Rail Safety Ambassador Program Overview

In an effort to provide continuity and program guidelines, Metro Community Education (formerly known as Transit Safety Programs) in collaboration with Metro Operations, Corporate Safety, Risk Management, and Legal has created this document to outline the implementation process of the Metro Rail Safety Ambassador Program.

Background
Within Metro’s Community Relations Department, Metro Community Education (MCE) created the Rail Safety Ambassador (RSA) Program in 2003. In an effort to educate the public about safety when near tracks and trains and to observe and report traffic behaviors, the program started out with six RSAs on the Metro Gold Line to Pasadena. Since that time, the program has expanded but continues to support MCE’s ongoing safety education outreach efforts conducted on Metro’s street-running light rail alignments (Blue, Expo and Gold Lines).

Purpose and Scope
The original intent of the program was to conduct safety outreach on Metro’s new rail lines, or extensions to existing rail lines, for a period of 90 days prior to revenue service through the first 90 days of revenue service. Over the years, however, the Rail Safety Ambassador Program has been expanded to support other Metro departments for special projects such as intersection evaluation for grade crossing gates for the Gold Line Eastside Extension, redesign of the Little Tokyo station pedestrian entrance and exit gates, opening of the El Monte Busway, replacement of the pedestrian swing gates on the Gold Line Eastside Extension, and the opening of the First Street Bridge. In some instances, the typical 90 day pre/post-revenue service timeline has been extended.

RSAs are retired Metro bus and rail operators and are eligible for rehire. These men and women serve as Metro’s grassroots safety education team, supporting MCE’s safety education outreach efforts. RSAs observe and record behaviors of pedestrians and motorists around grade crossings along Metro’s street running light rail alignments (Blue, Expo and Gold Lines), distribute safety materials, and explain safe practices when they observe people performing unsafe acts.

RSAs have received commendations from the City of Los Angeles and the City of Arcadia. In 2013, the program received the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Gold Award for Safety citing, “the Ambassadors played a pivotal role in encouraging the community to adopt safer behaviors, intervening when they observed unsafe acts, and educating the public about the meaning of the new warning signs installed at the crossings.”
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Deployment Criteria
RSAs are stationed at critical grade crossings. Critical grade crossings are determined by the following criteria during the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) process when the rail line is in its planning phase, and may possess one or more of the following characteristics:

- Close proximity to schools;
- Population density;
- Pedestrian/Bicyclist traffic volume;
- Vehicle traffic volume;
- Grade crossing design;
- Railroad alignment characteristics; and,
- Operating requirements.

Observing and Recording
RSAs observe and record behaviors by pedestrians and motorists at grade crossings along Metro’s street-running light rail alignments (Blue, Expo and Gold Lines). Observations by RSAs are recorded on Daily Report Forms which are turned in to MCE management at regularly-scheduled RSA meetings. Safety infractions reported by RSAs include, but are not limited to:

- Jaywalking;
- Walking around lowered gates;
- Illegal turns;
- Track intrusions; and,
- Disobeying traffic signals.

The reported observations on the Incident Reports have provided information which has led to safety improvements and enhancements such as the installation of centerline fencing along street-running sections of rail alignments in Los Angeles, Long Beach and Santa Monica.

Review of RSA Reports
Observation Summary Reports are reviewed quarterly by the Transit Safety Review Committee, with representatives from MCE, Operations, Corporate Safety, and Law Enforcement. Each department reviews the reports and address issues pertaining to their jurisdiction.
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The Transit Safety Review Committee will also evaluate the conclusion of RSA deployment or its continuation beyond the normal pre/post-revenue 90-day scope for new/extension rail lines, as well as any special project deployment needs. Upon approval by the Transit Safety Review Committee, the MCE Director will submit a memo of recommendation to the Deputy Executive Officer (DEO) of Community Relations, with concurrence from the Executive Officers (EOs) of each Review Committee representative. After full review of RSA observations and approval from all parties, RSAs will be discharged from their posts.

Examples of Duties for Rail Safety Ambassadors

An RSA’s main focus is to promote safety awareness and observe and record pedestrian and vehicle behaviors at designated grade crossings. While on duty, RSAs must wear Metro-issued safety vests, their current Rail Safety Certification Badge and Metro identification badge, and personal protective equipment (PPE) (when necessary).

Please note: Safety is of the utmost importance at Metro. RSAs must never sacrifice personal safety for customer convenience and must not under any circumstance expose themselves to the risk of assault or injury when faced with unruly patrons.

Specific duties include:

- Observes the behaviors of pedestrians and motorists around grade crossings, logs and documents observations on report forms, and reports observations to management. Meets with management on a regular basis;
- Explains safe practices to the public when unsafe acts are observed;
- Supports safety outreach education efforts along the Blue, Expo and Gold Lines;
- Reports any Facilities Maintenance concerns to management;
- Reports emergencies to Rail Operations Control (ROC);
- Answers Metro-related questions and distributes safety materials;
- Provides assistance at special events and projects, as required;
- Assists supervisory personnel during emergency situations, when necessary;
- Maintains, supports, and promotes a safe work environment while complying with all of Metro’s safety rules, policies, and procedures; and,
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- Contributes to ensuring that the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies and programs of Metro are carried out.

Deployment Schedule
An RSA’s work schedule varies and is based on what is needed. A consistent schedule and maximum work hours are not guaranteed. Assignments may require working split shifts, evenings, weekends, and holidays. Most assignments coincide with rail and bus operations.

Training
All RSAs are required to participate in a Rail Safety Certification class which allows them to work at/near rail alignments. The training also prepares them on how to handle emergency situations.

RSAs are also trained to fully understand the duties and responsibilities of the position and how to best handle situations while out in the field. Training includes visitations to the ROC (Rail Operations Control) to meet Rail Controllers and CCTV Observers and understand their responsibilities. There is an RSA SOP (Special Operating Procedure) Handbook that includes policies and procedures to be followed while on duty as an RSA.

Additional training is provided on topics such as Sexual Harassment Prevention, Transit Terrorism Awareness, and Suicide Prevention.

Staff Meetings
MCE management conducts regularly scheduled meetings which RSAs are required to attend. RSAs submit their Daily Reports and a roundtable discussion is included on the agenda.

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Code of Conduct for Rail Safety Ambassadors
All Metro employees (including RSAs) are expected to exercise courteous behavior and treat patrons, co-workers and management with respect and dignity at all times. Words or acts of hostility will not be tolerated.
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RSAs are NOT permitted to:

- Use any electronic device while on post unless it is for work-related purposes or in the event of an emergency;
- Use foul or offensive language;
- Use intoxicants/narcotics/drugs;
- Possess weapons;
- Smoke or use tobacco on Metro property;
- Use Metro property, time or personnel for non-Metro business; and,
- Misuse employee pass.

As employees of a public agency, we each have the obligation to conduct ourselves in a manner befitting the public’s trust.

Contact Information

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