

[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](#)

Need e-Help?

Call the Help Desk
at 2-4357

[Contact myMetro.net](#)



Heavy Rescue Firefighter Robert Stover opens the battery compartment on the exterior of a Gold Line rail car under the direction of RTOS Ricardo Perez. More than 100 firefighters took the Metro training to familiarize themselves with Gold Line equipment.

Metro Rail Instructs Firefighters on Gold Line Safety

• Training grew from September collisions

By JIMMY STROUP

(Jan. 15, 2008) In response to the two recent accidents on the Gold Line, Metro Rail instructed 100 firefighters at Metro Gold Line Division 21, last week, in agency procedures and equipment related to train operation.

John Quintanar, a former firefighter and Metro corporate safety consultant, was contacted by firefighters stationed near the Gold Line who asked for information about the trains and normal operation along the line, such as street crossings and electrical concerns.

Giving the firefighters more than they asked for, Quintanar set up a training session – given by Ricardo Perez, a rail transit operations

supervisor who works in instruction.

"It's important that they be aware of rail safety, aware of the facilities here that can help them and the equipment they could be working with that can harm them," Perez said. "When they respond to an incident, we want them to be aware of those situations so they can come to a quick and safe resolution."

More than 100 firefighters came to six sessions held from Jan. 9 to Jan. 11. The safety briefings involved an hour-long classroom discussion where Perez lectured and explained, followed by another hour of hands-on training on trains in the yard.

The classroom discussion focused on the electrical hazards that accompany a light rail system. Perez said there are "no second chances" if emergency personnel make mistakes with 17,000 volts of alternating current powered at as much as 2,000 amps.

Firefighters whose stations could be called to respond to Gold Line emergencies participated in a Metro Rail safety program designed to teach law enforcement the ins and outs of Metro Rail equipment. From left: Ricardo Perez,

rail transit operations supervisor; John Quintanar, firefighter and Metro corporate safety consultant; Mike Cannell, Rail General Manager, and (standing) Doug Jackson, Metro Gold Line Transportation Manager.

Photos: Jimmy Stroup



'It's the amperage than kills you'

"Remember that the Tasers police use can hit you with 50,000 volts – which is higher than the system uses, but with only 2 milliamps – and it's the amperage that kills you," Perez said.

The 2,000 amps that power the Gold Line system are 10,000 times more powerful than the 2 milliamps a Taser uses to incapacitate humans.

"For the first responders at an incident involving the Gold Line, we want them to know the electrical considerations," Perez said. "I try to explain to them the electrical distribution, how much power there is, where it comes from and how to safely remove the power so that they can do what they do best under safe conditions."

After the classroom session, Perez and Quintanar led the firefighters to the Gold Line yard to show them how to access the trains without destroying the doors or windows, how to power the cars down and how to disconnect the train's onboard batteries.

"We can prevent the fire department from destroying part of the train to enter and do their job by arming them with a little knowledge about the way our trains work," Quintanar said. "Most times, its going to be faster to get in by using the methods we teach them than it would be for them to hack in."

"It's Metro's responsibility to ensure that these outside agencies can work well with us during an incident so that we all understand their protocols and procedures and they understand ours," Perez said."

"The fire departments and the police departments take this training very seriously and I appreciate their interest – that they take the time to get involved and learn Metro's facilities." he said.