



Floor warden Ralph Sbragia, MTA Safety Compliance Inspector, directs 10th floor to assembly point at Terminal 31.

HQ Evacuation was 'Most Well-Executed' Emergency Drill

(Dec. 12, 2001) By the hundreds, employees poured out of MTA Headquarters, Tuesday morning, in what one fire department expert said was "the most organized, most well-executed" emergency drill he's seen in a high-rise building.

In about 15 minutes from the time emergency gongs were sounded, the last of some 1,500 employees had evacuated the building in an orderly manner and was headed for an assembly point across the Vignes/Cesar Chavez intersection at Terminal 31.

They were shepherded by floor wardens in bright blue helmets and vests. LAPD and MTA Security officers, augmented by Transportation Operations Supervisors, blocked traffic and kept the crowd moving safely.

"It was an excellent drill, the most organized, most well-executed I've seen," said LA City Fire Inspector Joe Gould, who once was assigned to the department's high-rise unit and has witnessed several such drills. "Employee participation was as thorough as I've ever seen."



Some 1,500 employees evacuated Gateway Headquarters in about 15 minutes.

All departments cooperated

"It went very well," agreed General Services Director Brian Soto, whose department set up the drill. "All the departments cooperated together. That really helped."

There were lessons to be learned from the drill, officials said. Communications among floor wardens will be improved and employees may need reminders about the importance of a quick, orderly evacuation.

Some employees, for example, carried coffee cups – a spill and slipping hazard on stairs – and others took along personal belongings, including wheeled briefcases.

"Think of the consequences to other employees," cautions Gould. "An airline case can take up as much space as a small person and can become an obstruction. In an emergency, just get out of the building and be thankful you got out with your life."

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