

## MTA Launches Division Local Safety Committees



By Gary Wosk

(March 13, 2002) More than 80 employees – including representatives from every operating division – were briefed, Tuesday, about the state of safety at the MTA. It was the official kickoff of the division Local Safety Committees (LSC).

Among those participating in the Safety's First briefing, held in the Board Room, was service sector General Manager David Armijo and officials of the MTA's four unions.

Program moderator Gary Spivack of Transit Operations

Program moderator Gary Spivack of Transit Operations pointed out that safety problems cost the MTA \$60 million annually – money that could otherwise be better spent on

hiring more operators and mechanics and on providing better bus service. "We have met the enemy and it is us," he said.

Committee members were given an overview of the relationship between the division LSCs and the sector-level Central Safety, Health and Environmental Committees. The sector committees will not begin their work until service sectors debut in July.

### Taking responsibility for safety

Throughout the meeting, speakers asked for the cooperation of transportation and maintenance employees in taking ownership and responsibility for maintaining a safe working environment. Committee members were asked to identify safety problems at their worksites, identify solutions and spread the word that safety comes first at the MTA.



Spivack said safety problems cost the MTA \$60 million annually.

"We are beginning the next step in our overall Safety's First program," Spivack told committee members. "We've been talking about safety for the last couple of months. For the first time, we're going to stop telling you what to do and ask you to tell us."



UTU General Chairman James Williams spoke in support of the program.

LSC responsibilities include evaluating and monitoring safety performance; providing feedback; tracking and following up on safety issues; identifying and implementing accident prevention programs. The division committees will meet monthly.

"Local safety committees are empowered to take action," said Richard Hunt of Transit Operations.

"Nobody will come down and argue with

you about what is safe and what is not safe."

"This is it folks," Spivack said in concluding the meeting.

"Everyone takes responsibility for safety."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)