

'Don't Overreact' to Terrorism Rumors, Security Chief Says

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By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Oct. 10, 2001) "Act, but don't overreact." That's the advice MTA's security chief Paul Lennon has for employees in the current climate of concern about rumored acts of terrorism.

"Employees should be aware, be vigilant, but don't hit the panic button," says Lennon. "We shouldn't expect anything untoward, but if you do see something out of the ordinary, you should report it right away."

Employees should call MTA Security at 922-7600 for assistance in such situations.

The Doctor is On-line

[WebMD.com](#) provides comprehensive review of developing public health issues sparked by terrorism.

News stories in recent days have raised concerns about the possible threat of biological and other types of attacks – concerns that have resonated with MTA employees as a result of incidents on Metro Rail and other transit systems.

The Metro Red Line was shut down for two hours, Sept. 26, when a mysterious odor was detected. The Vermont/Santa Monica station was closed for 20 minutes, Tuesday evening, when cleaning crews spotted a suspicious canister. In both cases, authorities found no evidence of toxic substances.

Report anything suspicious

"Employees have a responsibility to report something suspicious," counsels Lou Hubaud, director, Systems Safety. "If you feel uncomfortable about a situation – whatever it may be – report it and let Security take the appropriate action."

Noting that Los Angeles has probably the best emergency response teams in the nation, Pam Engelke, manager, Occupational Health and Safety, said, "This area is home to large numbers of universities, laboratories, military and medical disaster teams."

MTA Security officials meet daily with representatives of the LAPD, LASD, city and county fire departments. In addition, the agency can call on the LAPD's Anti-Terrorist Division, the Sheriff's Emergency Operations Bureau and other emergency assets.

"There are a lot of very solid resources devoted to the protection of our staff and our customers," says Dan Cowden, director, Security and Law Enforcement.

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