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Press Release

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[NYC Transit](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA New York City Transit & TWU Local 100's Statement on Bus Operator Safety

Thousands of MTA New York City Transit employees work in front-line positions, bringing them in contact with the public on a daily basis. While they receive introductory and refresher training on how to deal with customer disputes, there is always the chance that the rider will not demonstrate the same type of patience and communication skills that come as second-nature to bus operators, station agents and conductors.

Yesterday afternoon, Flatbush Depot Bus Operator Edwin Thomas, 46, crossed paths with a rider who failed to pay the fare and then demanded a transfer. Despite a measured, reasonable and non-confrontational response from Bus Operator Thomas the result was tragic, ending in Thomas' death. In the wake of this incident, the NYPD is aggressively pursuing all leads as detectives seek to identify and arrest the individual responsible for this heinous crime. We all await the outcome of their investigation.

Brooklyn District Attorney Charles J. Hynes has historically worked closely with NYC Transit and the TWU, particularly in the creation of the Assault on Transit Workers Program, an initiative designed to ensure that assaults on front-line NYC Transit workers will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. The program consists of a team of prosecutors and investigators who look into cases where a transit worker has been seriously injured, shot at or attacked with a deadly weapon, or if there is an attempted assault.

Edwin Thomas' family members are in the thoughts and prayers of MTA New York City Transit and Transport Workers Union Local 100. Management and union stand as one in support of the Thomas family. MTA New York City Transit President Howard H. Roberts, Jr. and TWU Local 100 President Roger Toussaint met this morning to discuss an immediate and coordinated response to the problem of bus operator assaults, which occur on an alarmingly frequent basis. In the short term, the two presidents have ordered an immediate meeting of the Joint Bus Operator Assault Committee (BOAC) – a union-management committee tasked with addressing this problem. A couple of the deterrents under consideration are a direct-to-911 button and some form of physical barrier.

Legally, we will be working with the state legislature, jointly seeking to change the definition of bus operator assault and toughen the associated penalties.

We are doing our best to assure transit employees in general and bus operators in particular that labor and management are working together to help prevent a recurrence of this tragic incident.