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Metro Safety Compliance Officer Ralph Sbragia provided tunnel safety training for three battalions of firefighters.



Photo by Bill Heard

## Local Firefighters Receive Tunnel Safety Training from Metro

BY JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 9, 2005) Three battalions of local firefighters received emergency response tunnel safety training from Metro, this week, in preparation for the tunneling on the Eastside Extension.

Ralph G. Sbragia, Metro safety compliance officer, delivered the two-hour training sessions that taught city and county firefighters about the special dangers involved with rescue situations in tunnels.

Sbragia briefed the firefighters on topics like airborne gas hazards, and electrical, lighting and communications systems that will be present in the tunneling operation. Metro is offering 12 training sessions to ensure that fire stations remain adequately staffed to respond to emergencies.

"This was an introduction to the California [and federal] Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations," Sbragia said. "By law, the firefighters have to receive a basic level of instruction before they enter the tunnel."

## Mandated training

As many as 50 construction workers—who also receive state and federally mandated safety training from their primary employer—can be in each tunnel at any given time.

With that many people at risk if an incident occurs, Sbragia said firefighters need to be familiar with what they might encounter in a rescue attempt before entering the tunnel.

“All of the fire stations that might be called upon to respond in the tunnel if an accident should occur during the Eastside Extension [construction] received training,” he said.

Tunnel safety training will resume in the Gateway Building Board room Dec. 20 through Dec. 22 so firefighters who remained in service during the first round can receive the training.