

Metro Blue Line maintenance specialists have been able to maintain train car rooftops more efficiently since the completion of the catwalk.



Blue Line Yard's New Catwalk Makes Maintenance Safer

By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

(Aug 8, 2003) Since its 1989 opening, Metro Blue Line maintenance specialists faced a daily challenge of cleaning and repairing train car rooftops. Now, with the completion of a new catwalk, that struggle is over.

Stretching 10 feet wide and 200 feet long and constructed of 56 tons of steel, the catwalk will replace portable scaffolding that maintenance personnel stood on to reach the tops of trains with tools, parts and hoses.

"It's something that was required to comply with OSHA fall prevention standards," says George Kennedy, manager, Metro Blue Line Rail Equipment Maintenance.

The need to construct the catwalk stemmed from concerns over the safety and inefficiency of working on scaffolding.

Maintenance personnel sometimes had difficulty balancing parts, tools and equipment on the old wheeled structure, which had to be repeatedly moved along the side of the car – occasionally scratching the paint.

"The portable scaffolding units were hard to push," says Metro Blue Line Maintenance Specialist Steve Parker. "Most of the time, the guys



The all-steel catwalk provides safer and easier access to train car rooftops. The 200-foot structure spans the length of two train cars.



would use just one portable scaffold on each side of a car to access the roof, which was a real safety concern. Now, with the new catwalk, we're working safer and more efficiently."

Construction of the 11-foot tall catwalk, with a 3½-foot high protective railing, took approximately four weeks. It has been in service since mid-July. Total project cost is approximately \$380,000.

Kennedy's department plans to equip the new catwalk with electrical outlets, lighting, and retractable hose reels for water and air in the near future.

"It's better now that we don't have to use the old scaffolds," says Metro Blue Line Maintenance Specialist Dennis Nacar. "I feel safer."

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