

[Home](#)[CEO Hotline](#)[Viewpoint](#)[Classified Ads](#)[Archives](#)[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](#)

New program will help keep wheelchair riders safe and secure aboard Metro buses

By Laura Kloth
myMetro.net

In an effort to improve safety and accessibility, Metro has launched a program requiring that all wheelchairs and scooters be properly secured on Metro buses.

The idea behind the "Wheelchair Marking and Tether Strap Program" is to keep wheelchair users safe as they ride, and to streamline the time it takes for operators to secure the devices properly, said Metro ADA Compliance Officer Chip Hazen.

Simulated crash tests show that wheelchair users can sustain serious injuries with their chairs being seriously damaged or even destroyed when not properly secured, he said.

As part of the first phase, expected to begin in February, Metro contractors will begin installing nylon tether straps or yellow plastic tape on 1,000 chairs or scooters over the next few months. Installation is expected to be completed by July or August.

At the same time, bus operators will undergo training to learn how to properly secure wheelchairs using the markings and/or tether straps.

"Right now some bus operators are guessing where to put the bus securement hooks," said Hazen. The new program will greatly simplify the process as Metro operators will now, ideally, be able to secure wheelchairs to the bus in less than a minute.

Some of the confusion has occurred because some wheelchairs meet the American National Standards WC-19, while many others do not. For the wheelchairs that do not meet the standards, Metro contractors will install either yellow tape pointing operators where to attach the bus strap. If there isn't a designated location, a nylon tether strap will be attached, Hazen explained.

Bus operators will then attach the bus



Art student Lucia Mendez of Los Angeles, who uses Metro buses frequently, says she hopes to benefit from the Wheelchair Marking and Tether Strap Program. *Photo by Laura Kloth*



A tether, shown above, can be attached to the wheelchair or scooter, below, at the request of the user.



strap to either the marked location or the tether strap. Operators will have strap cutters available to release chairs in case of an emergency.

The program, which is voluntary, has received positive reviews from potential benefactors and nonprofit groups assisting wheelchair users, he said.

Lucia Mendez of Los Angeles, an art student who uses a wheelchair, said she is eager to learn more about the program because her chair is never attached when she rides the bus to school. Noting that her chair doesn't have the tethers, Mendez said, at times her chair shifts around when she travels and that has been frightening,

particularly when she has to carry her portfolio and can't hold on.

"I think it is a good idea, and I think it's great that drivers will be trained better," she said.

Hazen estimates that between 600 to 800 wheelchair or scooter users board Metro buses daily. Approximately 5,000 wheelchair users who ride public transit systems countywide will potentially benefit from the program, he added.

Implementation of the program is the result of a decision made two years ago by Metro's Accessibility Advisory Committee requiring that all wheelchairs be properly secured.

The program's \$108,000 budget includes a \$54,000 matching grant from the New Freedom Fund under the Federal Transit Administration.

Long Beach Transit and the City of Pasadena will also participate in this program, while similar programs are already underway with Sacramento Transit and AC Transit in Oakland.