

METRO | Emergency Guide

A PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS RESOURCE FOR METRO RIDERS

JULY 2004

Risk Analysis

The D.C. transit system is a possible terrorist target. What Metro's doing about it | **E3**

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BILLOLEARY/TWP

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express

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CLAIRE DUGGAN

EDITOR'S NOTE

In the Event of An Emergency ...

We've heard it time and again: Another terrorist attack somewhere in the United States is a matter of "when, not if."

It would be easy to respond to these alerts with either all-consuming worry or fatalistic nonchalance. But security experts agree the most practical response falls somewhere in the middle: Go about your business as usual, but recognize that "usual" no longer means what it used to.

An attack on Washington — a city rife with symbolic targets — would have dramatic implications for our transit system, whether the system itself is targeted or not.

Inspired by the Metro fire in March that sent muddled Red Line commuters trailing to work on foot, Express consulted emergency experts and compiled this guide to address basic questions about how to prepare for an emergency that affects Metro — whether it's a terrorist attack or simply a fire or power outage. We examine some of the threats the system faces, the safeguards Metro has in place and important precautions you can take.

Our chief findings are rooted in common sense: Alertness and preparation are your best defense. Beyond that, emergency experts say these general points are most essential:

- In an emergency, abandoning a train to take your chances in the tunnel without trained professionals is almost always the wrong thing to do. Stay in place and listen for instructions unless the threat is imminent.

- Don't assume you'll have access to the Metro in an emergency. You might not. Make a plan for how you'll get home or to safety before a disaster arises.

- Learn the importance of "shelter in place." Unless you're in immediate danger, staying where you are and awaiting instructions from the proper authorities is usually best.

This guide is not intended to substitute for information from Metro, law enforcement or medical professionals — in an emergency, you should contact the appropriate agencies and follow their instructions. But we hope it will prompt you to think about your options should an emergency arise and understand what to do if you must act on your own. DAN CACCAVARO



IN MOTION: Commuters wait for a train on June 15. Metrorail set a record on June 9, the first day of Ronald Reagan's state funeral ceremony, with 850,636 trips taken.

A Transit System on Alert

A civil-defense mindset guards against threats

A wrecked two-car Metro train disappears from sight as smoke pours into the tunnel. Soon, only the red glow of a fire is visible burning behind the windows of the first car.

Firefighters make their way through the smoke, groping with thick gloves for anything resembling a body. Minutes later, over the wheezing of breathing equipment, a firefighter calls out, "We got one!"

A limp mannequin, found hunched over between two seats, is one of two rescued this morning. Nicknamed Terry, the dummy is almost always pulled to safety in drills at Metro's emergency training center in Landover, Md.

But sometimes that's not such a good thing. Terry, alternately known as Terry the Terrorist, is occasionally rigged with mock explosives — a fact that rescuers often miss.

The mission of the emergency responder has long been to find a way in and pull people out, says Chuck Novick, a Metro emergency management coordinator who trains firefighters. Terry the Terrorist, he says, can be a "shot of cold water in

the face." At a time when a terrorist strike in the United States is considered more of a probability than a possibility, rescuers might have to pat down victims before they're pulled off the train.

Exercises like those at the 2-year-old training facility are part of the heightened civil defense mentality that emerged at Metro after the 1995 sarin gas attack on Tokyo's subway. The incident, which killed 12 and injured more than 5,000, pushed Metro to turn a critical eye toward its vulnerabilities to terrorism and look to new technologies to detect threats. That effort has gained momentum since the Sept. 11, 2001, strikes and this year's Madrid train bombings.

Metro also has enlisted the aid of riders in preventing an attack like Madrid's, in which bombs in unattended backpacks killed 191. Protecting the system from terrorism may hinge on civilian vigilance.

