



Increasing safety through investigation

Safe living, safe working, safety. Although we are used to feeling safe, safety cannot be guaranteed. In spite of all the expertise and technology available at our fingertips, serious situations do occur. Sometimes with disastrous results. Since 2005 and appointed by virtue of national law, the Dutch Safety Board has been tasked with the investigation of accidents and incidents. Lessons learned from studying these events can lead to an improved design of processes and organisations.

In the Netherlands, the Dutch Safety Board investigates specific occurrences, broader safety issues and unsafe situations that arise gradually. Administrative processes and how they influence safety are frequently featured in Board investigations. The aim of all investigations is to learn from occurrences and to draw lessons learned to enhance safety in the future. When safety is lacking in structural ways, the Board can formulate recommendations for improvements.

Independent investigation in all areas

The Dutch Safety Board is authorised to conduct an investigation in virtually all areas. In some cases the Dutch Safety Board is legally obligated to conduct an investigation. This applies to specific occurrences in aviation, shipping, on railways and in the petrochemical industry.

Aside from the mandatory investigations, the Board decides which subjects and occurrences will be investigated. The Dutch Safety Board mainly focuses on situations where citizens depend on other parties for their safety, such as the government, businesses or institutions. For example in recent years, investigations have been conducted into safety risks on new year's eve, an investigation was conducted into the collapsed parking garage that was under construction at Eindhoven Airport and a general review of forensic care and safety was performed.

The research process is shown schematically on the back of this folder.

Far-reaching legal powers

Investigators of the Dutch Safety Board have been granted far-reaching legal powers. In the course of their investigation they may obtain relevant information by acquiring access to buildings, collecting material and obtaining anything else they need for further technical research or investigation. Examples include documents, images and sound clips or even wreckage. As stipulated in Dutch law, everyone is required to cooperate with the investigators in the performance of their duties.

Protection of witnesses and persons involved

The Dutch Safety Board collects as much information as possible from various sources to get a proper idea of the circumstances of occurrences. This means that persons involved and witnesses can also be interviewed. Their statements will only be used in the Board's own research. Any information taken from statements that is included in the investigation report, is anonymised. Statements will not be published or shared with third parties, including the Public Prosecution Service and the police.

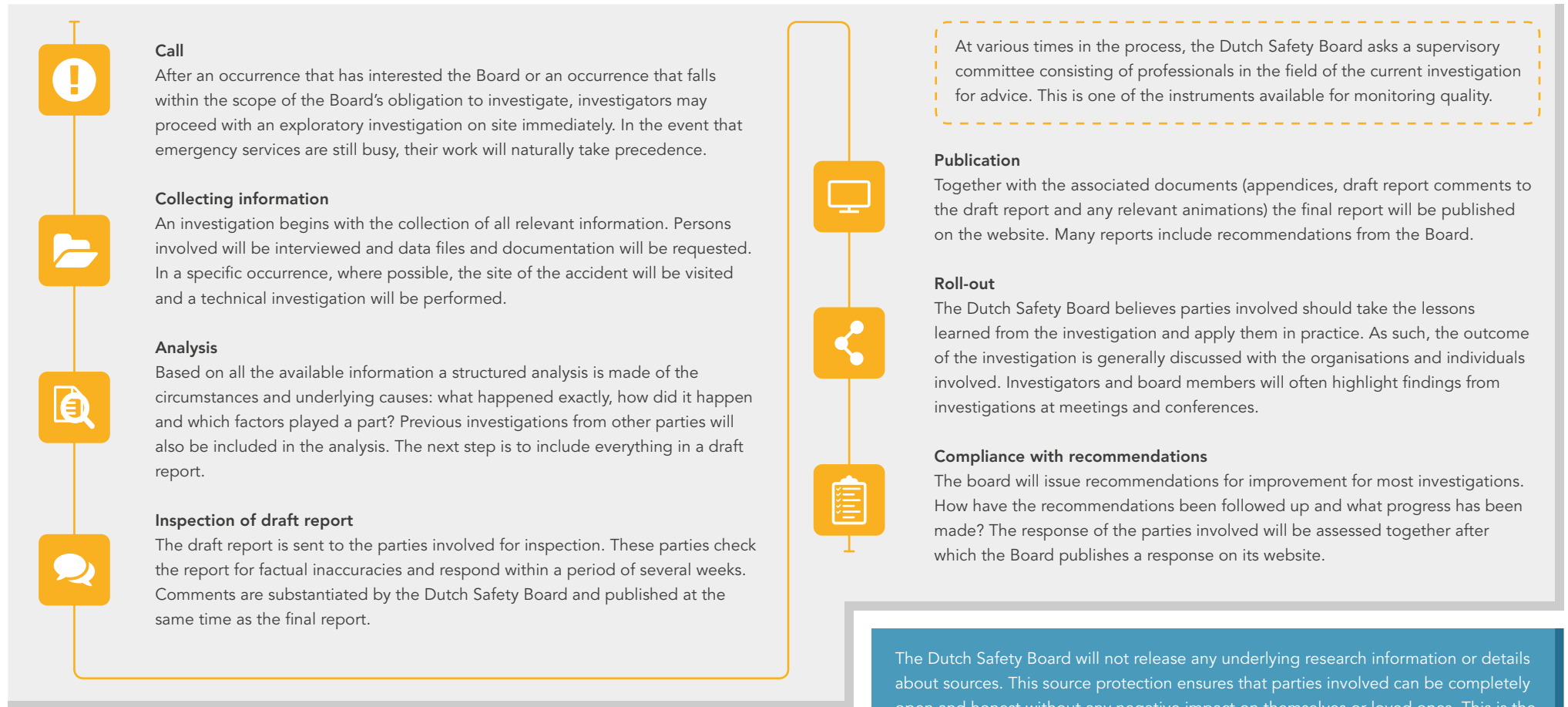
The Dutch Safety Board Act expressly stipulates that statements, information collected by the Dutch Safety Board and documents drafted by the Dutch Safety Board may not be used as evidence in criminal proceedings, disciplinary proceedings or civil proceedings. The decision to impose a disciplinary measure, administrative penalty or administrative measure cannot be based on this either.

The Board and the office

The Dutch Safety Board consists of three permanent members, chaired by Chris van Dam. The board members have extensive knowledge of safety issues and possess considerable administrative and societal experience. The Dutch Safety Board can also rely on the expertise of a number of extraordinary board members with knowledge and expertise of various sectors. The office of the Dutch Safety Board has approximately 70 employees, two-thirds of whom are investigators.

Phases in the research process

The Dutch Safety Board aims to publish its reports within one year from starting. During the investigation, various phases are completed, which are shown schematically below. Because different backgrounds and factors play a role in every incident, the final report contains a justification of the investigation. This explains how the investigation was conducted and which research methods were used.



The Dutch Safety Board will not release any underlying research information or details about sources. This source protection ensures that parties involved can be completely open and honest without any negative impact on themselves or loved ones. This is the only way to entirely benefit from lessons learned.