



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT of TRANSPORTATION

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GOVERNOR EHRLICH PRESSES FOR EXTRA VIGILANCE IN MARYLAND'S TRANSIT SYSTEMS

(March 12, 2004) Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. today directed Maryland Department of Transportation police agencies and the Maryland State Police to be extra vigilant about watching for suspicious activity on Maryland Transit Administration trains, buses, platforms, and parking facilities and called on Maryland citizens to report suspicious activities.

"Passengers are an extra set of eyes and ears for us," said Governor Ehrlich. "There are tens of thousands of riders everyday on MTA trains, buses and subways."

Because there are currently no specific indicators that terrorist groups are coordinating such an attack in the U.S. or Maryland, there will not be an increase in the U.S. or Maryland's color-coded terror threat alert system.

"We remain vigilant and encourage passengers and others who note suspicious behavior to call 1-800-492-TIPS, said Maryland State Police Lt. Col. Stephen Moyer.

"Passengers using our transit system are the first line of defense," said Department of Transportation Assistant Secretary Jim Ports.

"In addition to calling on citizens' involvement, state government agencies have undertaken a number of precautions," said Maryland Transit Administration Police Chief, Douglas DeLeaver. "These include deploying additional uniformed and plainclothes police officers that ride trains and buses, and ones that watch parking lots and platforms. In addition, front line MTA employees have had significant training in responding to emergency situations."

Chief DeLeaver, in coordination with Baltimore City public safety officials, recently conducted an emergency response drill that tested authorities' response to a mock Baltimore City subway attack. This drill and others like it, reflect the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's preparedness and prevention strategy initiatives.

DeLeaver noted that employee skills have increased as a result of exercises and ongoing training. This includes awareness and vigilance on how to recognize suspicious packages, suspicious devices, and any out-of-the-ordinary, unusual behavior by people at transit facilities.

Passengers are reminded to keep their personal belongings by them at all times, and not forget to take them when they reach their destination. If passengers notice a suspicious package or activity that appears to be abnormal, they are encouraged to notify the operator of that train or bus.

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