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# American Airlines



## Crisis Plan

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## **Part One - Historical Breakdown**

### **History**

Founded in 1926, American Airlines has been flying for over 95 years and has been flying internationally for 80 years. American Airlines champions itself on its historical milestones, both cultural and innovative. In 1964, American Airlines was the first U.S. company to hire a black commercial airline pilot, and in 1973, it was the first major U.S. airline to hire a female pilot. They also introduced the first female vice president in the entire industry in 1951. American Airlines has also been an industry trendsetter in terms of both technical and logistical innovation. They are the first company to create airport lounges as a modern-day standard for major carriers and the first to create a loyalty program, a now common practice for customer retention. They are also responsible for creating the first scheduled air cargo service in the world (American Airlines, n.d.).

### **Key Products & Services**

American Airlines offers its guests a wide variety of travel experiences, with eight flight options ranging from the lowest fare option, Basic Economy, to its highest-end experience, Flagship® First (American Airlines, n.d.). As a pioneer of the airport lounge experience, American Airlines has up to approximately 650 lounges available to its patrons internationally. Accessibility to the lounges is determined by my membership status, ticket selection, and oneworld® status. American Airlines' Flagship® First experience is offered for both international and transcontinental flights. These personalized experiences offer special in-flight amenities, high-end dining, and an overall streamlined travel experience (American Airlines, n.d.).

## **Strategic Goals**

American Airlines has strategic goals of maintaining an adaptable business model that capitalizes on its industry leverage, promoting financial longevity, working towards higher margins of profit, streamlining efficient and effective operations, and utilizing a tech-forward mindset (American Airlines, 2024).

## **Market Standing**

With over 800 million passengers this year, American Airlines currently holds a strong market standing, second only to Delta Airlines domestically (BTS, 2025).

Within the last year, American Airlines has held the largest proportion of the domestic marketing carrier network in October, November, and September, respectively, referring to the amount of sales each airline was able to make (BTS, 2025).

## **Assets & Liabilities**

American Airlines currently holds roughly \$61.8 billion in assets and \$65.8 billion in liabilities across the board. This year, they have reported a third-quarter revenue of \$13.7 billion (Yahoo Finance, 2025).

## **Stakeholder Image**

One of American Airlines' key focuses is to seek out value for its stakeholders (American Airlines, 2024). American Airlines has proven to be conscientious of its image and impact, continuously making an effort to display its integrity. Just in this past year, they have made concerted efforts to showcase their support for flight

attendants promoting UNICEF, veterans, community fundraisers, and much more (American Airlines, n.d.). We can infer that American Airlines maintains a positive image among its key shareholders, showcasing its strong standing in the market, viable and well-established strategic goals, and a currently unproblematic media perception.

## **Part Two – Risk Analysis and Crisis Vulnerability Assessment**

American Airlines operates within one of the most heavily regulated and high-risk industries in the world, and as a result, the organization is constantly exposed to a combination of operational, financial, and reputational threats. This section identifies the airline's key vulnerabilities by examining potential issues specific to the company, its past crises, major industry-wide threats, and broader societal trends that heighten risk. Based on this analysis, the single most significant threat facing American Airlines is also identified and justified.

Potential Issues Facing American Airlines

**Several issues make American Airlines particularly vulnerable to crises.**

First, the airline manages one of the largest and oldest fleets in the United States, which increases the strain on maintenance resources and raises the likelihood of mechanical malfunctions. Operational disruptions also remain a chronic issue due to staff shortages, air traffic control delays, and high travel volume across major hubs.

Financial pressure represents another vulnerability. American Airlines carries substantial long-term debt, limiting its flexibility to respond to crises or invest aggressively in fleet modernization. In addition, the airline has faced ongoing

reputation challenges tied to customer service complaints, inconsistent communication, and overall traveler dissatisfaction. Together, these issues create an environment where a crisis, particularly one related to safety or service, could escalate rapidly.

### **Past and Current Crises at American Airlines**

American Airlines has experienced several incidents that illustrate the operational and reputational challenges the company faces. Past crises include emergency landings and mechanical issues, such as the 2016 AA Flight 383 engine fire in Chicago. The airline has also struggled with large-scale operational breakdowns, including widespread holiday cancellations and staff shortages in 2021 that disrupted thousands of passengers.

