

## The Nose Knows



**Meet LAPD's Bomb-Sniffing Dog Tosca**

By LISA HUYNH

(Sept. 19, 2002) She's cute, smart and well-trained – the newest addition to LAPD's Transit Group Team.

Tosca is a seven-year-old Belgium Malinois, trained to sniff for bombs and explosives.

She has been training with LAPD Officer Don Bender for six years. They have been working with the Transit Group for about a week now, conducting random checks at Metro Red Station and on the trains.

Bender says Tosca is always excited about working. It's hard for her to stay in one place. So when a train came to a stop one recent morning, Tosca led the way onto the train.

As they made their way up and down the aisle, Tosca stopped and sniffed a woman's purse. Although she was surprised, the woman had a smile for the dog. Satisfied the purse held no explosives, Tosca moved on to sniff other people.

"We do this to increase security so we can make the passengers feel safe," says Bender.

This duo has also worked local airports, checking for bombs in the cargo and luggage areas, as well as on planes.

"We haven't found anything suspicious here at the MTA and I hope we never find anything," says Bender.



LAPD Officer Don Bender accompanies Tosca during a training exercise as she sniffs for explosives at a Metro Red Line station. Below, Bender and Tosca conduct a random check on a subway train.



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