

Office of Safety and Security Transit Security Newsletter

Volume No. 3

September 1997

SYSTEM SECURITY PROGRAM PLAN

The Washington (D. C.) Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) has completed a draft *System Security Program Plan* to meet the State Safety Oversight deadline of January 1, 1998. The security plan is a requirement mandated by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to maximize security for rail fixed guideway (transit) systems.

The plan utilizes a systems approach, defining the security expectations for all employees and patrons in addition to highlighting specific roles and responsibilities for transit police. The WMATA security plan was developed over a 6-month period by Sergeant Amy Phillips and a team of WMATA officials and Transit Police officers. Final editing and management approval is underway prior to the document being presented to the Tri-State Oversight Committee which has safety oversight responsibility for WMATA rail operations.

One key feature of the plan as suggested in the *Transit System Security Program Planning Guide* published by the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center for FTA, is preparation and planning for potential security threats. This proactive approach to transit policing is contrary to the traditional security concept of reactive post-incident investigations. Problematic areas of vulnerability and potential security threats are addressed. Included are action plans that provide methods to reduce the probability of threat occurrence.

Another key feature of the plan addresses the operating environment of the system. Crime prevention through environmental design is a concept that has only recently gained international acceptance, but one which has been used by WMATA from the beginning of the system's design phase. Transit engineers use design concepts from security professionals to harden the targets of newly constructed environments as well as for upgrading facilities.

These two features are only a fraction of the information researched and developed by WMATA to describe and implement its comprehensive security program plan. After careful analysis of security data collected, the plan will become a reflection of the operating system. The plan will provide WMATA Transit Police with critical information regarding the proper direction for their policing efforts.

For further information, contact Sergeant Amy Phillips at 202, 962-2190.

Information Exchange

- During the week of June 8, 1997, Amtrak management and police personnel traveled to England and Belgium to meet with

the British Transport Police, London Metropolitan Police, and Belgian Railway Police to share knowledge involving handling bomb threats and incidents. Some threats made against Amtrak are similar to those handled by the British Transport Police, namely telephone bomb threats to trains and facilities, unattended luggage and packages on trains and in stations, and tunnel and right-of-way vulnerabilities. The Amtrak team reviewed the security procedures of Eurostar, the transportation system connecting London to France through and tunnel under the English Channel. Passenger-related checking and security system procedures were reviewed with the Belgian Railway Police in Brussels. The Amtrak Police Department will utilize information it has gained from this exchange to further its work in developing a counter- terrorism plan. For further information call Mary Ann McGee at 215, 349-1252.

Best Practices/Lessons Learned

- In February 1997, the FTA Office of Safety and Security initiated a voluntary transit security audit program. Aegir Systems, Inc., is FTA's security audit consultant. This audit program is for all sizes and types of transit systems. To date, pilot audits have been conducted at San Diego Transit, WMATA, SEPTA, Metro-Dade, Denver/Boulder, and BART. Once a transit agency has volunteered for this program, the audit process begins with a pilot audit followed in six months by the first audit, with the second and third audits each being done after 12-month intervals. For those agencies which fall under the FTA state safety oversight regulation, such an audit could facilitate compliance. The audits will 1) assist in developing measures to enhance the security of patrons, employees, and facilities; (2) assist in implementing a security program that best suits the individual needs of each agency; (3) help transit agencies prepare for the security phase of the state safety oversight regulation; and 4) identify industry-wide concerns and trends. For further information, contact Carole Ferguson at 202, 366-2896.
- During the week of August 18, Governor Pete Wilson of California signed Assembly Bill 946 which increased the maximum fine from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for battery against an operator, station agent, or passengers of a transit system.

Drills

- In partnership with the City of Boston and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, the Amtrak Police Department sponsored the Amtrak South Station Terrorism Exercise on June 18, 1997, at Boston's Black Falcon Terminal. Agencies including the FBI, U. S. Coast Guard, and the Boston Police and Fire Departments joined Amtrak for the functional/tabletop

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drill. Also participating were representatives from 62 local, state, federal, private, and volunteer agencies, including local hospitals. The objective was to improve interagency communications and coordination among participating agencies during a terrorist event. The scenario involved release of a chemical agent at South Station. The entire drill was videotaped and a follow-up interagency critique is scheduled. For further information call Mary Ann McGee at 215, 349-1252.

Noteworthy Events

During the week of July 13, a training event was conducted to prepare for a terrorist attack on Washington, D. C., and its suburbs. An elite unit of 129 people--the Metro Medical Strike Team (MMST)--was preparing for the day when a terrorist incident similar to that in Tokyo in 1995 might occur in the Washington Metropolitan region.

This was part of a 2-year training program for the team, funded with \$500,000 in Federal money under a program approved two years ago by President Clinton. This team, the first of its kind in the nation, was formed by the U. S. Public Health Service and the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments to handle chemical terrorist events in the region. It consists of firemen, law enforcement officers, nurses, paramedics, and other emergency medical personnel from the District, including WMATA Police, Montgomery and Prince George's counties in Maryland, the city of Alexandria, and Arlington, Fairfax, and Prince William counties in Virginia.

The funds were used for recruitment, training, equipment, and a specially designed 20-foot trailer which converts into an emergency decontamination shower station which can serve up to 750 people an hour. The trailer, which cost \$65,000, was designed by Arlington County Fire Department Captain Mike Moultrie, one of three strike team leaders. The Tyvek suits used in the drill will prevent team members from becoming contaminated.

It is estimated that the MMST requires from 60-90 minutes to mobilize, depending on their destination. However, it is still local fire and rescue and law enforcement personnel who are usually the first responders. The local Haz-Mat team should arrive next, enter the hot zone, and try to identify the type of chemical agent or agents used.

