



July 15, 2003

CONTACT:

Dave Sotero/Marc Littman

MTA MEDIA RELATIONS

(213) 922-3007/922-2700 www.mta.net/press/pressroom

e-mail: mediarelations@mta.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MTA Urges Residents to Make Safety a Priority Around Trains as Opening Nears for Metro Gold Line

- **MTA undertakes many safety, security measures to help ensure safe operation of Gold Line Trains**

With the opening of the Metro Gold Line just weeks away, MTA is calling on residents to make safety a priority around trains that will travel through the communities of downtown Los Angeles, Chinatown, Highland Park, Lincoln Heights, South Pasadena and Pasadena 23 hours per day starting July 26.

"MTA considers safety a partnership with the community," said Gerald Francis, general manager of rail operations at MTA. "It is a personal responsibility, and everyone must do their part to ensure the safe operation of trains in their neighborhoods. Otherwise, the many safety measures we've put into place can be rendered ineffective."

Trains have not operated in these communities for years, and a new generation of residents must understand and adhere to safety precautions along the 13.7 route. Electric P2000 trains are scheduled to run approximately every 10 minutes among 13 stations during peak hour commute times, and approximately every 12 to 20 minutes during non-commute hours.

To help ensure safety and security, MTA has leveraged its considerable experience as operator of the Metro Red, Blue and Green Lines in bringing proven, effective safety and security measures to L.A. County's newest rail line. It has also established a close security partnership with the L.A. County Sheriff's Department, and developed an effective community rail safety education program.

Rail Safety Operations

MTA has employed a suite of rail safety measures that have proven effective for 13 years on the Metro Blue Line, which serves the communities between downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach. MTA has made use of four quadrant gates on key intersections that completely seal them off when trains are crossing. Vehicle detection loops embedded in the pavement detect vehicles that may be caught within the intersection as the gates descend and automatically lift the nearest gate to allow the vehicle to escape. Additionally, 23 of the 30 at-grade crossings on the Metro Gold Line are equipped with pedestrian and swing gates, which bolster safety by completely closing the crossing to foot traffic.

Fiber optic signs installed on traffic signal cantilevers are utilized in street-running portions of the Metro Gold Line route to give drivers advance warning of approaching trains. Used previously on the Metro Blue Line, this safety measure has been instrumental in dramatically lowering the incidents of illegal left-hand turns. The Metro Blue Line has experienced a 50 percent drop in such incidents over the last two years.

MTA has also paid close attention to signage and striping at intersections to ensure compliance with Public Utilities Commission regulations. MTA will closely monitor other safety measures as well.

Station parking lots will be well lit, and closed circuit television cameras will be installed for monitoring purposes. Stations will be equipped with emergency intercoms that will be directly linked to close circuit television observers. Station structures will be well lit and will have no hiding spaces. To deter graffiti, flat surfaces have been minimized and wrought iron fences used instead of block walls.

Security Partnership with L.A. County Sheriff's Department

MTA has contracted with the L.A. County Sheriff's Department to take full security details on MTA's entire Metro transit system. The Sheriff's Department will work collaboratively with MTA's transit operating supervisors, its transit security unit and Metro Gold Line management to coordinate security efforts.

Sheriff's Department security assistants will be used to inspect fares at Metro Gold Line transit stations, allowing the Sheriff's Department to extend its coverage and visibility. Fare inspectors will also provide riders with information, directions and other assistance. They will also be able to write citations, call for backup using the same radios as Sheriff's deputies, and proactively resolve issues.

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

Contracted Metro Transit Sheriff's deputies and security personnel will patrol Metro Gold Line stations during all hours of operation. Metro Transit Sheriff's personnel's full-time policing and security measures will include vehicle and foot patrols onboard the trains and in passenger stations.

Sheriff's transit motorcycle deputies will also patrol the Metro Gold Line right-of-way full-time to ensure the safe passage of rail patrons, motorists, and pedestrians. Motorcycle deputies have helped reduce collisions dramatically along the Metro Blue Line, and will be frequently seen at Metro Gold Line grade crossings to help ensure traffic enforcement and community safety.

The Sheriff's Department has set up multiple bases of operation for policing the Metro Gold, Red, Blue and Green Lines to speed response times.

Rail Safety Education

Since September 2002, MTA has conducted proactive education presentations that detail rail safety issues to the community and, specifically, to surrounding schools. MTA's Community Relations Rail Safety team attended scores of community events and 71 area schools, reaching nearly 48,700 students with the rail safety message.

Here students are trained to be cognizant of approaching trains and their required stopping distances, to stay away from tracks and idle trains, and not to breach train crossing gates. MTA has created interactive DVD presentations to help the community recognize rail warning devices and how they function in their neighborhoods. Real-life examples are used to demonstrate what to do and what not to do near trains.

Retired rail operators have also joined MTA's community safety outreach by acting as safety ambassadors. Safety ambassadors are safety trained and work directly with residents in their neighborhoods to encourage appropriate safety behavior and answer their questions and concerns.

The newest tool in MTA's education arsenal is the "Metro Experience" mobile safety theater that employs advanced video and 3-D effects to simulate the true operation of a P2000 train along the actual Metro Gold Line route. The interactive presentation dramatically portrays the serious incidents that can occur if safety regulations are ignored, and provides an opportunity to make a visually compelling, lasting impression on children and adults. The mobile theater will be used throughout Los Angeles County.

