



PHOTO by JIM AVILA, Red Line Maintenance Specialist, Division 20.

Forensics Firm Assessing Headquarters Fire Damage; No Estimate Yet on Repair Costs



(Jan. 16) A forensic investigation firm retained by the MTA began an analysis, today, of the smoky blaze that destroyed lighting equipment atop Headquarters last Friday, caused minor water damage to floors beneath and prompted an evacuation of the building.

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"The firm has extensive experience in electrical fires," said Frank Cardenas, executive officer, Administration. "We want to determine whether the fire was an isolated incident and to make sure it won't occur again."

A Los Angeles Fire Department arson investigator also is conducting a routine examination of the fire scene, according to General Services Director Brian Soto. No estimate of repair costs has been made, but Soto considers the \$30,000 cited in local news stories to be very conservative.

Over the weekend, a General Services team and an outside contractor cleaned the insides of windows, dried carpets and dehumidified walls where water from the fire fighting seeped into offices on the 25th, 24th, and 23rd floors. Window washers are at work today on the building's exterior.

Preliminary damage survey

A preliminary survey of damage from the fire indicates that electrical wiring and lighting equipment will have to be replaced. The caulking between the limestone blocks fronting the parapet where the fire started and even some of the blocks, themselves, may have to be repaired or replaced.

Determining what has to be repaired, how repairs are made, who should make them and how much the repairs should cost will be the task of

Warren Fu, director, Facilities Engineering.

"This job will be unusual because of the architectural design of the building and because it is so high above ground," Fu said.

Cardenas commended the Security, General Services and Facilities Maintenance departments for their emergency response during and after the fire. And he praised the firefighters' work. "The support we got from the Fire Department was terrific."

"From all accounts, the evacuation was quite orderly," he added. "It just goes to show that our fire drills are a good practice."

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