

## Flight 1549: Lessons for Safety

The Hudson landing and rescue shows how quality training can make all the difference.

"We've had a miracle on the Hudson," said New York Governor David Patterson of US Airways Flight 1549's river landing. Indeed we have. According to aviation experts, water landings are rare and tough to pull off, but the Hudson incident proved to be the brilliant exception.

But as miraculous as it was, it was by no means inexplicable. The spectacular success of the landing was a product of, among other things, superb pilot and flight-attendant training.

However, both would have been for naught if it weren't for the rescue teams, who swiftly and efficiently responded to the scene.

With impeccable timing and excellent execution, the crew of the New York Waterway Ferry vessels pulled the passengers out of the Hudson's frigid waters.

This was no simple process. According to an article by Captain Tom Serio of [megayachtnews.com](http://megayachtnews.com), the ferry's navigators "had to hold position against the wings to evacuate passengers as the plane not only slowly sank, but drifted with the current...they had to make sure they didn't run over anyone or put the stern too close to people or other vessels. The ferry captains also had to approach the plane slowly initially so their wake would not overturn passengers standing on the wings."

Despite these challenges, they pulled it off quite superbly, thanks to their training.

The Hudson rescue clearly demonstrates how training can be pivotal in averting potential disasters. It holds critical safety lessons for rescue workers, particularly those on water. Captain Tom Serio raises some important points:

- Does the crew know where the life jackets are kept?
- Are there extra jackets?
- Are crew members trained to "throw a life ring with a line attached?"
- If a civilian-occupied craft encounters a situation similar to the Hudson landing, are captains "prepared to press guests into rescue mode?" Do the guests know that they might assist in an emergency? Can the crew help guide civilians into the proper disaster-response procedures?

"The time to plan for a disaster is not at the time of the disaster," adds Captain Serio. Crew, he says, must take part in drills that train them to prevent tragedy.