More recently, American Airlines faced renewed safety scrutiny following a 2025 crash involving a regional American Eagle flight near Washington, D.C., in which the aircraft collided with a helicopter shortly after takeoff. While regional partners operate these flights, the incident directly impacted American Airlines' brand perception, media coverage, and public trust.

These events highlight operational strain within the company and demonstrate how even one mechanical or procedural failure can lead to major reputational consequences.

### **Past and Current Crises in the Airline Industry**

American Airlines' vulnerabilities are compounded by crises affecting the entire aviation industry.

Industry-wide incidents include the grounding of the Boeing 737 MAX between 2019 and 2020 due to fatal crashes linked to software and training failures. The FAA has also reported an increase in runway incursions and near-miss events since 2023, raising concern about systemic safety weaknesses.

Additionally, airlines across the U.S. continue to struggle with staffing shortages in air traffic control, resulting in persistent delays and unpredictable scheduling.

Turbulence-related injuries have also increased as climate conditions shift, putting added pressure on carriers to reinforce safety measures.

These industry crises demonstrate that even major airlines with extensive safety processes operate in an environment where rare but catastrophic failures can still occur.

### **Societal Issues and Trends: Increasing Risk**

Several societal trends further heighten American Airlines' exposure to crisis.

Public scrutiny of airline safety has intensified recently, with passengers expecting immediate transparency, accurate information, and evidence of accountability following any incident. Social media amplifies customer complaints instantly, increasing reputational vulnerability even for minor service disruptions.

There is also growing public demand for improved customer service, particularly as cancellations and delays have become more common across the industry. In

addition, stakeholders and regulators increasingly emphasize environmental and safety performance, pushing airlines to demonstrate responsible operations and long-term planning.

These societal trends mean that when a crisis occurs, the public's expectations for communication, accuracy, and empathy are significantly higher than in the past.

### **Identification of the Top Threat**

Based on this combined analysis, the most significant threat facing American Airlines is a major aviation safety incident resulting from mechanical failure or a maintenance breakdown. This threat is prioritized above others because it has the highest potential for loss of life, regulatory intervention, and irreversible reputational damage.

The age and size of American Airlines' fleet, combined with the pressures of high flight volume, ongoing maintenance demands, and industry-wide safety concerns, increase the likelihood of such an event. Recent incidents, such as the 2025 American Eagle crash, demonstrate that catastrophic outcomes, although rare, are still possible and would represent the most severe crisis the company might face.

A safety-related crisis would require immediate, coordinated, empathetic communication, and its consequences would extend far beyond the initial event. For these reasons, a major mechanical or safety failure remains the top threat for which American Airlines must prepare a detailed, strategic crisis response plan.

### **Part Three - Contact List**

For a Crisis response, especially one involving a plane crash, it is essential to have a key list of people at the helm of the company when dealing with such a significant crisis that affects people's lives. This list is chosen from the senior leadership team for American Airlines, who have strategic roles and expertise in areas that would be needed for a crisis. Below is the list of the crisis management team (CMT) that will respond directly to the crisis. Additionally, we will include a list of senior leadership contacts, the board of directors who need this information, and the significant government agencies that we would work directly with in the case of a fatal crash. We have also included a list of senior executives from five prominent national news organizations with whom we would work, alongside local news outlets, to get the information out to our key stakeholders.

### **Crisis Management Team List**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Robert Isom	Chief Executive Officer	<b>E:</b> robert.isom@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 458-9847	Serves as Primary Spokesperson. Directs the Crisis Management team.
Steve Johnson	Vice Chair and Chief Strategy Officer	<b>E:</b> steve.johnson@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 765-9876	Secondary choice for Spokesperson. Keeps the global executive team up to date on crisis strategy
David Seymour	Chief Operating Officer	<b>E:</b> david.seymour@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 975-4563	Third choice for spokesperson. Helping maintain the day-to-day operation of the company during the crisis and handling financial impacts.
Ron DeFeo	Executive Vice President, Communications and Marketing, and Chief Communications Officer	<b>E:</b> ron.defeo@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 567-9875	Serves as the primary connection to media relations, external and internal communications to stakeholders, crafting statements, and must approve all communication.

Nate Gatten	Executive Vice President of American Eagle, Corporate Real Estate and Government Affairs	<b>E:</b> nate.gatten@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 766-4899	Serves as the primary contact with the FAA, DHS, and NTSB during the crisis.
Tony Richmond	Executive Vice President, Corporate Affairs and Chief Legal Officer	<b>E:</b> tony.richmond@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 478-3458	Serves as legal advisor and approves all messaging for legal purposes before publication.

