

[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](#)

## Rail Class Aims to Keep Customer Relations Agents on Track

- Rail safety class also prepares employee transit riders to help in emergencies

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 11, 2008) To better prepare Metro employees to deal with a rail emergency and to aid Customer Relations representatives in explaining the 62-station Metro Rail system to riders, a new Rail Safety class offers an overview of the complex system.

The idea for the special class, a variation of the standard Rail Safety class, came to Duane Martin, director of Rail Transportation Operations, "as he read Customer Relations' answers to rider complaints about rail service.

"I started to see responses that I thought [indicated] the people responding to the customers didn't have a clear idea about how the system is integrated," Martin said.

In response, Martin began offering the new class in May. In addition to the standard subjects covered, attendees visit the Rail Operations Center and learn how the rail system is integrated.

"They see how the railroads are run," Martin said of the Customer Relations staff who have attended the Wednesday classes. "It gives them a broader perspective. They can now put their mind's eye to the complaints."



Dalila Valles, a passenger relations representative, recently attended the new Rail Safety class designed for Metro employees who routinely assist the public.

• Photo by Ned Racine

Dalila Valles, a passenger relations representative, came away from the class with a healthy respect for the power of the trains—particularly the Red Line—and the electrical systems that run them.

"I can't believe there is so much power," she said of the Red Line trains,

adding that passengers waiting on the station platforms should respect that power as well and avoid standing on the edge of the platform.

Besides being equipped to answer questions about why trains are single-tracked, why Red Line trains sometimes stop between stations and why bus bridges are needed, Valles learned there is an emergency walkway through the tunnels.

She also learned how to de-energize a track in an emergency. Valles saw some of the things she learned as crisis management, which fits with Martin's goals.

He sees Metro employees who are frequent Metro Rail riders as being crucial assets in a rail emergency if the operator needed help. "If we have employees on the train, we hope the employees [would] calm and inform the public," he added, "because it is impossible to have the [rail] staff everywhere."

"I can help others in case of an emergency rail situation," said Gail Harvey, director of Customer Relations, who was in Martin's first class. Harvey, who received a Rail Safety Certification badge, values learning of several safety pockets within a rail station. "Key locations where you can be safe," she added.

"I know a lot more about the aspects of rail safety: what to do, what not to do; how to help people if something goes wrong," said Harvey. Members of her Information Operators group have also taken the class.

Valles, who speaks with 30 to 40 callers each day, believes even a bit of accurate information shows that Metro has a handle on the situation.

Tom Horne, communications manager, who has had four of his five Customer Relations operators take the course, sees his operators better able to conduct "customer education" and offer a deeper understanding of rail operations when customers call.

"Once customers understand how the system works, they're more pleased with it," he said, adding that his newly trained operators can reduce caller frustration.

Eventually, Martin would like to offer the training to other Metro employees who ride the system, as well as key members of the community outside of Metro.