



[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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Operator Pleads ‘No Contest’ to Felony Insurance Fraud

By PAM MURANO

(Nov. 8, 2007) A Metro Bus operator who was charged earlier this year with three felony counts of insurance fraud and one count of attempted perjury pled “no contest” to the charges, Oct. 24, in Los Angeles Superior Court.

Ricardo Valdez, 40, was sentenced to six days’ jail time already served, five years formal probation, 120 hours of community service, restitution to Metro of \$9,051 and a \$1,395 fine.

In 1998, Valdez was involved in a non-work related traffic accident and suffered injury to his back. He allegedly attempted to conceal this condition from Metro and blamed the back injury on accumulated trauma from driving a bus.

The Central City Division 1 operator was arrested April 13 by the state Department of Insurance Fraud Unit following an investigation by Metro’s Special Investigations Unit.

Valdez was charged with filing a fraudulent Worker’s Compensation claim for the injury in an attempt to gain benefits from Metro.