

MTA, L.A. Sheriff's Department Partner to Deploy Fare Inspectors on Metro Rail

- Inspectors will check fares, enhance security visibility and provide assistance to transit customers

Fare inspectors have been deployed on the Metro Red Line this week under a partnership between MTA and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department to supplement law enforcement on Metro Rail.

Thirty-two fare inspectors will now patrol Metro Red Line stations and the 7th Street/Metro Center Blue Line transfer station. Another 18 fare inspectors will be deployed to Metro Gold Line stations when the line opens this summer, bringing the total number of fare inspectors to 50. The L.A. Sheriff's Department will evaluate the new program on these lines before considering whether to expand fare inspector service on additional portions of the Metro rail system.

Fare inspectors are non-commissioned civilians who act on behalf of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department in providing security and fare checking duties for MTA. They will be a highly visible presence to passengers, able to write citations for ticketless patrons, eating and drinking, and can call for Sheriff's Department backup if needed. They will also act as transit ambassadors, helping transit riders with directions, information and other needed assistance.

"MTA will have more station security coverage than it has ever had before with the introduction of these fare inspectors," said Gerald Francis, general manager of rail operations at MTA. "They will supplement the eyes and ears of law enforcement, acting as a force multiplier to increase security on the Metro Red and Gold Lines, which frees up officers to focus on critical law enforcement duties. Furthermore, they will also serve as customer service ambassadors to our patrons."

Fare inspectors are in addition to -- and not a replacement of -- regular Sheriff's Department deputies assigned to Metro Rail who also perform fare inspection duties.

Fare inspectors will wear white uniform shirts and navy slacks, and will be equipped with the same radios that L.A. Sheriff's Department deputies use. They will attend regular security briefings alongside MTA Sheriff's deputies and MTA security officers.

Fare inspection is a critical function to ensure fairness for all transit riders and for MTA to operate a clean, safe and efficient transit system.

"By their very presence, fare inspectors encourage ticket purchases," said Dan Finkelstein, chief of transit police at MTA. "They have the authority to write citations for \$70 to \$240 depending on the number of offenses. While their main job is not to issue citations, they do provide a strong incentive for people to buy their ticket prior to boarding the train."

Fare inspectors were trained on heavy- and light-rail systems, safety, Sheriff's Department procedures, tactical communications, fare media recognition and identification of suspicious devices.

MTA contracted with the L.A. County Sheriff's Department in May to take over policing and security details on MTA's entire Metro transit system. The Sheriff's Department is working closely with MTA's transit operating supervisors, its transit security unit and Metro Rail management to coordinate security efforts.

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