## Key Internal Contact Information

### ***American Airlines Senior Leadership Team***

Name	Position
Robert Isom	Chief Executive Officer
David Seymour	Chief Operating Officer
Ron Defeo	Executive Vice President, Communications and Marketing, and Chief Communications Officer
Steve Johnson	Vice Chair and Chief Strategy Officer
Cole Brown	Chief People Officer
Nat Pieper	Chief Commercial Officer
Devon May	Chief Financial Officer
Nate Gatten	Executive Vice President of American Eagle, Corporate Real Estate and Government Affairs
Ganesh Jayaram	Chief Digital and Information Officer
Tony Richmond	Executive Vice President, Corporate Affairs and Chief Legal Officer

## **American Airlines Board of Directors**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
Adriane M. Brown	<b>E:</b> adriane.m.brown@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 675-4589
Matthew J. Hart	<b>E:</b> matthew.j.hart@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 654-4589
Denise M. O’Leary	<b>E:</b> denise.m.oleary@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 128-9087
John T. Cahill	<b>E:</b> john.t.cahill@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 498-7652
Susan D. Kronick	<b>E:</b> susan.d.kronick@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 657-0983
Vicente Reynal	<b>E:</b> vicente.reynal@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 945-8765
Howard Ungetleider	<b>E:</b> howard.ungetleider@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 949-4444
Kathryn Farmer	<b>E:</b> kathryn.farmer@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 365-9876
Martin H. Nesbit	<b>E:</b> martin.h.nesbit@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 976-3856
Gregory D. Smith	<b>E:</b> gregory.d.smith@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 436-8754
Robert D. Isom, Jr.	<b>E:</b> robert.isom@aa.com <b>P:</b> (817) 458-9847

## Key External Contact Information

Government Agency	Address	Contact Info
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)	Federal Aviation Administration 800 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20591	<b>P:</b> 866.835.5322
National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)	490 L'Enfant Plaza, SW Washington, DC 20594	<b>P:</b> (202) 314-6000
Department of Homeland Security (DHS)	2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE, Washington, DC 20528-0525	<b>P:</b> 202-282-8000

### Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Contact List

#### Office of the Administrator

Name	Position
Sean Duffy	U.S. Secretary of Transportation
Bryan Bedford	Administrator
Chris Rocheleau	Deputy Administrator
Peter Hearing	Chief of Staff (Acting)
Donald T. Bornhorst	Chief Administrative Officer

#### Lines of Business

Name	Position
Franklin J. McIntosh	Chief Operating Officer, Air Traffic Organization (Acting)
Tina Amereihn	Associate Administrator- Aviation Safety
Liam McKennz	Chief Counsel

Hannah Walden	Assistant Administrator- Communications
Christopher Senn	Assistant Administrator- Government & Industry Affairs
Sumone R. Perez	Assistant Administrator- Policy & Strategic Engagement

**National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Contact List**

**NTSB Board**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
Jennife Homendy	Chairwoman
Michael E. Graham	Member
Thomas B. Chapman	Member
J. Todd Inman	Member

**The Office of Aviation Safety**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
Tim LeBaron	Director
David Helson	Deputy Director
Frank Hilldrup	Chief Technical Advisor for International Aviation Affairs
Lorenda Ward	Air Carrier and Space Investigations Division Chief
Marvin Frantz	Operational Factors Division Chief
Dujuan Sevillan	Human Performance & Survival Factors Division Chief

**Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Contact List**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
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Tricia McLaufglin	Assistant Secretary- Office of Public Affairs
Nathaniel Madden	Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary- Communications
Laurin Bis	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Media Relations
Micah Bock	Deputy Assistant Secretary- Strategic Communications
Antoine McCord	Chief Information Officer
Tracy Watkins	Chief Rediness Support Officer
Rob Law	Under Secretary- Office of Policy and Plans
Davis Harcilicz	Assistant Secretary for Cyber, Infrastructure, Risk, and Resilience

### **Media Contact List**

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Position</u></b>
Almin Karamemedovic ( <i>ABC News</i> )	President, ABC News
Rebecca Blumenstein ( <i>NBC News</i> )	President, NBC News
Joseph Kahn ( <i>NY Times</i> )	Executive Editor, The New York Times
Matt Murray ( <i>Washington Post</i> )	Executive Editor, Washington Post
Jens Flottau ( <i>Aviation Week Network</i> )	Executive Editor, Commercial Aviation

## **Part Four: Strategic Response**

### **Key Objectives:**

1. Keep the public safe and alert journalists, regulators, and passengers' families as soon as possible with accurate information within 24 hours after the incident.
2. Throughout the situation, American Airlines will share verified updates across all authorized channels to demonstrate its commitment to transparency, empathy, and accountability.
3. Outline and demonstrate evidence-based steps taken during the investigation and recovery process to maintain and restore trust in the airline's safety reputation.

