

IVAF



**Soledad Fattori
Pedrana**

*Aviation specialist
with a degree
in journalism.*

*Responsible for the
JST's department
of Information to
Relatives of Accident
Victims (IVAF)*

When Information Makes a Difference

After an accident, families are immersed in uncertainty. Informing them about the progress of the investigation contributes to the grief elaboration and recovery process.

A new trend in the transportation industry started to emerge a little more than 20 years ago: prioritizing individuals who have been injured in accidents and helping them through the various procedures they must go through after the worst has occurred.

Initial steps were seen in the aviation industry, where a string of disasters made it increasingly clear how damaging it was for the relatives of accident victims to get inadequate care due to a lack of planning and foresight. The creation of appropriate regulations that would compel all parties involved in an accident—from operators to investigating agencies—to reconsider how victims were helped, not just right away but also in the days and weeks that followed, became essential.

The 1996 Act, which set duties for the victims and the care they ought to receive, came into existence in the United States at that time. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) then created two documents, the Policy on Assistance to Victims of Aviation Accidents and Their Families, and an ad hoc Manual, urging its member countries—including Argentina—to adopt the necessary measures in this regard. The Protocol on Assistance to Civil Aviation Victims and Their Families was then put into effect by the Argentine Civil Aviation Accident Investigation Board (JIAAC, Spanish acronym).

In addition to adopting the multimodal nature of the agency, the Información a Víctimas de Accidentes y Familiares (IVAF), which is a Section specialized on Information for accident victims and their families was established right upon the creation of the Transportation Safety Board (Junta de Seguridad en el Transporte, JST), replicating what was accomplished and applied in aviation, in the other transport modes. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the investigation agency; how might family members be supported? What can the JST provide to those who have lost a loved one in order to help them heal and move on? Firstly, using truthful facts obtained directly.

"It is then where the intervention of the IVAF area makes sense, intending to serve as a communication channel between the JST and the relatives of accident victims."



The Royal Spanish Academy defines an accident as ["an unforeseen event that changes the normal course of things."] It is also often said that those who lose a family member in an accident, whether on the road, the air, at sea, or on a train, have their routines forever changed, and everything they have ever known stops making sense. For this rea-

son, the search for answers is one of the most frequent attitudes among family members, who need to know what happened and how the events occurred in order to be able to move forward.

It is then where the intervention of the IVAF area makes sense, intending to serve as a communication channel between the JST and the relatives of accident victims—provided the occurrence is under investigation by the agency.

Family members will be informed of the most important findings of the investigation through the task performance of the area and JST's reports, and will be able to direct all of their questions that come up throughout the investigation. They are also the first to get material specifically created with the intention of being exposed, ensuring that there are no middlemen and that they can accurately comprehend the nature of the investigation. This prevents confusion and misunderstandings, which frequently result in family members becoming entangled in perplexing circumstances that hinder their recovery.

It is for all of these reasons, that the JST, an institution engaged in technical investigation, values these kinds of best practices, which are supported by our internal policies and are available for review on the agency website.