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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Begins Improved Security and Emergency Response Training

NYC Transit first of 28,000 MTA front-line employees to be trained to spot suspicious behavior, communicate in a crisis

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) this week began an improved security and emergency response training initiative that will be required for 28,000 of the agency's front-line employees. The goal of the session is to better prepare employees most likely to be on the scene of an emergency to identify potentially dangerous situations and communicate more effectively in crises. Employees from NYCT, MTA Bus, LIRR and MNR will receive training, beginning with more than 24,000 from NYC Transit.

"The MTA's front-line employees are both our first line of defense and our first responders in case of emergency," said Elliot G. Sander, MTA Executive Director and CEO. "We have a responsibility to train our men and women for potential emergencies, and I believe this new course will help protect our entire system."

"It's heartening to see the MTA finally take a common sense approach to terrorism in our transit system," said Roger Toussaint, President of Transport Workers Union Local 100. "For too long, we have stood by ourselves in demanding that transit workers are trained to react and respond to the dangers they face on the job every day. This initiative gives our members some of the tools they need to face the new reality of our transit system after 9/11."

The half-day sessions include a block on "Identifying and Reporting Suspicious Activities," and another on "Crisis Communications." The first block includes information on how the system may be targeted, recognizing suspicious behavior, describing such persons, and dealing with such individuals. The second block deals with what and how to report such activity and interacting with customers during crises.

The course will be delivered to approximately 28,000 front-line personnel who have direct customer contact, and who will function as the "on-scene responders" in the event of an incident. Funding for the initiative is being provided by the MTA, including course delivery and reimbursement for the employees. It is anticipated that it will take up to two years to train Bus and MTA Bus personnel, and about eighteen months for Subways. Once the training for NYCT is operational, the railroads will receive a similar program.

The course and its curriculum were prepared by two consultants with broad experience in Security and Emergency Response. They are the National Transit Institute, part of Rutgers University, and the EAI Corporation, part of Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC). The two firms reviewed the agencies' current training and procedures, and held many formal and informal discussions with employees and supervisors to help prepare the curriculum. The curriculum is based on past incidents, current events, and emerging trends.