

## Segue to Segways at Gateway

by Alisha Gomez

- MTA's Security and Law Enforcement units are the first to receive training on the Segway, an electrically driven and gyroscope-stabilized scooter.



PHOTOS: LISA HUYNH

Members of MTA Security line up their Segways at a training session conducted by Segway instructors.

(Jan. 22, 2003) Segways soon will be turning heads as MTA's Security and Law Enforcement units— the LAPD, LA County Sheriff's department and MTA security – prepare to incorporate them into their daily patrol at various locations. The three units were the first to receive training, recently, on how to use the two-wheeled scooters. The Segway is electrically driven and gyroscope stabilized.

"The Segways will enhance our foot patrol and help in our special assignment areas," says Sgt. John Davis, MTA Transit Security. "It also can supplement bicycle patrol."

### What it's Like

After a classroom session, seven officers from MTA security, seven LAPD officers and about 12 Sheriff's deputies tested out the scooters on P1 at Gateway.

After about six months of deployment, Davis says MTA, along with transit law enforcement partners, will decide if more Segways will be brought in. The LAPD and the Sheriff's Department each will get three Segways for now. MTA Security will deploy two Segways.

Four additional units will be available for special transportation testing and projects. They will be allocated to various uses by the MTA's Transportation Planning Manager, Robin Blair, who also is the project manager.

"We're going to see how they are enhancing our foot patrol and our means of security," says Davis.

Numerous times each year MTA Security and transit law enforcement units are assigned to provide security at

special events like the Christopher Street West parade in West Hollywood, the Rose Parade in Pasadena, Fiesta on Broadway, the Long Beach Grand Prix, the Christmas Parade in Hollywood and others. In such scenarios, officers would patrol these events while on the Segway.

MTA also is hoping to try the Segways for enhanced security on the various rail lines.

"Overall, everyone from the three law enforcement and security enforcement groups have been very pleased with the Segways," says Davis. "People were flabbergasted with the efficiency, how maneuverable they are and how easy it was to use them."

"They're efficient, and not bulky," he says. "We're fortunate that we are one of the groups who are able to use the Segways."

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Author, above, relays her lesson on the Segway.

Riding the Segway scooters is really quite simple after taking a few lessons from the Segway representatives.

At first, the scooters can feel a bit wobbly, only because riders tend to be uncertain of their balance. But after a few turns, forward and backward movements, riding a Segway is a convenient, easy and fun experience.

Three keys - red, black and yellow - determine the speed of the scooter. Black is a beginning speed of about 6 miles an hour; red is a bit faster at about 7 to 8 miles an hour; and yellow is the fastest key at about 12 1/2 miles an hour.

To turn the Segway on, a rider uses one of the keys, depending on the desired speed. A little screen on the handlebars shows when the scooter is on. The rider then presses a red button on the handle bar and the Segway automatically turns to balance

mode.

To go forward, riders simply lean with their feet forward. To stop, riders stay up straight, completely balanced. When going backwards, riders lean back with their feet. The more weight on the toes, the faster a rider goes in forward motion. The more weight on the heels, the faster a rider goes in backward motion.

The Segway has a zero degree turning radius so it turns in place. The left handle bar has a control knob to turn the scooter right or left. Riders usually lean with the motion to help the Segway turn easier.

Not only is the Segway fun, but also it is a great way to get around when taking those short walks. The scooter's battery lasts anywhere from 11 to 17 miles, depending on the speed and terrain riding on (if it is hilly or flat). --*Alisha Gomez*