

## Dispatcher Training

Transportation Operations Supervisor Myrna Ramirez demonstrates the Metro Bus control system for Sheriff's deputies David Vargas and Donna Valdez of the dispatcher training team.



### Improving Safety, Communication with Bus Operators, Police

(March 26, 2002) In a major effort to improve safety aboard Metro Buses through better communication with bus operators and law enforcement officers, the MTA is providing every dispatcher in Bus Operations Control with 128 hours of intensive training.

The mandatory training is aimed at achieving greater understanding and cooperation between bus operators caught up in emergencies on the streets and the dispatchers who are trying to help them, according to Tom Jasmin, Operations Control superintendent.

The dispatchers also should be better able to provide more accurate information, more quickly, to police officers responding to an incident. "If it helps save one life or improves the response time, it will have been worth it," says Ellis Kyles, Operations Control Center manager.

To date, 58 of the MTA's 64 dispatchers have participated in an eight-hour class taught by the Sheriff's Department dispatcher training team. Using tapes of actual 911 calls, for example, the class demonstrates how dispatchers should work with people under stress to obtain the information needed by police officers.

### College-level course

Two dispatchers have attended a three-week dispatcher's course at the Sheriff's Rio Hondo Academy. Three or four more dispatchers will attend in April and the remaining dispatchers will be scheduled throughout the year. The course gives each participant three college credits.

"We want to make sure we cover all the bases and provide every avenue of training we can," says Kyles. "It takes them to the next level in improving their awareness and their ability to give assistance to our customers – the bus operators and their passengers."

One of the first to attend the three-week Rio Hondo dispatcher's course is Transit Operations Supervisor Christina Overstreet. Among the

techniques she learned were standard police radio procedures and what information officers need to determine their level of response to an emergency.

"I'll have more compassion and understanding for our operators in an emergency," says Overstreet, "but I'll know how to get from them the information I need. It helps get the police to them a lot faster when we have all the right information."

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