

Metro Statement in Response to Channel 7 Inquiry -- issued Oct. 13, 2009

In the interest of a balanced report, Metro feels it's incumbent upon Channel 7 to note the following:

Even though there are no federal requirements that between car barriers be installed as a device to provide fall protection between light rail vehicles on the Metro Blue Line, which opened in 1990, Metro has made numerous attempts to install platform Between Car Barriers (BCB) on its rail stations for years. Attempts were hampered by regulatory restrictions; however, on Oct. 16, 2008, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) authorized Metro to proceed with a six month test to prove to CPUC staff that the platform BCBs were safe.

Three months into the test, tragically, a visually-impaired man died when he walked between two Metro Blue Line train cars. On March 26, 2009, the CPUC granted Metro a variance to install the platform barriers on all its light rail lines and that work has been completed. Metro is currently evaluating implementing these same platform BCBs throughout the Metro Red and Purple Line stations.

Metro has long been pro-active in serving the needs of the visually-impaired community who use Metro Rail, and a member of the Braille Institute serves on the agency's accessible service advisory board. The following are some examples of Metro's work that go beyond ADA requirements:

- Installed platform barriers on all light rail stations.
- Automatic announcement systems have been installed in all light rail cars. The Red and Purple Line cars are 80% installed
- Wayfinding Kit developed to inform persons with vision impairments how to use Metro Rail.
- Maps of the rail lines in Braille and tactile lettering are available by calling 213-922-7023
- Eastside Extension of Gold Line has all cross walks color coded and tactile.
- Training program under development for persons with vision impairments on the safety features of Metro Rail. Will be implemented after the first of next year.
- New passenger information signs have been installed at all subway stations.

Producer Lisa Bartley has asked Metro to respond to dozens of complicated questions in less than 24 hours for a story that the producer says is all wrapped up except for comment by Metro. Ch. 7 now has our statement but we will go beyond that and answer some of Ms. Bartley's questions:

1. It is not true that Metro didn't respond to the family of Cameron Cuthbertson. In fact, the Metro Rail Operations general manager and two other Metro senior executives met with Mr. Cuthbertson's pastor, representing his family, and asked if they could contact the family directly and express our deepest sympathies. After Metro's Risk Management Executive Officer received permission from the family's attorney to contact the family, he and his staff made repeated calls to the family and left messages but never received a call back.
2. The FTA never gave "LACMTA a more explicit warning to install barriers" because we were and are in compliance with federal regulations.
3. None of the rail cars used on the Metro Blue line have been re-manufactured since 1990.
4. Yes, Metro regulations require the operator to use the rear view mirror and check for any safety issues before pulling out of the station.
5. Metro has safely carried hundreds of millions of passengers on the Metro Rail system.
6. When we ordered the new AnsaldoBreda train cars, we made sure gaps were blocked by cords and also security guards were strategically positioned by the center of the trains to warn passengers to stay away from the gap. By then we were pushing for the platform barriers, which are the most effective solution.
7. We're not using the "squishy/elephant ear barriers" because the platform barriers are more effective.