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A Metro Blue Line train approaches a Los Angeles rail crossing with a left-turn warning signal like those now being installed in Long Beach.



Long Beach Installing Left-Turn Warning Signals on Blue Line

By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

(Apr. 7, 2004) The City of Long Beach recently began installing left-turn "TRAIN" warning signals along portions of the Metro Blue Line to alert drivers when a train is approaching a rail crossing.

Once the project is completed, the Metro Blue Line will have uniform traffic and train warning devices on all corridors where the trains run at street level, according to Abdul Zohbi, Metro Rail Safety manager.

Featuring state-of-the-art L.E.D (Light Emitting Diode) technology, the "TRAIN" signals illuminate the silhouette of a train when it is unsafe to make a left turn through a rail intersection. The city also is replacing all "T" train signals, which sometimes confused motorists, with bar signals visible only to train operators.

Signals are currently installed on Long Beach Boulevard at 7th and 10th streets, but will soon be integrated into all rail crossings where left turns are allowed in the city. Project completion is expected by summer.

Safer signal system

The project was initiated more than a year ago when MTA approached Long Beach officials about installing a new, safer signal system.

"Our main goal is to reduce, if not eliminate, accidents," says Zohbi. "Safety is first."

For the past three years, MTA has experienced a great deal of success with the fiber optic, left-turn "TRAIN" warning signals installed along Los Angeles portions of the Metro Blue Line. The project served as a model for the Long Beach plans.

"Over 50 percent of train versus car accidents happen because people turn against a red left-turn signal," Zohbi says. "In Los Angeles, we found a big reduction in left-turn accidents following the installation of the fiber optic TRAIN signs."

