

No One Hurt in Plaza Blaze



Photos: Manny Chavez

Fire, Smoke from DASH Bus Disrupt Plaza Traffic during Morning Rush Hour



in the past five years.

By Bill Heard, Editor
(Dec. 6, 1999) A fierce blaze in the engine compartment of an LADOT DASH bus caused extensive damage to the vehicle and closed the bus plaza in front of MTA Headquarters for about 40 minutes during the morning rush hour.

This is the fifth CNG bus in the DASH fleet damaged by fire

A witness said the bus operator noticed smoke pouring from the engine compartment as he rounded the north end of Patsaouras Plaza. He jumped out of the bus with a fire extinguisher in hand, but was unable to put out the flames. A dozen LA City firefighters, a ladder truck and pump truck, rushed to the scene and rapidly doused the smoky fire.

No injuries in fire

There were no injuries and no one other than the ATE/Ryder contract operator was believed to be aboard the bus, said James Okazaki,



LADOT assistant general manager. A preliminary investigation by personnel from the MTA's Regional Rebuild Center indicated the fire may have involved electrical wiring.

LA City firefighters worked quickly to beat down flames pouring from the engine compartment of an LADOT DASH bus.

All incoming buses were held at the foot of the Vignes Street ramp and buses already on the Plaza were rerouted to the El Monte Busway while the area was closed to traffic. The fire was reported at 8:22 a.m. and the Plaza was reopened to traffic by 9:02 a.m.

MTA Transit Operations Supervisor Fausto Brito and Armen Euredjian, acting assistant manager, Vehicle Operations, assisted passengers, who were escorted past the fire scene by security officers, said Tom Jasmin, manager, Bus Operations Control Center.

Only soot damage

The MTA is still evaluating the fire scene for damage, said Brian Soto, Director, General Services, but it appears that, while a light fixture, palm tree and pavers were soot-blackened, there was no permanent damage to adjacent fixtures.

Okazaki said this was the fifth DASH bus damaged in the past five years by fires that appear to have been caused by electrical problems. The vehicle was built by El Dorado National and is powered by a second-generation CNG engine. Some 30 of that model remain in the DASH fleet.

The bus was assigned to DASH Route D, which operates between Patsaouras Plaza and the Metro Blue Line station at Grand Avenue, via Temple and Olive streets.

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