

Operator's Heimlich Maneuver May Have Saved Patron's Life

By LISA HUYNH

(April 9, 2003) Call it beginner's luck. Operator Majd Bakir may have saved a patron's life with a technique he used for the first time since he learned it 13 years ago – the Heimlich Maneuver.



Metro Bus Operator Majd Bakir

Heimlich How-to

Late in the evening of March 20, Bakir, 44, was near the end of his Line 484 run on Valley Boulevard. A passenger rushed forward and told the 13-year veteran that another passenger was choking.

Visit the the [Heimlich Institute](#) web site to find instructions and illustrations on [how to apply](#) the Heimlich Maneuver.

Bakir, who's assigned to San Gabriel Valley Division 9, immediately pulled the bus over. He hurried back to the passenger and found him in distress.

Without hesitation, Bakir moved behind the man and wrapped his arms around him. Clasp his hands together in a fist, he thrust sharply upward into the man's abdomen in an effort to expel whatever was choking him.

"I wasn't nervous at all," says Bakir. "I was actually very calm. I knew I had to do something right away because he wasn't breathing and he was turning red."

He began breathing

After several attempts with the Heimlich Maneuver, the man, who appeared to be in his 50s, was able to breathe again.

"Ironically, he wasn't choking on anything," says Bakir. "I assume that it was an air pocket or something."

Bakir asked the patron if he needed an ambulance or immediate medical attention, but he declined. Instead, he thanked Bakir for saving his life and was dropped off at his stop.

When Bakir pulled the bus into the Division 9 yard, his supervisor told him the patron, Stephen Bennette, had called to commend him for saving his life.

"I try to do something good every day," says Bakir, "because I know one day, it will pay off."

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