

- The evacuation from WTC 2 occurred in spite of conflicting announcements, first urging people to return to their offices around 9:00 a.m., and then informing them around 9:02 a.m. that they may initiate an evacuation if conditions warranted. A subsequent announcement at 9:20 a.m., after the second aircraft strike, informed occupants that they could use the Concourse if they wished to leave the building. An announcement at 9:37 a.m. instructed occupants to go down the stairs.
- Stairwell A in WTC 2 remained passable for at least some period of time after the aircraft impact because (1) only the end of the left wing, empty of jet fuel, was in line with the stairwell; (2) Stairwell A was behind the structural/architectural core in the area of impact; and (3) the aircraft debris had to travel through the longer dimension of the core and thus was slowed by a greater number of columns, shafts, walls, and mechanical equipment, and (4) Stairwell A was widely separated from Stairwells B and C.
- Eighteen people successfully used the debris-cluttered Stairwell A in WTC 2 to leave the building after being on or above the 78th floor when United Airlines Flight 175 hit the building. It is possible that additional occupants from above the impact floors were making their way down the stairwell some minutes before building collapse.
- Two-thirds of the WTC 1 occupants and half of the WTC 2 occupants had started working at the WTC in the previous 4 years.
- Two-thirds of the WTC 1 and WTC 2 occupants participated in at least one fire drill in the twelve months prior to September 11, 2001. Nearly all (93 percent) of these occupants were instructed about the location of the nearest stairwell. However, only half of the survivors had previously used a stairwell, in part since NYC Local Law 5 prohibited requiring occupants to practice stairwell evacuation.
- The NIST Investigation found no evidence that the occupants of WTC 1 heard public address system announcements, although the fire command station was attempting to make such announcements.
- The delays of about 5 min in starting evacuation were largely spent trying to obtain additional information, trying to make sense of the situation, and generally preparing to evacuate.
- People who started their evacuation on higher floors took longer to start leaving and substantially increased their odds of encountering smoke, damage or fire. These encounters, along with interruption for any reason, had a significant effect on increasing the amount of time that people spent to traverse their evacuation stairwell.
- The WTC occupants were inadequately prepared to encounter horizontal transfers during the evacuation process and were occasionally delayed by the confusion as to whether a hallway led to a stairwell and confusion about whether the transfer hallway doors would open or be locked.
- The WTC occupants were often unprepared for the physical challenge of full building evacuation. Numerous occupants required one or more rest periods during stairwell descent.