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Employees make the best of their time during Friday morning's evacuation.

## Suspicious Package Prompts Partial MTA HQ Evacuation

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(March 12, 2004) An unidentified package that looked suspiciously like a homemade bomb, but turned out to be a harmless radio transmitter, prompted an evacuation, Friday morning, of some MTA Headquarters employees.

The package, described as a plastic-wrapped cylinder with wires attached, was discovered about 8:15 a.m. in the day's mail.

"We did what was right," said Mail Room Supervisor Dan Colonello. "We looked at it, determined it was suspicious, cleared everybody out and contacted Security."

Shortly afterward, MTA Security officers and Sheriff's deputies began evacuating employees from Plaza level and P-1 offices. A 10 a.m. announcement informed employees on upper floors that they were in no danger.

Meanwhile, the Sheriff's Arson and Explosives squad arrived and deployed a robot to inspect the package, which they took the away with them.

### A Metro transmitter

Later, it was determined that the device is a transmitter used by Metro. A similar device, discovered in the Headquarters building several years ago, also set off a flurry of activity.

"Everybody is being proactive because of what happened in Spain," said

Phyllis Meng, General Services supervisor.

U.S. Homeland Security officials issued a bulletin, Thursday, advising state officials, police and transit and rail agencies to be vigilant in light of the bombings in Madrid's subway system.

"Based upon assessments of the incident in Spain, there does not appear to be any corresponding similar threats to the United States... and there are no plans to raise the threat level at this time," a department spokesman said.

Nevertheless, Sheriff's Lt. Mike Herek said, "We want to stay vigilant and sustain our presence. We don't want to give anybody a chance to think our guard has dropped."

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