



MTA Equipment Engineering Mechanic John Mirabal inspects Thermal King air conditioning system on a new compressed natural gas bus manufactured by North American Bus Industries (NABI). The electronically controlled air conditioning system can drop the temperature inside the bus from 80 degrees to 68 to 72 degrees in approximately six minutes.



## Passenger Complaints about Metro Bus AC Dipped 70% this Summer

By GARY WOSK

(Oct. 2, 2001) Passenger complaints about a lack of air conditioning aboard Metro Buses dipped by 70 percent this past summer, compared to the summer of 2000.

Overall, customer complaints declined from the ratio of 6.37 complaints per 100,000 daily boardings in July 1997 to a ratio of 3.15 complaints per 100,000 daily boardings in July 2001, a new record and perhaps the strongest indicator yet, amongst others noted in a fiscal year 2001 performance review, that the Metro System continues to improve.

In July/August 2000, the MTA received 43 complaints about faulty air conditioning systems in contrast to only 13 this past summer.

Bus operators also are reporting fewer instances of air conditioning snafus.

There were 31 percent fewer problems in July 2001 versus July 2000, and 36 percent fewer problems in August 2001 versus August 2000.

In fact, it was so cold aboard some buses that one contributor to the "Ask the MTA" Internet page wrote:

"Why is it that all Rapid Buses running on Wilshire are always freezing cold? Everybody around me shivers and wishes the bus driver would realize that we're all freezing. It is unhealthy to leave the bus and experience (outside) temperatures 20 degrees hotter."

### New buses, better training

Reasons for the improvement in Metro Bus air conditioning vary, but MTA officials point to the deployment of 500 new buses since the summer of 2000, better training of mechanics and the weather.

"The feedback that I'm receiving from bus operators and managers at bus divisions is that the condition of the air conditioning systems is the best it's been in recent years," said John Roberts, deputy executive officer, Bus Operations. "It's been a very mild summer, which is always a plus, communications between Transportation and Maintenance is much better and (the addition of) all the new buses has definitely had a 'chilling effect.'"

The MTA has ordered approximately 2,000 new buses and has already taken delivery of more than 1,300 new CNG coaches. Fewer air-conditioning headaches are also allowing mechanics to concentrate on the big picture.

"If we're not spending a lot of time going out on road calls and repairing defects, it allows mechanics to stay in the shop and do preventive maintenance," said Milo Victoria, acting superintendent of Maintenance Divisions.

"Regular preventive maintenance throughout the year means mechanics can spend less time on breakdown repairs," he said. "The malfunction of an air conditioning or heating system that has been properly maintained is very different than a system that has not been maintained."

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