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Tagging damage to this sign over the 101 Freeway prompted Caltrans to issue an emergency repair.

Two Taggers Facing Vandalism Charges for Defacing Metro, Caltrans Property

By LAURA KLOTH
Staff Writer

(June 23, 2009) A couple of alleged taggers accused of defacing Metro and Caltrans property have been arrested over the past few weeks, said Los Angeles County Sheriff's Sgt. Augie Pando.

On June 10, sheriff's deputies from the Transit Service Bureau Special Problems Unit arrested Leol Mendivil, 19, who uses the alias of "Punter," and charged him with felony vandalism for allegedly defacing Metro Gold and Green line property, and Caltrans signs on the 101 Freeway.

The arrests follow a four-month investigation which led deputies to arrest Mendivil in his Highland Park residence after ramming down his door on the 1800 block of Daly Street, and issuing a warrant.

Pando said in the recent episode, a directional sign on the 101 Freeway was so badly covered in graffiti, "an extreme motorist safety issue resulted in Caltrans having to respond to address the damages immediately." The suspect's moniker was located on a directional sign on the 101 Freeway at Vignes Street and on the Gold Line Extension at Vignes Street, Pando said.

Mendivil was interviewed following the arrest and apparently admitted to the crime, Pando said. Damages were estimated at \$10,000.



Alleged tagger "Punter" displays his moniker on Metro Gold Line property.

On May 26, Cyrus Yazdani who goes by the name of "Buket" was charged with five counts of felony vandalism after he allegedly scribbled his moniker on a sign over the Hollywood Freeway, and then had it advertised on the internet. Damages were estimated at \$14,000.

Yazdani was also accused of defacing a business and a downtown bridge over the Los Angeles River. He was also charged with violating his probation from a couple of previous arrests involving similar acts.