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Press Release

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[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

Grand Central Terminal Fire Brigade Team, Metro-North Engineer and Metro-North Conductor Commended for Helping Save Commuter's Life

Receive Special Recognition from Metro-North Acting President Catherine Rinaldi

MTA Metro-North Railroad today announced that three first responders from the railroad's Grand Central Terminal Fire Brigade, a Metro-North engineer and a Metro-North conductor were recognized for helping save the life of a customer who went into cardiac arrest while on board a train this summer. Metro-North Acting President Catherine Rinaldi thanked the employees for their extraordinary efforts at today's meeting of the MTA Board's Metro-North Railroad Committee.

Two minutes after the 4:45 p.m. New Haven Line train departed from Grand Central Terminal on July 19, a customer knocked on the head cab door. The customer told the train's engineer, Danielle Bonge and the train's conductor, John O'Brien that a man on board had passed out and may have had a seizure.

John O'Brien raced to assist and assess the situation, and Bonge stopped the train and placed a call to the rail control center, advising them a customer was in medical distress and that the train may have to return to the Terminal. "We get to know our customers," said Bonge, who lives in Lindenhurst, New York. "They wind up becoming part of your life, and the most important thing at the moment was to be poised and ready to get that man the help he needed."

"When I got back to the train car, I saw a man lying in the aisle, and another customer, who identified himself as a doctor, administering CPR. The doctor told me that this man was having a heart attack," said O'Brien, who lives in Staten Island, New York.

Finding the quickest route possible, O'Brien climbed over seats to get around the man in cardiac arrest and made his way to the nearest cab with a radio. He placed a second radio call to the rail control center and told them the customer was having a heart attack and the train needed to make a reverse move back to Grand Central Terminal. The rail control center cleared Bonge to make the move and alerted the MTAPD, EMS and the Grand Central Terminal Fire Brigade to meet the train. As Bonge brought the train back to the Terminal, she made a PA announcement asking anyone with a medical background to go the car where the man was having a heart attack to assist.

When the dispatch call crackled over the Grand Central Terminal Fire Brigade's radio, Andrew Seicol, Assistant Fire Chief, GCT Fire Brigade, and James Tipa, Fire EMS Officer, GCT Fire Brigade, jumped into action. Seicol and Tipa grabbed their gear and drove one of the Brigade's unique fleet of electric carts, customized for medical and fire emergencies, from the unit's firehouse inside the Terminal to meet the arriving train on the platform.

Bonge saved precious seconds by stopping the train short at the Terminal to meet waiting MTAPD officers. When the train platformed, O'Brien kept the doors closed so that medical services and the police would have a clear path to the car.

Seicol and Tipa spotted the MTAPD officers on the platform, and less than three minutes after receiving the radio call, they were inside the vestibule of the train administering life-saving first aid to the customer. "We quickly began working with the MTAPD on the patient who was in cardiac arrest," said Seicol, from White Plains, New York.

Seicol and Tipa asked the conductors to clear the car. Seicol began ventilations with a bag valve mask, providing the man in cardiac arrest with supplemental oxygen, while three medical professionals who happened to be on board the train continued administering CPR. As Seicol managed the man's breathing, Tipa applied AED (automated external defibrillator) to analyze his heart rhythm. "The AED indicated this was a 'shockable rhythm,'" said Tipa, from Mt. Kisco, New York. After delivering a single jolt, and several more cycles of chest compressions, one of the assisting medical professionals located a pulse.

"It was a great outcome," said Tipa. "The man suddenly regained consciousness, and he seemed lucid and aware. The train's engineer, the MTAPD, the good people on the train, the Fire Brigade, we all came together and averted a tragedy." As the man regained consciousness, an FDNY EMS team arrived at the platform to transport him to an area hospital.

"I've been an EMT for eleven years and a firefighter for more than twelve years," said Seicol, who also serves as a volunteer firefighter in Westchester County. "I've responded to a number of cardiac events like this one, and this is the first one where a patient completely regained consciousness while we were still on-scene. It was great team work and a remarkable moment."

"Quick access to CPR and AED often has a great influence on the outcome of incidents like this one," said Jonathan Lee, Chief, GCT Fire Brigade, who was on the scene assisting and overseeing his crew. "Grand Central Terminal is a vast and unique building, covering over 12 city blocks above and below street level. The Brigade and MTAPD are first on the scene for emergencies at the Terminal, and we coordinate closely with FDNY so that the proper resources and personnel get to the incident location as quickly as possible."

"Customers, employees and visitors to Grand Central Terminal should feel assured that in the event of an emergency, Metro-North train crew members, the MTAPD and the GCT Fire Brigade stand ready to assist at a moment's notice," said Catherine Rinaldi, Metro-North Acting President. "This incident underscores the exemplary professionalism, skill and compassion of our employees. I'm proud to recognize Danielle, John, Andrew, James and Jonathan, and extend my thanks for their efforts."

In 2016, the Grand Central Terminal Fire Brigade responded to 1,514 calls, and over 1,200 thus far in 2017. "We're not just a reactionary unit; prevention is the name of the game," said Lee, from Nassau County, New York. "In addition to emergency response, the Brigade performs regular fire prevention inspections, as well as fire and evacuation drills. We also provide training for other agencies." There are over 4,000 fire detection devices at Grand Central Terminal, and hundreds of rooms and areas to inspect.

Metro North Railroad also has fire brigade units at the North White Plains, Croton-Harmon, Brewster, Stamford and New Haven train yards. These units are staffed by employees from Metro-North who hold other jobs at the railroad and participate because they care about giving back and making a difference at their workplace. All brigade members undergo intensive, initial training that involves 130 hours at one of the regional training centers for firefighting. Emergency Medical Technicians complete 175 hours of initial training, and they must recertify every three years.

(*photo caption, left to right, Susan G. Metzger, Chair Metro-North Railroad Committee; Andrew Seicol, Assistant Fire Chief, GCT Fire Brigade; James Tipa, Fire EMS Officer, GCT Fire Brigade; Jonathan Lee, Chief, GCT Fire Brigade; Danielle Bonge, Metro-North Railroad Engineer; John O'Brien, Metro-North Railroad Conductor; Catherine Rinaldi, Acting President, Metro-North Railroad)

