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Carson Division Operator Keeps Passengers Safe after Freeway Blowout

By TCAP Intern Casandra Escobedo and
Rich Morallo, Community Relations Manager

(August 18, 2009) It was just past midnight on July 14. Metro Bus Operator Kenya Allison was on her last run with her Line 446 assignment on the 110 Freeway when she heard the left front tire blow out and felt the shudder beneath her as the entire bus sank down.



Operator Kenya Allison

Knowing the 25,000-pound bus was still moving but dropping at the same time, the Carson Division 18 operator thought, "Oh my God, I'm gone." Allison, a nine-year veteran with the agency, was heading south on the Harbor Freeway in her orange 40-foot bus and was just about to enter the Manchester Transitway Station when the tire burst open. Kenya knew she only had seconds to react.

"I remembered a supervisor telling me to hold the steering wheel steady and steer straight for front tire blowouts," Allison recounted.

Passengers looking out the left window could see the rubber separate from the bus and sparks flashing from the rim grating on the road. Traveling at 55 miles-per-hour, Allison focused on keeping her six passengers and herself safe.

Allison was also concerned about the safety of the moving vehicles around her. She steadied the steering and kept the bus traveling straight ahead and waited until the rumbling coach had slowed down before finally stepping on the brakes.

The bus, amazingly, slid right into the regular pickup location for passengers at the station. "God is good," Allison whispered when she checked to see her passengers were fine.



Metro South Bay Governance Council commends Operator Kenya Allison.

At the August 14 meeting of the Metro South Bay Governance Council, Chair Ralph Franklin and General Manager Dana M. Coffey commended Allison for her heroism and professionalism in keeping her passengers safe and preventing a major accident on the freeway.

"I had never had a tire blowout before," remarked Allison who started driving buses 12 years ago. " I was so thankful we were all safe and I didn't crash in the freeway, the station or collide into the freeway walls, " she added.