

3-2015

## ARFF WG's Response to the NTSB's Recommendations

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### Scholarly Commons Citation

Herron, R. (2015). ARFF WG's Response to the NTSB's Recommendations. *ARFF Working Group News*, 26(2). Retrieved from <https://commons.erau.edu/publication/87>

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by Rene Herron

## Technical details

This piece is the final installment in a series of articles discussing research in connection to the four applied research projects the ARFF Working Group (ARFF WG) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) are conducting concerning the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) recommendations from the report of findings on the crash of Asiana Flight 214. In the last two articles, applied research and the art of conducting research were reviewed. In this article, I discuss the format for each of the brief research papers that will be independently written in response to each of the NTSB recommendations.

The configuration of this applied research project (ARP) will be more similar to a white paper. Within an ARP there are many sections, but the structure of the ARFF WG's ARPs will only include the following: introduction, problem definition, research and discussion, recommendations, and summary. Any research paper is also book-ended by a few items; the beginning always has a title page, abstract, and a table of contents and the end always has the references.

The beginning portion of the paper is a preliminary standard that sets the stage for the actual recommendations: abstract, introduction, and problem definition. While the abstract is a brief overview of the paper that informs the reader the topic and the research question (which are the NTSB recommendations for these papers), the introduction goes into more detail about the subject with an overarching view. The problem definition portion provides the history and reasons as to why the research is needed and important.

After writing these sections, it is time to unveil the actual research and discussion about the topic. At the beginning of this section, the research question and the research conducted are discussed. The research may range from literature found, such as standards and regulations or periodical/journal articles, to any quantitative or qualitative studies (surveys, etc.) conducted during the committee's investigative period. The research analysis examines the results of the research and the discussion part speaks to what was discovered that supports the proposal of the committee. Recommendations are made with the backing of research analysis. In this area, the solutions will be broken down step-by-step to clarify the suggestions of the committee.

Finally, the summary needs to not only conclude the discussion, but also readdress the major points of the paper again. This may seem repetitive, but it is necessary

due to the fact that often individuals read only this section to get a "quick and dirty" overview of the paper itself. The author(s) need to outline the benefits of the proposed solutions and the risks if they are not adopted. It is in this area that the author(s) have a chance to provide their understanding of the data and whether their questions were answered or not, and why. Additionally, the section allows the opportunity to state what changes can be done to support the study's findings and what follow-up research can be conducted in order to gain more data on the subject matter.

It needs to be noted that the papers for the four NTSB recommendations will be formatted using the American Psychological Association (APA) manual, edition 6, which is otherwise known simply as APA6. In other words, if you are on a task group and are concerned about all of these ARP details, you do not need to be. The academic institutions will have people well versed in all of this to assist each task group. Together we will develop a well-researched and professional answer the NTSB questions posed to our organization.

As I often say, applied research is really an everyday occurrence. As leaders within your department you use research to validate staffing levels, operational guidelines and budgeting, just to give a couple of obvious examples. How you conduct your research and present the information to your executive staff may make the difference on whether the item is approved. Understanding this process better will likely help you in a variety of ways you may not even be expecting. That can be said of writing reports, as well. These reports just require a bit of a different structure than which you may be accustomed. Once the final report is written though, a great sense of accomplishment will be felt by all of those who took their time and volunteered to assist the ARFF WG demonstrate their members knowledge, skills and the value they provide to aviation safety.

**About the Author:** Dr. Rene Herron is an Associate Chair for the Emergency Services program and an Assistant Professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Her research interests are primarily within the ARFF realm, but she is also published in regards to academic technology within higher education. Rene has been in academe for almost 20 years and held various positions, including Dean of Online Instruction.



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See page 10 for more information - you don't want to miss it!