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Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: PHILLIP A. WASHINGTON *PAW*
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: ROBERT F. GREEN *RG*
CHIEF OF SYSTEMS SECURITY AND LAW
ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

SUBJECT: TEMPORARY COVID-19 ONE-BAG RECOMMENDATION

ISSUE

During the April Regular Board Meeting, Board Director Mike Bonin asked for a review of the temporary COVID-19 One-Bag recommendation.

BACKGROUND

Due to early perceptions that COVID-19 might have spread quickly in New York through the public transportation system and led to high numbers of commuters and transit employees contracting the disease, Metro staff participated in a conference call on March 29, 2020 with Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Director, Dr. Barbara Ferrer, representatives from the County Emergency Operations Board, Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, Los Angeles Police Department, and Metro's System Security and Law Enforcement (SSLE) and County Counsel departments to discuss the need for additional strategies or Public Health Orders that would help mitigate the possible threat. During the discussion, it was determined that existing Public Health Orders and recommendations (Safer at Home, Essential Travel Only, Social Distancing) were sufficient. An additional recommendation was to limit personal belongings to reduce the likelihood of COVID-19 spread through exposure to items riders carry on board.

DISCUSSION

To reduce the potential for COVID-19 spread and anxiety felt by operators and individuals using the system, SSLE worked with Transit Security and our law enforcement partners to implement a strategy of education of the Public Health Orders, and encourage patrons to limit items carried on board transit. It was determined that voluntary compliance with both the order and the One-Bag recommendation would best be achieved through education, rather than enforcement.

Hence, the direction was provided to each agency to engage in an education campaign on the law and policies to increase public safety. This campaign included signage and announcements.

The One-Bag recommendation for riders was shared in an article on Metro's The Source on March 30, 2020. The article stated, "...Metro encourages those using the system to only bring aboard one personal item. That can include a purse, backpack or similar sized work utility." The One-Bag recommendation specifically was not included on signage or in announcements. Understanding the prevalence of situations involving shoppers with multiple bags or families with children and multiple bags, police officers and Metro security officers have been reminded that One-Bag is a recommendation, and Security's focus is on an education campaign and to use discretion in their interactions with patrons.

Since March 30, 2020, when the One-Bag recommendation were enacted, there have been two complaints about the policy. On both occasions, SSLE investigated the circumstances and provided additional training to the individuals involved.

NEXT STEPS

SSLE will continue to remind its partners and staff of the need to educate commuters to gain voluntary compliance and to use good judgement and reason while enforcing the law and recommendations related to COVID and essential travel.