

[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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Successful Collaboration> The Weapons of Mass Destruction training program was the result of a successful collaboration of a select group of Metro, LA County Sheriff's Department and Transystems team members, who developed the curriculum and ensured its distribution to transit agencies nationwide. Pictured here, front to back, are Sheriff's Sgt. Dale Gulley, Metro Contract Administrator Phyllis Walker; Deputy Executive Officer Jack Eckles of System Security and Law Enforcement, Deputy James Johnson, Deputy Jose De La Cruz and Capt. Pat Jordan, LASD project manager. Other key project team members not pictured include Transit Security Manager Dan Cowden, who originally developed the grant application; Marion Colston, director of Organization Development & Training; and James Allen, Metro grants administrator.



Photo by Ned Racine

Metro, Sheriff's Department Produce WMD Training Program

- Funded by Homeland Security, program distributed nationwide to train transportation agency security officers, first responders

By DAVE SOTERO

(June 12, 2007) Metro has partnered with the LA County Sheriff's Department to produce a computer-based Weapons of Mass Destruction training program that will better prepare frontline responders for potential acts of terrorism against the nation's public transportation system.

Entitled "Terrorism Awareness: Protecting the U.S. Public Transportation System," the self-paced training program is designed for non-sworn security professionals who are responsible for the security of transportation facilities, services and infrastructure.

The eight-module program – funded by a \$1.5 million U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grant – provides specific training that enables

security officers and other frontline responders to recognize and appropriately react to a potential or actual terrorist event.



Security officers and other security professionals can complete the Weapons of Mass Destruction training program at their own pace. The kit includes a video tape, CD and DVD instruction program, along with workbook exercises.

The program consists of interactive CD, DVD and workbook exercises. About 12,000 copies of the program are now being distributed to more than 350 transit agencies across the country.

"Training is a critical component of our ability to strengthen security within our systems," said CEO Roger Snoble. "We are pleased that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has funded the development of these security training materials that can be used throughout our industry."

Security roles have changed

Traditionally, the duties of transportation security personnel focused mainly on "observing and reporting." In today's post 9/11 environment, however, the security roles of frontline responders have changed.

Recognizing and reacting to terrorist threats is more important than ever. Preventive actions by responders serve to deter and minimize the effect of terrorist attacks on transportation systems.

The training modules teach frontline responders how to identify chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive weapons and materials. They also are taught how to identify symptoms of chemical agent exposure, as well as to recognize various types of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

The students also learn what they can do during their regular job duties to help prevent a terrorist incident. Lessons cover how to deter, detect and defend transportation facilities. Others instruct students how to respond to incidents involving mass casualties.

Students also will receive a Frontline Responder's Pocket Guide, a Suspicious Persons and Vehicle Form, and an Assessment and Evaluation Report for their use.

Useful in natural disasters

Many of the response aspects presented in the training program also can be employed during such natural disasters as an earthquake or hurricane.

Funding for the \$1.5 million program was awarded from a \$32 million DHS, Office of Domestic Preparedness anti-terrorism competitive grant. Metro was one of 14 agencies selected out of 217 applicants nationwide.

The \$1.5 million award was twice the requested amount, due to the quality

of the program and Homeland Security’s desire to expand it. Metro is among a select group of federal grantees, including major national education institutions, now considered “training partners” for the security agency’s national anti-terrorism program.

SEQ CHAPTER \h \r 1The Sheriff’s Department was one of the first law enforcement agencies in the U.S. to provide public transportation police services under the Homeland Security umbrella by assigning its Transit Services Bureau to the Sheriff’s Office of Homeland Security Division.

As a result of that reorganization and increased security for the bus and rail lines, public confidence in Metro’s transit security increased to 88 percent. LASD is now recognized as a leader in transit police services.