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South Bay Operators Piloting Crime and Incident Reporting System

By RICH MORALLO

(Dec. 10, 2004) One operator reported youngsters playing near a bus stop and occasionally jumping into the street. Another reported two passengers who were continuously refusing to pay the fare. A third operator described a parked vehicle in a red curb zone that was making it difficult for the Metro bus to proceed.

These and other South Bay operators are helping pilot a new procedure to report safety and security hazards or violations of transit rules to management and the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau.

"All they have to do is pick up a phone and call 310-225-6000," said Sgt. Jim Rifilato. The call goes to his office at the Rosa Parks Metro Blue Line station. If Rifilato is in the field, a recording machine picks up the message.

To help operators provide a complete report, the South Bay sector has provided a Non-Emergency Assistance Request (NEAR) card that reminds operators what information would help managers and deputies investigate an incident.

Wallet-sized and convenient

"The card is wallet-sized and convenient enough to place in a shirt pocket, so they can refer to it at any time when they want to make a report," said Rifilato.

The 5-by-3 inch card allows an operator to report the date, time, and location of an incident, describe the incident and the people involved.

The card also lists the various activities that can be reported, such as alcohol or drugs, disturbance, drinking or eating, fare evasion, graffiti, loud music, smoking, theft, thrown objects and transients.



Carson Division 18 Operator Dionne Graham, left, tells Operator Larry Chandler of Arthur Winston Division 5 about the NEAR program. Below: The wallet-sized NEAR card helps South Bay operators report crimes or incidents aboard Metro Buses.

Los Angeles Sheriff Department Metro South Bay			
NON-EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE REQUEST (NEAR) For Use By Metro South Bay Employees Only - NOT FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION - Dial 310-225-6000 then Press "7" after prompt			
Date:	Time:		
Employee Name:	Phone Number:		
Badge Number:	Division:		
Line:	Bus Run:	Route:	Direction:
Description of Non-Emergency Assistance Request:			
Description of Person Involved:			
Type of Activity:			
Alcohol/Drugs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Graffiti	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disturbance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loud Music	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drinking/Eating	<input type="checkbox"/>	Smoking	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fare Evasion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Theft	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Thrown Objects	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Transients	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other:	

"I would also request all callers to speak clearly and slowly so I can get all of the details of their phone message when I'm in the field," said Rifilato.

Staff was briefed

Transit managers have briefed the staff at both Arthur Winston Division 5 and Carson Division 18 on the new procedure, and information tables have been set up to provide followup information.

Operators are also reminded to report ongoing crime immediately to the Bus Operations Center through the bus communications system, with a followup call to NEAR.

Key goals of the NEAR program are to enhance performance improvement in the areas of safety, customer complaints and bus cleanliness.

"This pilot program is designed to more effectively and efficiently respond to non-emergency public safety needs aboard our buses in the South Bay," said General Manager Dana M. Coffey.

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