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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MTA Kicks Off "Safety Begins With Me" Campaign to Promote Safety Around Metro Trains, Buses

To help prevent accidents on Los Angeles County Metro properties, trains and buses, MTA announces the launch of its "Safety Begins With Me" public outreach campaign.

Consisting of newspaper and outdoor advertisements and a supporting community safety outreach program, the campaign urges residents within MTA's 1,433-mile service area to take personal responsibility and be aware of their own safety when riding MTA's nearly 2,400 Metro Buses and 73 miles of Metro Rail service throughout Los Angeles County.

"This is not just an MTA issue, but a community-wide issue for prevention of traffic-related injuries to pedestrians and others who live, work, and play in the Los Angeles area," said Roger Snoble, MTA's CEO.

"Safety Begins With Me" campaign advertisements this week began appearing in Los Angeles County newspapers, on the sides of Metro Buses and at Metro Bus and Rail stations. The ads urge people, young and old, to follow simple safety precautions to ensure their safety around the public transit system. Safety precautions include:

- Always wait for rail crossing gates to close and reopen before crossing an intersection.
- Hold on to your child's hand when using the escalators or getting on or off a Metro Bus or Train car.
- Never run near a bus or train. Wait for the next one.
- Never play near or on train tracks.
- Always use crosswalks, and make sure that motorists see you while crossing or making turns.

MTA continually focuses upon improving safety on its rail and bus lines. For example, on the Metro Gold and Blue Lines, which run at-grade, MTA has installed four-quadrant crossing gates that seal off key intersections when trains are crossing. Pedestrian and swing gates close crossings to pedestrian foot traffic. Vehicle detection loops detect and release vehicles caught within intersection crossing gates. Fiber optic signs on at-grade traffic signal poles give drivers advance warning of approaching trains.

Many buses are now equipped with rear wheel guards that will push fallen pedestrians away from bus tires, preventing a more serious and possibly life-threatening injury. Over 700 new buses are low-floor models that reduce the need to climb steps to board the bus. New Metro Buses will come with yellow painted poles that encourage people to hold onto rails while in transit.

Community safety education is a critical part of the "Safety Begins With Me" outreach campaign. Since September 2002, MTA has conducted proactive education presentations that detail rail safety issues to the community and, specifically, to area schools. MTA's Community Relations Rail Safety Outreach team attended scores of community events and made presentations at area schools, reaching 50,400 students with the safety message.

MTA also employs a "Metro Experience" mobile safety theater, to educate the public about rail safety. The mobile theater employs advanced video and 3-D effects to simulate the true operation of a Metro train. The ride is similar to the Star Wars "Star Tours" ride, with vibrating seats and surround sound. It provides an opportunity to make a compelling, lasting impression on children and adults.

Safety is MTA's top priority, both for its employees and its customers. MTA's proactive and ongoing "Safety's First" employee safety campaign advocates personal responsibility for preventing workplace accidents, and has proven

instrumental in steadily reducing the number of new injuries. In FY2003, total new worker's compensation claims per 100 employees decreased 31% from FY2002 levels, and the number of lost workdays decreased by 14.4%.

Public liability/property damage claims also fell precipitously in all five Metro Service Sector areas and on Metro Rail lines. Between FY2002 and FY2003, total public liability/property damage claims decreased by 18.3%.

Similar claims for Metro Rail decreased by 27.6%. MTA's total public liability/property damage expenses decreased 46.7%, representing a substantial reduction in safety-related costs for MTA.

"The number of accidents and injuries on the Metro system has consistently declined over the years, proving that MTA's ongoing safety efforts are making a positive difference," said Snoble. "But we must continue to do better. Our goal is zero accidents. Preventing accidents saves lives, and that is our first priority. At the same time, improved safety allows us to use our precious transportation dollars for improving and expanding Metro Bus and Rail service throughout Los Angeles County."

For additional information on Metro transit services or to plan your next trip, please call 1-800-COMMUTE or visit WWW.MTA.NET.

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