Warnings. Attorney General John Ashcroft set the tone for the summer when he announced in May that intelligence gathered before and after the Madrid bombings suggest-

SYSTEM STATS

MILES OF TRACK: 103 (increasing to 106.1 miles in December)
STATIONS: 83 (soon to be 86)
BUS STOPS: About 12,500
WEEKDAY RIDERSHIP: About 1.1 million trips (bus and rail)
RAIL CAR FLEET: About 900
BUS FLEET: 1,450
TRAIN SPEED: Max 59 mph, about 33 mph with stops
ESCALATORS: 572
ELEVATORS: 197
FY 05 OPERATING BUDGET: \$940 million

Brandon, the nation is "almost overdue for a major attempt."

Though not as symbolic as, say, the White House, Metro offers terrorists easy access — and easy escape — along with large, anonymous crowds in a contained area.

Simply put, the goal of terror attacks on public transportation has been "body count," says Brian Jenkins, director of the National Transportation Security Center at the Mineta Transportation Institute in San Jose, Calif. "If terrorists are determined to kill in quantity and willing to kill indiscriminately, then public surface transportation systems represent ideal targets."

Some at Metro readily acknowledge the system is at a significant level of risk. "I'd say we're at the top of the leader board — dubious honor indeed," says Fred Goodine, Metro's assistant general manager for safety and risk protection.

Still, although subways and buses are proven targets abroad, intelligence is rarely Metro-specific. Instead, mass transit systems may be warned of a threat at the same time as other vulnerable settings, such as high-profile events, says Metro Transit Police

ed that al Qaeda is "almost ready" to attack the United States.

The warning was criticized as being politically motivated, but few questioned the reasoning: With a number of high-profile events leading up to the November election, the next few months offer terrorists many tempting opportunities.

With a long list of symbolic targets, Washington is an obvious bullseye. "They would like nothing better than to strike a major blow right here in Washington, D.C.," says Skip Brandon, a former FBI deputy assistant director. According to

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Chief Polly Hanson. "I think there's a generalized concern about transit because of its openness, but there aren't daily threats," she says. "We've had very little specific threat information regarding the Metro."

Defense. Metro's security measures, experts say, cover the essentials: a monitoring system, a strong law enforcement presence and, perhaps the most important, the enlistment of Metro staff and the public in the task of prevention.

Metro saw a spike in reports of suspicious packages in March, when the transit authority launched its "Hey, is that your bag?" campaign following the Madrid bombings. Transit police responded to 441 calls about suspicious packages in the first five months of this year, more than double the number in the same period last year.

"The security on the Metro system is much more obvious and beefed up since Madrid. You can see it when you travel," says Brandon, noting the increased presence of guards and bomb-sniffing dogs.

There are still some holes — big ones. Metro says \$150 mil-



SMOKE OUT: Terry awaits rescue at Metro's Landover, Md., training facility.

lion is needed for security-related upgrades. At the top of Metro's priority list is completing work on a fully redundant backup Operations Control Center. As Metro's core, the OCC coordinates the movements of every train and bus, and manages communications throughout the system.

Without the OCC, Metro General Manager Richard White envisions trains being operated manually and at speeds of 15 mph or less, "which literally would be grinding the system to a halt."

Other items on Metro's wish

list include broadening the system's ability to detect weapons of mass destruction; developing more efficient methods of decontaminating stations and tunnels; and extending the installation of digital video cameras beyond the current 100 buses.

Metro Board member David Catania, of the D.C. Council, says there's also a need for better communication with riders. Efforts to provide information about emergency procedures — like brochures that he says are "a little light on content" and not widely distributed — have been a "failure," Catania says.

Metro managers have also expressed concern that too few riders, as well as local and federal officials, are aware of the system's limitations.

The image of Metro's entire daily ridership — plus everyone who may decide to ditch their cars for mass transit — surging into the system during an emergency still "causes us a lot of angst," says White. "We know we don't presently have capacity to handle many more than the people who use our services every day."

An emergency on even a single rail car or bus could send delays

rippling throughout the system. A large-scale emergency could compound the problem exponentially.

