provide for the participation of the Secretary of Transportation in any aviation accident investigation conducted by the NTSB. This requirement is also illustrated in 49 CFR § 831.11(a)(4). The means by which the NTSB fulfills the statutory and regulatory requirements for FAA participation in an accident or incident investigation is by designating the FAA as a party to the NTSB investigation under 49 CFR § 831.11.

C. **Completing FAA Form 8020-23.** The product of an FAA accident or incident investigation is FAA Form 8020-23. In that report, the FAA IIC makes a determination whether any of the FAA’s nine responsibilities had any bearing on the event (see subparagraph 7-9A). In addition, the completed FAA Form 8020-23 contains the FAA IIC’s identification of actions planned or initiated. These actions include no action, counseling, the issuance of a FAA Safety Recommendation, reexamination of a certificate holder under 49 U.S.C. § 44709, the issuance of a Service Difficulty Report (SDR) or Malfunction or Defect Report, or other action that the FAA IIC may identify. FAA Safety Recommendations issued as a result of an accident or incident investigation have initiated rulemaking actions, issuance of Airworthiness Directives (AD), and revision of policies, standards, and procedures.

NOTE: If a regulatory noncompliance is discovered as a result of the accident or incident investigation, the Compliance Action Decision Process in Volume 14, Chapter 1, Section 2 should be followed. At the time of publication of this section, a discrete selection for CA is not included on the Accident/Incident report. If Flight Standards Service intends to take a CA to address a regulatory issue discovered as a result of the investigation, the use of the “Other” box should be selected and the CA activity described.

D. **Flight Standards Service Response to Accidents.** While the NTSB officially investigates all civil aircraft accidents, and will issue a report for each aircraft accident under its jurisdiction, the NTSB often does not travel to the accident scene due to its limited investigator resources. In those cases, the FAA IIC responding to the accident represents the FAA and, as a party to the NTSB investigation, will share information with the NTSB IIC, as required by 49 CFR §§ 831.5 and 831.13.

E. **Other Parties.** In accordance with Order 8020.11, other parties outside the NTSB and the FAA may participate in the investigation of an accident. It is important that all personnel involved with the accident investigation be aware of the other parties and their teams in order to establish communication channels for obtaining and exchanging information.

F. **Responsibility for Accident Investigation.** This section incorporates information that was previously published in FAA Notice N 1100.327, Establishment of the Office of Accident Investigation and Prevention. Among AVP’s responsibilities are those for accident and incident investigations, special accident/incident investigations and analyses, the analysis of
accident/incident trends, managing NTSB and FAA Safety Recommendation Programs, and establishing FAA accident and incident investigation policy.

NOTE: AVP was previously known as the Office of Accident Investigation (AAI).

7-7 ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION DIVISION (AVP-100). The Director of AVP (AVP-1) has overall responsibility to develop FAA policy and procedural instructions for accident investigation and reporting. The primary element of AVP for accident and incident investigation policy is AVP-100. AVP-100 does the following:

- Serves as focal point for the Administrator in coordination with the public, aviation industry, military, and foreign governments;
- Represents accident investigation interests on those matters under the direct purview of the office;
- Apprises associate and assistant administrators, regions, centers, and other FAA organizations on safety issues and programs related to accident and incident investigation findings and analyses;
- Develops, coordinates, manages, evaluates, and executes FAA accident investigation program policies, procedures, practices, and quality assurance (QA) programs;
- Serves as the primary FAA organization for interaction with the NTSB when dealing with accident and incident investigations;
- Identifies and provides the FAA IIC for accident and incident investigations that have received national or international attention (see subparagraph 7-7A);
- Operates the FAA Accident Investigation Duty Room; and
- Operates the FAA Flight Data Laboratory.

A. Notification and Coordination Procedures. AVP-100 determines whether AVP-100 or RFSD personnel will investigate the accident. If AVP-100 decides to send its own personnel, the local/regional FAA IIC will remain on the scene to provide support and assistance until relieved by the headquarters (HQ) FAA IIC.