This team was the first assembled because the nation's capital is a prime target for terrorists. An additional 26 cities nationwide are gearing up to create similar strike teams. The program is funded under Nunn-Lugar II, which was discussed in the July issue of this newsletter. For further information on the Atlanta team, which is

nearly complete, call Bernie Hicks, Atlanta-Fulton County, 404, 730-5685. For further information on the overall program, contact Mr. William Clark, U. S. Public Health Service, Office of Emergency Preparedness, 301, 443-1167, ext. 41. (Excerpted in part from the *Montgomery Journal*, July 20, 1997)

Commendations

- At approximately 2:35 a.m. on Sunday, June 29, two MTA Metro-North police officers reported heavy smoke condition in the west shuttle passageway of Grand Central Terminal. The smoke filled the upper and lower levels of the Terminal. The fire reportedly started in a defective refrigerator compressor inside the oyster bar. The entire Terminal, including the rail traffic control center, was evacuated. The 4-alarm blaze required 44 pieces of fire apparatus and over 100 fire fighters. Although the initial blaze was brought under control at approximately 3:20 a.m., several secondary fires continued to burn elsewhere in the Terminal. During the incident, Metro-North Police re-entered the Terminal several times to search for missing employees or direct firemen to critical locations. The Terminal was reopened without disruption to service. Officers Pressley, DeFrancesco, Acevedo, Kinahan, Cody, Whitfield, and Monaco and Sergeant O'Brien were commended for their outstanding efforts.

Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) Police Officers John Kowalchuck (1 year of service) and Eric Huber (1 years of service) were on patrol near the LIRR terminal at Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues in Brooklyn on July 31, 1997. At about 11:45 p.m., they were approached by an individual who was visibly in distress and spoke poor English. He tried to communicate to the officers his knowledge of a bomb-making operation. The man was extremely apprehensive about being seen talking to police and was in fear for his life. Aware of the recent suicide bombings in Jerusalem, and concerned with the threat to public safety, the officers determined the person with whom they were dealing was sufficiently convincing to cause them to investigate further. They immediately secured him from public view and established a rapport which contributed to eliciting further details of a bombing conspiracy. Within minutes of their first contact, the two officers notified their superiors and arranged for the man to be taken to the New York Police Department and debriefed through an interpreter. Follow-up by the NYPD and FBI led to the discovery of explosive devices in a house in Brooklyn and revealed the fact that transportation facilities had been targeted. Although the suspects in the house were wounded, no law enforcement officers were injured during the recovery of the explosive devices and a disaster was averted thanks to the alertness of Officers Huber and Kowalchuck.

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Meetings

- 9/21-25 American Public Transit Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL (202, 898-4000)
- 10/1-3 Counter-Terrorism Tactical and Security Equipment Exhibition and Seminar, Atlanta, GA (703, 527-8000)
- 10/21-23 Security Canada Central '97, Toronto, Ontario (905, 513-0622)
- 10/25-30 International Association of Chiefs of Police Annual Convention, Orlando, FL (703, 836-6767)
- 11/2-4 Security Industry Forum, Palm Beach, FL (703, 683-2075)
- 11/10-11 Safe Public Transport, Safe Cities: Perception, Concepts, Measures, Experience, Berlin, Germany, International Union of Public Transport (32 2 673 6100)
- 11/10-12 High-Tech Security Expo and Conference, Fort Lauderdale, FL (703, 683-2075)
- 11/17-19 Moving Kids Safety, U. S. Department of Transportation, Tysons Corner, VA (202, 366-2896)
- 4/7-9/98 International Land Transportation Security Technology Conference, Atlanta, GA, National Institute of Justice/ Department of Transportation (202, 305-4638)

Training

- 9/22-26 Transit System Security, Richland, WA, Federal Transit Administration/Transportation Safety Institute (405, 954-3682)
- 10/7-9 The Defense Budget: Process and Issues Related to National Security Funding, Washington, DC, The Brookings Institution (202, 797-6299)
- 11/17-20 Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies, Philadelphia, PA, Federal Transit Administration/Transportation Safety Institute (405, 954-3682)
- 11/18-20 The Presidency, Congress, and National Security Policy, Washington, DC, The Brookings Institution (202, 797-6299)
- 12/8-12 Transit System Security, Baltimore, MD, Federal Transit Administration/Transportation Safety Institute (405, 954-3682)

3/23-27/98 Transit System Security, Pompano Beach, FL, Federal Transit Administration/Transportation Safety Institute (405, 954-3682)

5/11-15/98 Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies, Denver, CO, Federal Transit Administration/Transportation Safety Institute (405, 954-3682)

6/2-3/98 The Changing National Security Environment: Discussions with Key Players and Policymakers, Washington, DC, The Brookings Institution (202, 797-6299)

Newly Available Reports

Safety Management Information Statistics (SAMIS), 1995 Annual Report, April 1997, FTA-MA-26-9033-97-1, Federal Transit Administration, Office of Safety and Security (202, 366-2896). This issue is the first SAMIS report to include statistics on crimes occurring on transit systems.

Other

Response during the past two months has been outstanding. Please keep the articles coming. If they do not fit under existing headings, we will create new ones, as with the "**Commendations**" section in this issue.

If you note any inaccuracies on the address label, please fax corrections to the number shown below. Since it is sometimes helpful to have phone and FAX numbers, please include these in any such communication.

Note: All information for the next issue of this newsletter should be sent to Edith Rodano, Office of Safety and Security, Federal Transit Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D. C. 20590 (202, 366-0191; FAX: 366-7951/ 3206) no later than October 15, 1997.