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Sheriff's Lt. John Baylis describes the suspicious package incident at the Metro Rail Vermont/Sunset station to local TV reporters. Photo: Bill Heard



Suspicious Packages, Intruders Plague Metro Service

- Two men detained, no explosive devices found

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 12, 2005) Two suspicious package incidents and unauthorized intruders in Metro Rail tunnels prompted emergency response, in recent days, at Central City Division 1 and on the Metro Red Line.

The incidents, which came close on the heels of the terrorist attacks in London, July 7, interrupted work and inconvenienced patrons but caused no damage or injuries to Metro property or personnel.

Just hours after the London bombings, Sheriff's deputies ordered an evacuation of Division 1 and sent for the Arson and Explosives Unit when a relieving operator found an abandoned briefcase on a bus. Pull-in buses and layovers were diverted during the investigation.

The situation cleared just before noon when Division 1 transportation and maintenance employees were able to return to work. Because the situation was resolved so quickly, said Gateway Cities General Manager Alex Clifford, the division was able to make afternoon rollout without affecting service.

Intrusion at Hollywood/Highland

Late Friday, July 8, deputies on duty at the Hollywood/Highland station investigated patrons' reports that a man had entered the tunnel. The deputies evacuated the station and service was halted during the investigation.

The suspect was held for questioning and service resumed after about an hour. No suspicious device was found during a search of the tunnel.

At 1:20 p.m., Saturday, July 9, patrons alerted deputies when a person was seen entering a tunnel at the Vermont/Sunset station. Deputies detained the man for questioning and evacuated between 120 and 150 passengers from the station.

The Rail Operations Center halted service between Vermont/Beverly and Hollywood/Western and initiated a 4-bus bridge to serve passengers who couldn't use the two closed Metro Rail stations.

During their search of the tunnel, the deputies discovered a small Igloo-type cooler with multi-colored wires protruding from it. The Arson and Explosives Unit determined that no explosives were in the cooler and rail service resumed at 4:20 p.m.

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