B. The “Go-Team.” FAA involvement with the NTSB investigations of accidents and incidents of national or international attention will normally be handled by the Washington HQ, AVP-100. The FAA investigator coordinates with the NTSB and other divisions within the FAA. This investigator will accompany the NTSB Go-Team. AVP-100 is responsible for designating the FAA IIC and will determine which accidents AVP-100 will investigate.

7-8 LEGAL BASIS FOR INVESTIGATIONS. Title 49 U.S.C. provides for FAA participation, as appropriate, in aircraft accident investigations conducted by the NTSB, and contains the two general responsibilities of the FAA pertinent to aircraft accidents and incidents. These responsibilities are as follows:

A. Recordation, Evaluation, and Prevention of Accidents. To ensure that all facts and circumstances leading to the accident are recorded and evaluated, and that action is taken to prevent similar accidents.
B. Certification and Compliance. To ensure that regulated persons conform their conduct to statutory and regulatory requirements concerning civil aircraft airworthiness, airmen and air carrier certificate holders, and airports used by certificate holders utilizing aircraft with more than 30 passenger seats; and to conform to 14 CFR part 139 standards and other safety standards to ensure operations are conducted to the highest level of safety in the public interest.

C. Special Circumstances. FAA personnel may encounter special circumstances during an accident or incident investigation. The field office, the Washington HQ International Field Office Management Branch (AFS-54), and RFSD personnel should consult with AVP-100 if they encounter any circumstance in which there is a question concerning the FAA’s authority to investigate.

1) For example, there is a requirement for the U.S. Military to provide for the participation of the Secretary of Transportation (delegated to the Administrator) in the investigation of an aircraft accident in which a duty of the Secretary may be involved. This could include the involvement of an air traffic facility operated by the FAA, or an accident involving an aircraft which is similar to an FAA type-certificated (TC) aircraft (e.g., a United States Air Force (USAF) C-37A, a derivative of the Gulfstream G-V).

2) Another example would be investigation of an accident involving a U.S.-registered aircraft holding an FAA airworthiness certificate operated by a military service of the United States (e.g., a U.S. Army TH-67/Bell 206B helicopter).

7-9 FAA INVESTIGATIONS. Depending on the occurrence, investigating personnel may involve local resources, one or more RFSDs or IFOs, or participation from HQ divisions other than Flight Standards Service, including Security, Airways Facilities (AF), ATO, Aviation Medicine, Chief Counsel, Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), Public Affairs Offices, or International Aviation. The responsibility for coordinating the level of FAA involvement rests with the FAA IIC.

A. Nine Responsibilities of the FAA. Order 8020.11 lists nine specific responsibilities in all accident investigations conducted by the FAA. The FAA investigations must determine whether or not the following were factors in the accident:

1) The performance of FAA facilities or functions;

2) The performance of non-FAA-owned and operated air traffic control (ATC) facilities or Navigational Aids (NAVAID);

3) The airworthiness of FAA-certified aircraft;

4) The competency of FAA-certified airmen, air agencies, commercial operators, or air carriers;

5) The adequacy of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR);

6) The airport certification safety standards or operations involved;
7) The airport security standards or operations involved (aviation security is now under the direction and control of the Transportation Safety Administration (TSA); Flight Standards Service personnel observing or being notified of a possible security incident should report the occurrence to the local TSA office);

8) The airman medical qualifications involved; and/or

9) There was an apparent violation of 14 CFR.

B. Parallel Investigation. The preferred method of conducting a concurrent and parallel investigation with the NTSB is for Flight Standards Service to assign an inspector other than the FAA IIC to conduct the FAA investigation. If personnel resources do not permit another FAA inspector to conduct a separate investigation, then the FAA IIC will both assist the NTSB and represent the FAA.

NOTE: The FAA should not initiate action until the NTSB has completed the field investigation. Exceptions can be made to address immediate safety concerns, such as an emergency revocation of a certificate, operations specification (OpSpec), Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (CoW/A), or letter of authorization (LOA). If any action is taken prior to completion of the NTSB field investigation, it must be coordinated with the NTSB investigator and the RFSDs or AFS-54 as appropriate.

1) Because of the differences in the responsibilities of the NTSB (to determine probable cause) and the FAA (to ensure compliance with regulations), evidence obtained by the FAA under direction of the NTSB is not permitted to be used by the FAA in legal enforcement proceedings.