### **Key audiences:**

1. Immediately contact the families of the passengers and crew, who are the primary audience.
2. The general public/current/future passengers and media require frequent, accurate updates to avoid misinformation.
3. Government partners and regulatory organizations (such as the NTSB and the FAA) receive formal reports and communications related to compliance.

### **Key messages:**

1. "The health and safety of our employees, customers, and their relatives is of the highest priority to us. To help those impacted, we are doing all in our power to support them."
2. "Throughout this process, American Airlines remains committed to maintaining full transparency, sharing all verified information, and collaborating closely with federal investigators."
3. "We will make sure to apply all the safety measures that have been suggested to avoid similar events in the future, and we will learn from this tragedy."

### **Strategies:**

Strategy 1: Take responsibility and show compassion right after the incident.

#### **Tactics:**

- Within the first two hours after the incident, the CEO should deliver a video message expressing sympathy and outlining the immediate actions the company will take to address the situation.

- Launch a live hotline for passengers' families and activate the Family Assistance Program.
- Inform families privately and face-to-face before making any public announcements.

Strategy 2: Ensure all channels of communication are organized and that information flows quickly and consistently.

Tactics:

- To avoid misunderstandings, build a crisis communication team and assign a single spokesperson.
- Post credible updates on the company newsroom, social media, and email briefings every two to three hours.
- Establish a central location on AA's website for the Q&A section, news releases, and safety materials to track incidents in real-time.

Strategy 3: Maintain a firm focus on safety and the honesty of operations over the course of time.

Tactics:

- Once authorized, work with the NTSB to issue safety briefings and submit reports following incidents.
- Start an internal and external "Safety Improvement Update" campaign that will review the steps taken after the investigation.
- Upon receiving the necessary legal authorization, hold a media briefing featuring aviation safety experts to review the findings.

**Timeline:**

Timeframe	Action
0-2 hours	Initiate the crisis team, prepare a statement from the CEO, draft an initial media statement, and establish an emergency contact line for relatives.
2-12 hours	Messages to the family, constant internal updates, and confirmed public updates every two to three hours.
24-48 hours	A news conference with the spokesman and initial communication with the NTSB have been conducted, and the website information center has been updated.

72-1 week	Continue long-term safety messaging, provide regular daily updates, and continue family support.
1-3 months	Post-investigation communications, safety campaign rollout, and internal training adjustments.

**Evaluation:**

1. Examine the news for its accuracy, tone, and effectiveness in conveying a message.
2. Feedback from stakeholders: Ask employees, key partners, and families how empathic and clear the communication was after the crisis.
3. Digital metrics: Monitor participation, fact-checking rates, online traffic to the crisis center, and reaction times.

## **Part Five: Prepared Media Materials**

### **Prepared Media Material**



**[ADDRESS]**  
**[CITY, STATE]**  
1-800-433-7300

#### **NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

**[DATE]**

#### **American Airlines Statement Regarding AA Flight [FLIGHT NUMBER]**

**[CITY, STATE]** – American Airlines is responding to a serious incident involving American Airlines Flight **[FLIGHT NUMBER]**, on a scheduled flight from **[DEPARTURE CITY]** to **[ARRIVAL CITY]**

The incident occurred at approximately **[TIME]** local time on **[DATE]** near **[CITY, STATE]**.

The health and safety of our employees, customers, and their relatives is of the highest priority to us. To help those impacted, we are doing all in our power to support them.

- **Immediate Actions:** We have alerted our Crisis Response Team and are working closely with the National Transportation Safety Board and the Federal Aviation Administration.
- **To Families:** Our deepest sympathies go out to all those affected by this tragic event. We are working to immediately contact the families of the passengers and crew who were aboard. Families will be informed privately and face-to-face before any public announcements regarding names or specific numbers are made.
- **Information Hotline:** A dedicated telephone number has been established to assist family members seeking information: **[PHONE NUMBER]**.

