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**Man Accused in Subway Mercury Spill Pleads Not Guilty**

(Feb. 9, 2007) A transient accused in the mercury spill at the Pershing Square Metro Rail station in December pleaded not guilty, Thursday, to misdemeanor charges, City News Service reported.

Armando Bustamante Miranda, 27, was charged with one count of releasing an offensive or harmful substance in a public area and carrying a toxic material in a public transit facility.

If convicted, Bustamante Miranda could face up to a year in jail and a \$2,250 fine, according to prosecutors. Now being held on \$45,000 bail, he also faces an unrelated parole violation allegation, authorities said.

Sheriff's detectives arrested the suspect, Jan. 23, after identifying him through surveillance video footage. That Dec. 22 footage showed a man who appeared to drop a bottle of liquid on the subway platform. When the bottle broke, the man went to a nearby call box and reported the spill.

Mercury is considered a hazardous substance that can contaminate the air and can cause injuries, but the Sheriff's HAZMAT team determined that the amount spilled on the platform was not enough to injure anyone.

The spill was cleaned up the next day, but the delay sparked an investigation about a month later and led to hazardous materials response training classes for all Metro Rail personnel.

The results of the investigation, which concluded the spill was not a terrorist act, were referred to City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo's Environmental Justice Unit, which brought charges against Bustamante Miranda.

The suspect also faces felony charges in an unrelated matter, Delgadillo's office said.



Armando Bustamante Miranda, 27, is being held on \$45,000 bail in the mercury spill case.