2) During any investigation, there may be times when the FAA IIC needs information not required by the NTSB (e.g., if an investigation reveals that a flightcrew deviated from a regulation, or a certificate holder violated an approved management specification (MSpec)). In such an event the FAA IIC will see Volume 14, Chapter 1 to determine the appropriate response by the FAA. The FAA IIC is required to gather sufficient evidence to substantiate or refute the apparent noncompliance, even if that evidence is not required by the NTSB to determine the probable cause of the accident. In gathering that evidence, the FAA IIC will coordinate with the NTSB to ensure such actions do not adversely affect the investigation.

3) Because of the separation of the NTSB from the FAA, when the FAA collects evidence for use against an airman, certificate holder, or commercial operator, there must be no question in the mind of the person from whom the evidence is being requested that the ASI is not working under the direction of the NTSB. For example, witness or crewmember statements should never be written on NTSB forms.

   a) Except as described in subparagraph b) below, the rules of evidence allow FAA and NTSB personnel to gather information simultaneously, such as when interviewing a witness, as long as the witness is aware that the information is being given to both the NTSB and the FAA separately.
b) If an ASI is gathering evidence for purposes of the NTSB investigation (i.e., under the direction of the NTSB IIC), then no duplicative gathering of evidence should occur. Refer to 49 CFR § 831.12(a).

7-10 PRINCIPAL INSPECTOR (PI) NOTIFICATION AND INVOLVEMENT.

A. Availability to the FAA IIC. Principal operations inspectors (POI), principal maintenance inspectors (PMI), and principal avionics inspectors (PAI) assigned to a certificate holder or commercial operator involved in an accident must be available to the FAA IIC as soon as possible after notification of the accident. The FAA IIC is responsible for determining the extent of the PI’s involvement with the investigation. This decision will be made by the FAA IIC after consulting with the PI, the field office manager, the RFSD, and/or other appropriate Flight Standards Service divisions.

NOTE: The FAA IIC should avoid using a PI for investigations involving that inspector’s assigned certificate holders or operators, if possible.

B. Post-Accident Drug and Alcohol Testing. The PI, as applicable, will also notify the certificate holder or commercial operator to ensure they comply with their drug and alcohol testing program. (Refer to part 120.)

7-11 ACCIDENT NOTIFICATION. Normally, a field office is made aware of aircraft accidents through the ROC; however, any FAA employee who becomes aware of an accident through other means will report the accident to the nearest air traffic facility (such as an air route traffic control center, an airport, a terminal facility, or an FSS). This facility will initiate FAA Form 8020-9, and will make the appropriate notifications (including notification to the local ROC). The ROC will notify the field office having geographic jurisdiction over the area of the accident. Depending on the nature of the accident, the ROC will coordinate a conference telephone call between the NTSB, the FAA, and the air traffic facility initiating the notification. During this initial conversation, the FSDO inspector taking the information should do the following:

• Be prepared to copy initial information from the air traffic representative. This will be the information provided on FAA Form 8020-9.
• If the accident involves a certificate holder or commercial operator, contact the FAA office of responsibility for the operator so they can ensure that their operator complies with their drug and alcohol testing program.
• Request that the ATC statements and voice tapes be prepared and sent to the field office.

NOTE: In situations in which drug and/or alcohol tests cannot be conducted under the air carrier’s Department of Transportation (DOT)/FAA-mandated
testing program, the FAA may only obtain a drug and/or alcohol test by asking state or local law enforcement officers to request such a test. Flight Standards Service is responsible for conducting the investigation and notifying the Office of Aerospace Medicine, Medical Specialties Division (AAM-200), 202-267-8035, of an airman who has a positive drug test result, alcohol violation, or a refusal to submit to a test administered by law enforcement personnel (see Volume 6, Chapter 1, Section 6).

7-12 FLIGHT STANDARDS SERVICE PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENT. After being notified by the ROC of an accident, the field office will designate an ASI as the FAA IIC. This individual may act in different roles and perform different functions during the course of an accident investigation. This individual will continue to act as the FAA IIC until relieved by another Flight Standards Service ASI assigned as the FAA IIC or relieved by an AVP-100 Air Safety Investigator who will serve as the FAA IIC.

