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A
Metropolitan
Transportation
Authority

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TO: ~~BOARD OF DIRECTORS~~
FROM: *Paul J. Lennon*
PAUL J. LENNON, MANAGING DIRECTOR,
OFFICE OF SYSTEM SAFETY AND SECURITY
SUBJECT: **AGENCY RESPONSE TO CNG (COMPRESSED**
NATURAL GAS) INCIDENTS

ISSUE

Recent CNG vehicle incidents, inclusive of the Bus hijacking incident of May 2, 2001, have prompted the Agency to review its emergency procedures, practices and interaction with emergency first responders. This report updates the Board as to internal review findings and the action plan being developed to enhance first responder awareness, ensure public safety and improve service recovery.

DISCUSSION

The MTA relies on the assistance of emergency 1st Responders - Fire Service, Law Enforcement, Health and Haz-Mat units - to control and contain any CNG emergency.

Historically, emergency personnel stationed near CNG fuel facilities at bus divisions were trained on CNG incident management as each facility came on-line. That same training, however, has not been offered to all emergency responders throughout the MTA system. The MTA service area is quite extensive - 88 cities and 8,000 square miles - and the number of CNG buses on public rights-of-way are increasing significantly. There is an increased probability that 1st responder agencies who are not fully trained in CNG transit vehicle fuel systems may become involved with a CNG bus fire, traffic collision or an action involving criminal activity.

The Office of System Safety and Security has an extensive CNG System Safety program in place and is considered to be one of the leaders in the safe utilization and operation of a CNG fleet in North America. Part of that program is directed to emergency response and mitigation measures for CNG incidents.

After the May 2nd hijacking, the Office of System Safety and Security initiated a multi-departmental review and assessment to ascertain MTA's CNG Emergency Response program's effectiveness and to develop a path forward for any recommended enhancements. Representatives of the Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles Fire Department, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Los Angeles County Fire Department as well as Transit Operations Transportation and

Maintenance personnel were invited to meet and share their experiences gained during CNG incident responses.

An analysis of the input received reflected that there was a large variance in 1st Responder knowledge base and skill in handling CNG incidents. An action plan was then developed to expand CNG awareness and training and a task force to accomplish this was instituted in late May. A two-tiered approach to the 1st Responder training and awareness educational project was decided upon by that task force, which was made up of outside agencies and MTA departments previously mentioned.

NEXT STEPS

The first tier to be addressed is an MTA-developed and produced “CNG Field Service Guide for 1st Responders.” This booklet would consist of a pictorial section with all MTA CNG bus types displayed and a bulleted instructional section that would swiftly guide responding personnel with procedures on CNG hazard mitigation. This booklet would then be distributed through a “Train the Trainer” seminar hosted by the MTA and attended by all 1st responder agencies within the MTA service area. A September 2001 date has been tentatively set. The Systemwide Safety unit of the Office of System Safety and Security leads this effort.

The second tier of this project would be to develop a full-length training video that would be produced and distributed to all 1st responder agencies within the MTA service area. This video, used in conjunction with each agency’s Emergency Operations Procedures, would provide a global outreach to all personnel. The Bus Operations Safety unit of the Office of System Safety and Security is the lead in seeking grant and FTA assistance in providing financial support to this CNG video development. This educational medium would have application not only for the MTA and its emergency response agencies, but could serve all transit properties that have CNG vehicles.

In closing, the MTA has an effective CNG training program in place that has been and continues to be shared with training representatives of 1st responder agencies. It has been determined that training efforts for emergency response to CNG incidents need to be increased and expanded. This is based on the increased variety of CNG buses, their advanced operating systems and the ever expanding need of emergency 1st responding agencies for that knowledge and the means to provide it cost effectively throughout the MTA service area. The Office of System Safety and Security will lead in this endeavor.

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