


[Home](#)
[CEO Hotline](#)
[Viewpoint](#)
[Classified Ads](#)
[Archives](#)
[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

[Safety](#)
[Pressroom](#) (web)

[CEO Hotline](#)
[Metro Projects](#)
[Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

[Archives](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[Research Center/
Library](#)
[Metro Cafe](#) (pdf)

[Metro Classifieds](#)
[Retirement
Round-up](#)

Metro Info

[Strategic Plan](#) (pdf)

[Org Chart](#) (pdf)

[Policies](#)
[Training](#)
[Help Desk](#)
[Intranet Policy](#)

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[E-Mail Webmaster](#)

Two gang members arrested during the anti-truancy operation at the Metro Blue Line Imperial station are led away for processing. Photo courtesy of Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau.



Anti-Truancy Sweep in Compton Nets Kids Ditching School

(April 20, 2005) Almost 150 high school kids playing hooky, last week, were swept up by Sheriff's deputies, school police and probation officers during an anti-truancy operation on the Metro Blue Line.

In addition to citing 143 youngsters with truancy, the officers issued 62 transit-related citations, detained two juveniles for vandalism, two on bail warrants and arrested one for possession or sale of narcotics.

"Juveniles who are truant are causing problems, disturbing our transit passengers and burglarizing cars in some of the station parking lots," said Sheriff's Lt. Paul Becker. "We wanted to impact that and get information about their activities."

Although the April 14 operation was concentrated in Compton and the four Metro Blue Line stations between Imperial and Del Amo, only about half the 143 youngsters were from the Compton School District.

Ditched school to visit friends

The youngsters, ranging in age from 15 to 17, were mostly traveling in groups of four and five. About 75 percent were male. Most said they had ditched school to visit friends. Previous anti-truancy operations on the Metro Red Line netted similar results, Becker said.

Officers tested an electronic identification device during the anti-truancy operation. The "Portable Live Scan," which looks similar to a PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) can record a thumbprint and, via satellite, transmit the print to the U.S. Department of Justice for a criminal background check.

The scanner also can transmit driver's license information to the California Department of Motor Vehicles, which can provide a suspect's driver's license photo to verify identification.

Joining the anti-truancy operation were deputies from Metro's Transit Services Bureau and the Sheriff's Compton Station, school police from Compton, Long Beach and Los Angeles, officers from County Probation and from the Department of Child and Family Services.

| [Home](#) | [Phone Directory](#) | [Forms Online](#) | [FIS Online](#)