A. FAA IIC Duties. Flight Standards Service personnel are usually at the scene of the accident prior to the arrival of either the NTSB or AVP-100 and should follow the guidelines in Order 8020.11. The FAA IIC supervises and coordinates all FAA participation in an accident or incident investigation conducted by the NTSB or the military services. The FAA IIC is responsible for the following:

- Assembling the team of technical specialists to conduct the investigation;
- Managing all FAA resources at the scene; and
- Determining if FAA responsibilities were involved in the occurrence.

B. FAA Coordinator. This job title is used by the NTSB and the military services when referring to the FAA IIC.

C. FAA Participants. FAA participants consist of FAA personnel assigned to assist the FAA IIC and the NTSB. The FAA participants report to the FAA IIC for their group assignments under the NTSB group chairman and directly to the FAA IIC when conducting FAA investigations.

7-13 AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT REPORT.

A. Obtaining Documentation. For investigations conducted by the NTSB or the FAA, the FAA IIC is responsible for obtaining a copy of completed accident reports prepared by the NTSB. The FAA IIC then includes any FAA attachments, except for autopsy reports, which are opinions, and completes FAA Form 8020-23 for distribution per Order 8020.11. If the FAA IIC becomes aware of any duplicate reports, he or she will bring these to the attention of his or her manager.

NOTE: If obtained by the FAA IIC, autopsy reports are sent (unfolded) to the NTSB IIC in an envelope marked “FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.” These reports should be kept in a separate envelope in the office accident file. For additional details refer to Order 8020.11.
NOTE: If duplicate reports are identified to exist between regions or AFS-54, the resolution will be worked out at the RFSD/AFS-54 level so that only one FAA Form 8020-23 will be distributed for the same aircraft accident.

B. Submitting Reports. The manager of the responsible field office, after conducting his or her review, submits it by selecting Submit in ATQA to load the completed FAA Form 8020-23 into ATQA. The completed form will be made available through the Accident Incident Data System (AIDS).

7-14 UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (UAS). When completing FAA Form 8020-23 to report a UAS accident or incident, see Volume 16, Chapter 4.

7-15 PTRS INPUT. The PTRS will be used to track FAA conducted investigations and the activities of FAA personnel during the course of NTSB accident investigations.

A. FAA IIC PTRS Record. The FAA IIC will open a PTRS record with activity code X702 (Accidents On Site), whether the NTSB conducts an on-scene investigation or not. If the FAA IIC does not travel on scene (usually when the aircraft is missing and presumed to have been involved in an accident, or a known accident site is not accessible), the FAA IIC will open a PTRS record with activity code X703 (Accident Other). During the course of the investigation, the PTRS record should remain open, using section IV (Comments) to log inspector activities until completion of the NTSB field investigation. Close this PTRS record with a “C.”

B. FAA Participant PTRS Record.

1) The PTRS activity code X761 (Technical Support Function) will be used by FAA participants that participate on scene to record their activities.

2) FAA participants providing investigative support not at the accident site will use activity code X703 (Accident Other) to record their activities.

   • This PTRS record must be closed with a “C” (i.e., do not use an “A” to close this report).
   • The comment section of the PTRS data sheet will contain the PTRS record ID of the FAA IIC to link the activity to the investigation.

3) UAS. When completing the PTRS record for a UAS accident or incident, see Volume 16, Chapter 4.

7-16 THE PAAT. The PAAT is comprised of ASIs who are available to assist a field office in the event of a fatal accident involving a part 121 air carrier certificate holder. When an accident occurs, the affected field office experiences an increase in demand and workload, along with a high volume of requests for information, often for a period of days or weeks. Field office staffing may not allow for the timely accommodation and coordination of these demands while continuing to accomplish the required day-to-day activities necessary for effective oversight of the certificate holder(s) assigned to the field office. A PAAT can provide immediate, temporary resources and provide assistance to the field office with the management of the information

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demands resulting from an accident. The PAAT will report to the office manager of the field office, interface only with FAA personnel, and function in a supporting role only. The PAAT will not conduct an internal evaluation or independent investigation.

**RESERVED.** Paragraphs 7-17 through 7-30.