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How to put out a bus fire with a dry chemical fire extinguisher

from Mike Greenwood  
*DEO, Contract Services*

(Sept. 1, 2009) Fire extinguishers are standard equipment on every bus but do you know how to use one?

Twelve supervisors from the Westside/Central Sector Vehicle Operations (VO) Unit had a chance to prove their know-how when instructors from the Los Angeles Fire Department conducted a fire extinguisher drill at Metro Support Services Center (MSSC) Aug. 27.

With the smoke from the Station fire visible from the safety zone set up on MSSC grounds, the supervisors were trained in the use of the dry chemical fire extinguisher that is standard equipment on all 2,600 Metro buses and in all VO Supervisor vehicles. As temperatures approached 100 degrees in downtown Los Angeles, the supervisors learned what types of fires that can be put out with the dry chemical extinguisher, how it works and how long the supply of fire retardant material lasts.

The effort was organized through the joint efforts of the Los Angeles Fire Department Battalion Chief John Quintanar, Westside/Central Senior Safety Specialist Richard Long, and Westside/Central VO Assistant Manager Fernando Hernandez. The LAFD instructors were Capt. Carlos Avina and Firefighter Jeffrey Hudson. The training consisted of a lecture, a question and answer session, and hands-on experience in putting out a fire. Staff from several other sectors and Corporate Safety observed.

A second round of fire extinguisher training will be conducted for the remaining 12 supervisors in the 24-member Westside/Central Sector Vehicle Operations (VO) Unit. Organizers are proposing to take the training program on the road to all divisions and facilities to make certain that all personnel are fully equipped for fire and other emergency scenarios.

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