American Airlines is committed to maintaining full transparency throughout this process, sharing all verified information, and working closely with federal investigators. We will establish a central location on our website at **AA.com/Updates** for all verified news, updates, and safety information. American Airlines CEO **[CEO NAME]** will release a video message of the immediate actions the company will take within the next two hours.

**For More Information**

**[NAME OF US MEDIA RELATION]**

Head, US Media Relations

**[PHONE NUMBER]**

**[US MEDIA RELATION EMAL]**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**[DATE]**

Media Advisory

**American Airlines to Briefing Regarding Flight [FLIGHT NUMBER] Incident and Response**

**WHO:**

- **[SPOKESPERSON NAME]**, Official Spokesperson, Directs the Crisis Management Team

OR

- **[SECOND SPOKESPERSON NAME]**, Secondary Spokesperson, keeps the global executive team up to date on crisis strategy
- **[THIRD SPOKESPERSON NAME]**, Third Spokesperson, helps maintain the day-to-day operation of the company during the crisis and handles financial impacts.

**WHAT:** An official press briefing will be held to provide verified updates on the incident involving American Airlines Flight and to outline the ongoing cooperative efforts with federal and local authorities.

**WHEN:** [DATE], at [TIME]

**WHERE:** [LOCATION NAME] [ADDRESS] [CITY, STATE]

**WHY IT MATTERS:** This event will serve as the primary source of verified, updated information to prevent the spread of speculation and misinformation.

For More Information Visit: [AA.com/Updates](https://www.aa.com/updates)

or Contact

**[NAME OF US MEDIA RELATION]**

Head, US Media Relations

**[PHONE NUMBER]**

**[US MEDIA RELATION EMAL]**

## Holding Statement

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

American Airlines can confirm that an incident occurred involving American Airlines Flight **[FLIGHT NUMBER]**, which was traveling from **[DEPARTURE CITY]** to **[ARRIVAL CITY]**.

We are currently gathering verified facts regarding the flight, the passengers, and the crew.

Our Crisis Response Team is working closely with federal and local authorities.

**Our absolute priority right now is the safety and well-being of all individuals involved and their families.**

We ask that the public and the media refrain from speculation. **We are committed to full transparency and will share verified information immediately as it becomes available.**

All official updates will be posted on **AA.com/Updates** and our official newsroom. We will provide our next update within the hour.

Thank you for your patience during this critical time.

## American Airlines BACKGROUNDER

**Media Contact: [NAME OF US MEDIA RELATION]**

Head, US Media Relations

**[US MEDIA RELATION EMAL]**

**[PHONE NUMBER]**

American Airlines, Inc.

**[ADDRESS] [CITY, STATE]**

[AA.com](http://AA.com)

### Summary

American Airlines is committed to providing a safe, reliable, and friendly air travel experience. The company's mission is to prioritize safety, comfort, and convenience, making each flight enjoyable. AA is dedicated to addressing any issues that may arise, understanding that things may not always go as planned. Every customer is valued, and AA is dedicated to making every flight memorable, with safety, comfort, and convenience being top priorities.

### Safety Policy

American Airlines maintains a proactive approach to safety, focused on prevention, training, and continuous improvement.

- **Safety Management System (SMS):** AA operates under a robust, federally regulated SMS, which systematically identifies and manages safety risks through continuous hazard identification and risk assessment.
- **Training:** Pilots and crew undergo continuous, advanced training, including flight simulator training, emergency procedures, and crew resource management (CRM) training, exceeding regulatory minimums.

### Support and Investigation Protocol

- **CARE Team:** American Airlines immediately activated its CARE Team, which is a dedicated program present for family members; coordinating travel arrangements; arranging accommodations as well as childcare, elder care, or pet care; facilitating and arranging transportation for critical meetings in the weeks following the accident; and obtaining clothes, toiletries, and other necessary items.
- **Regulatory Cooperation:** AA is the operator of the aircraft, but is not the lead investigative body. The official investigation is led by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). American Airlines cooperates fully by providing all necessary personnel, records, and access to the incident site as requested by the NTSB.
- **Transparency Commitment:** American Airlines will ensure all communication is verified and coordinated through a single, authorized spokesperson to maintain consistency and accuracy. The public should only rely on information posted at [AA.com/Updates](http://AA.com/Updates).

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