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at 2-4357[E-Mail Webmaster](#)**Jim Pachan, Director of Corporate Safety**

Photo Credit: Bill Heard

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## New Safety Director's View of Job Stretches Back to Shop Floor

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Oct. 1, 2004) During all the years he spent on the shop floor as a Metro bus mechanic and, later, as a division maintenance manager, safety in the workplace was a constant concern for Jim Pachan.

It was important during the eight years Pachan worked as a mechanic at divisions 15 and 7. Safety was important during the five years he was an Equipment Engineering supervisor and during his three years as maintenance manager at divisions 15 and 8.

Now, as the newly appointed director of Corporate Safety, Pachan, 44, is responsible for the full range of Metro's on-the-job safety efforts.

"Jim is a natural for Corporate Safety director, with his leadership skills and impressive safety record at Division 8," says Andrea Burnside, managing director, Operations Administration. Division maintenance employees achieved a record of 275 days without a lost-time injury while he was manager.

### A comprehensive program

Pachan is charged with administering a comprehensive program that includes occupational health and safety, industrial hygiene and bus and rail operations and maintenance safety.

It also includes what is perhaps Metro's most familiar employee-oriented program, "Safety's First." The program is aimed at drastically

reducing accidents and employee injuries in an agency that has had one of the highest rates of injury claims in the nation's transit industry.

In Fiscal Year 2000, prior to the launch of Safety's First in October 2001, Metro recorded 20 lost-time injuries for every 100 employees. By June 2004, however, new claims for such injuries had fallen to less than one per 100 employees.

"Our workplace is safer because people are more aware of safety," says Pachan. "We've taken a more pro-active approach to safety, addressing safety issues before injuries occur."

### **Thorough accident investigation**

Two key elements of the safety program, he says, are thorough accident investigation and the local safety committees whose members include division managers, operators and mechanics.

The local safety committees discuss safety problems brought to them by employees at the working level. They work to improve division safety programs and, perhaps most important, ensure that safety issues are communicated to all division employees.

Pachan is a strong believer in getting to the root of an accident through in-depth investigations that pin-point the cause of an incident and identify ways management and employees can work together to prevent future accidents.

Pachan sees safety as a 24/7 effort of making sure employees constantly think about safety and how to avoid injuries, while managers ensure that the workplace is safe for employees to do their jobs.

As he puts it: "The pro-active approach to safety does make Metro a safer place to work."