

First Day Back

Div. 10 Operators Greeted with Many Smiles, but Few Patrons

- **Mechanics happy to be back, but have a lot of work to do**
- [‘Good to be back,’ Metro Rail Operator Says](#)

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(Nov. 19, 2003) MTA bus operators returned to work, Tuesday, and most of them could not have been happier. Coming back to work after 35 days was made a little easier by the fact that most of their passengers were happy to see them.

"There has been a positive response. The passengers are glad we are back and they are letting us know it," said Lamont Hopes, who has been a bus operator for three years. "I am glad to be back because a lot of people depend on us."

"There have not been any negative comments," said Operator Theodore Brooks. "But, there is some confusion about how long the free fare will last. I think, right now, the free fare is a good gesture and a lot of passengers agree."

Operator Jason Brown, who co-workers refer to as a rookie, had just a handful of passengers waiting for him on his first early morning stop. "This morning there were just six people waiting for the bus. Usually there is a whole bus load."

Brown has confidence that, as soon as more people realize that bus services are back, his bus will be full again. "One of my passengers was extremely happy because he works in Malibu and had been struggling to get to work." Many bus operators had similar stories.

Mechanics must play catch-up

Division 10 mechanics returned to find extra work ahead of them, but they preferred that to being back on the picket line. For many of them, the biggest concern over the past 35 days was the financial burden.



Operators Denise Johnson and Demonte Mills are happy to be back at work. "I missed my bus," Johnson says.



Taking a lunch break are Operators Francine Sanchez and Frank Escareno.



Operators Frank Escareno and Bernie Carrasco relax following their early morning runs.

‘Good to be back,’ Metro Rail Operator Says

(Nov. 19, 2003) "It's good to be back," Metro Rail Operator Tish Rivera said Wednesday as she stood on the platform at Union Station. "I missed work."

Rivera said all her customers had been positive, which made her return that much better.

Rail Transit Operations Supervisor Cris Medina agreed with Rivera that the customers are happy, even though service is limited until Friday.

"We must begin the team-

"The majority of us love our jobs and we missed it," said Mechanic "A" Jim Shirley, who has been with MTA for six and a half years. "We are very happy to be back at work, especially during the holidays."

Shirley admits that the holidays would have been hard if the strike had not ended. "One more week and I would have been in trouble. I even came close to having to tell my eight-year-old daughter that there would be no Christmas this year."

Anthony Johnson, a mechanic "A" leader, agreed with Shirley that the holidays would have been hard, but he was elated to be back to work. "It will be a few days until things are back to normal out there. We are still sorting through the mess."

The bus operators and the mechanics concur that it was hard to survive during the strike, but none had have any complaints about returning to work.

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building process again," said Medina. "Even through the strike had an effect on our operations, we are still on our way to reaching General Manager Gerald Francis' goal of becoming a world class rail system!"