



Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

**Metro**

**News**

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## **METRO LAUNCHES GROUNDBREAKING HOTLINE TO ASSIST VICTIMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Furthering its commitment to assist transit passengers who have experienced unwanted sexual contact, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) today announced a first-of-its-kind 24/7 sexual harassment counseling hotline.

The hotline, 1-844-Off-Limits (633-5464), will be staffed by counselors from the community advocacy organization Peace Over Violence, which has 45 years of experience counseling victims of sexual abuse in Los Angeles County. The hotline is a one-year pilot program.

“This 24/7 hotline is part of Metro’s commitment to keeping the system a safe space for all passengers,” said Metro Board Chair John Fasana. “Launching the round the clock sexual harassment hotline shows that Metro cares about our riders experiences and that we’re committed to their safety.”

The Metro 844-Off-Limits (633-5464) hotline features counselors who are trained to address issues related to sexual harassment on a transit system. Peace Over Violence is the pre-eminent victim rights advocacy organization in L.A. County and has maintained a rape and battering hotline for the past 45 years of service.

“A victim of sexual harassment on a bus or train might have to encounter their harasser on a daily basis while traveling to work or school,” said Patty Giggans, Executive Director of Peace Over Violence. “We want victims to make reports and also have the resources they need to recover in a healthy way.”

Metro ramped up efforts to reduce sexual harassment on the bus and rail system in April 2015 with the “It’s Off Limits” campaign that encouraged victims and witnesses to contact police with reports of harassment. The campaign included advertisements posted on 2,200 buses and 400 train cars in addition to distributing tens of thousands of information cards throughout the transit system. The rate of sexual harassment has decreased from 22 to 15 percent since the inception of the campaign.

Metro has also implemented cell service in Red/Purple Line stations in downtown Los Angeles, increased video surveillance and monitoring of the transit system and added provisions to the Metro Code of Conduct to specifically prohibit many different types of harassment.

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“No other transit agency in the world has a 24/7 sexual harassment victim hotline,” said Metro CEO Phillip Washington. “The establishment of this pilot program exemplifies Metro’s commitment to protecting our customers from this kind of abuse.”

“Metro partnered with Peace Over Violence nearly two years ago and efforts to make the transit system a safe space for all travelers are increasingly successful, but we’re not resting on our laurels,” said Los Angeles Mayor and Metro First Vice Chair Eric Garcetti. “We’re providing resources for our passengers who may experience long-lasting effects from unwanted sexual contact.”

### **About Metro**

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is unique among the nation’s transportation agencies. Created in 1993, Metro is a multimodal transportation agency that transports about 1.3 million passengers daily on a fleet of 2,200 clean air buses and six rail lines. The agency also oversees bus, rail, highway and other mobility-related building projects and leads transportation planning and programming for Los Angeles County.

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