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First in a series of articles By Scott Norwood on emergency preparedness and resources available to Metro employees. Future articles will address ICS training for employees; personal emergency preparedness at home.



On the job - Transit Security Officers, from left, José Ortiz, Sgt. Yi Pu, German Poblano are among the Transit Security force whose scope includes Metro employees, facilities and patrons in the line of duty. *Photos: Gayle Anderson*

Metro's Security Transit at the Frontline of Emergency Preparedness

By SCOTT R. NORWOOD

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(Dec. 16, 2008) In light of national concern for preparedness in the face of natural disasters and the threat of terrorism, the Department of Homeland Security is increasing efforts to fully inform the public and private sectors in all levels of emergency preparedness.

Metro's Transit Security, a dedicated force of some 80 trained security personnel assigned to Metro facilities, is on the frontline of emergency operations within the agency.

Living up to its motto -- "Safety, Security, and Service" -- the force is undergoing intensive emergency preparedness training in order to serve and protect the employees, facilities and patrons served by the second largest transit system in the nation.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requires that all first responders be trained in Incident Command Systems (ICS).

The Incident Command System originated in California out of the FireScope program created by local fire agencies, and has been adopted by FEMA as

the system which will be used in every emergency response.

Last July, under a directive from DEO, Safety and Security Jack Eckles, the Security staff began training in ICS courses. These initial courses provide the first level of training required for first responders. All of Metro's Transit Security Officers have now completed the training.

The initial courses, an option now being offered to all Metro employees through OD&T, are as follows:

- **ICS 100**, Introduction to the Incident Command System, introduces the Incident Command System (ICS) and provides the foundation for higher level ICS training. This course describes the history, features and principles, and organizational structure of the Incident Command System. It also explains the relationship between ICS and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
- **ICS-200**, Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents is designed to enable personnel to operate efficiently during an incident or event within the Incident Command System (ICS). ICS-200 provides training on and resources for personnel who are likely to assume a supervisory position within the ICS.
- **ICS-700**, Introduction to National Incident Management System (NIMS) explains the purpose, principles, key components and benefits of NIMS. The course also contains "Planning Activity" screens to complete some planning tasks during this course.
- **ICS-800**, Introduction to National Response Framework introduces participants to the concepts and principles of the National Response Framework. This course is intended for government executives, private-sector and nongovernmental organization (NGO) leaders, and emergency management practitioners.

In preparing for their role in emergencies, the Transit Security force trains for situations that may involve one individual or many.

For example, a Metro customer was ejected from his wheelchair recently when one of his wheels jammed into a crack in the roadway. Seeing the man's distress, Transit Security Officer Willie Miles went to his assistance, protecting the man from potential oncoming traffic while returning him to his wheelchair. The grateful customer later wrote a letter to the department commending Officer Miles and noted: "We live in a crazy world and the mere presence of your security officers makes me feel safe and secure here in the workplace, but it is especially nice to know that I can count on their help in other ways."



Transit Security Officer Willie Miles

Officer Miles responded simply and to the point: "This is what we do."

Officer Miles is typical of the ongoing commitment of Metro Security to the welfare of Metro employees, patrons, and contractors. In the field or behind the security desk or on patrol, this is what they do.