But if the system has its vulnerabilities, it also has the advantage of a ridership experienced in coping with crises. The attack on the Pentagon, followed by anthrax-tainted letters sent to Capitol Hill and a three-week sniper spree that left 10 people dead, challenged residents to conduct their daily activities with an unprecedented level of awareness.

"The people that are responsible for our security are more aware and pay more attention," says Georgetown University professor Bill Daddio, who teaches a course in the sociology of terrorism. "I think the people themselves are a little more seasoned in reacting" as well.

The role of an alert public remains crucial, even as technology improves. The National Transportation Security Center's Jenkins says that he was struck by reports from survivors of the Madrid train bombing.

"They remember seeing the backpacks," he says, "but thought nothing of it." **DANNY FREEDMAN (EXPRESS)**

Q&A

QUESTIONS FROM RIDERS

Q In an emergency on a train, what will happen to those in strollers and wheelchairs if we have to get out and walk?

Wheelchairs and strollers are probably too big for the tunnel's walkway, so they may need to be left behind. If that's the case, Metro will try to recover them when the emergency is over. For those who can't walk, means of evacuation could include being carried or placed on one of the evacuation carts that are stored throughout the tunnels. The carts roll on the two running rails and can transport four people at a time or up to 1,000 pounds. Fire departments also have equipment such as plastic sleds that can be used to carry passengers.



Alexandria firefighters observe an evacuation cart at Metro's training facility.

Q What should I do if I see a suspicious package left on a train while it's at a station? Should I push it off onto the platform?

No. If you see a package that seems suspicious, you should use one of the intercoms at either end of the Metro car to report it to the train operator. Moving the bag could endanger more people — and send Metro police out looking for you as a suspect.

Q Can the Metro be closed off completely and used as a shelter in case of a terrorist attack aboveground?

No. You should not attempt to use the system as a refuge in an aboveground attack. Metro stations are not approved shelters for chemical, biological or radiological attacks. Sheltering in place — whether at home or work — would be safer.

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Tools of the Security Trade

The effort to keep Metro's sprawling system of tunnels and stations safe incorporates a combination of technology and old-fashioned sleuthing. Among the system's safeguards:

Design. Metro's architects sought to build basic security measures into the system. Stations are vast, uncluttered and thoroughly lighted spaces, making it easy to spot anything out of the ordinary. Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, trash cans and recycling bins in stations have been replaced by bomb containment trash cans and reconfigured recycling bins (only paper fits through their narrow slots). Trains and buses are made of fire-retardant materials.

Observation. The Metro system is constantly watched (and recorded) by 1,400 station cameras. One hundred buses have been outfitted with digital video cameras; installation of a global positioning system to track each bus is nearly complete.



DOG DETAIL: A Metro Transit policeman patrols Farragut North with Kodo the dog.

Detection. Post-Sept. 11, additional K-9 teams were deployed to detect explosives. Following the bombings in Madrid, Metro increased station patrols by the dogs along with officers toting machine guns. Metro discloses little information

about its most advanced measures, however. Chemical detection sensors are installed in unspecified stations. Metro has "some" capability to detect biological agents, says Metro Transit Police Chief Polly Hanson. Some transit offi-

cers wear radiological detection pagers, though Hanson said the transit authority has several ways of detecting radiation.

Disarmament. Metro's transit police have an explosive ordnance disposal team, which last year gained a new member — a 3-foot, 500-pound, remote-controlled robot on wheels that can disarm explosives.

Decontamination. Metro keeps enough disinfectant on-hand to decontaminate both its railcar and bus fleets for biological agents such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), smallpox and tuberculosis. However, further research is needed to develop efficient methods of decontaminating Metro stations and tunnels.

Outreach. Metro safety officials make monthly appearances at stations to field questions. Brochures on emergency procedures are available, as are multimedia evacuation instructions (www.wmata.com/riding/safety/evac.cfm).

DANNY FREEDMAN (EXPRESS)

Anatomy of a Metro Tunnel

A dark, hazard-filled place, it should be entered only as a last resort

Seen through the windows of a speeding train, a Metrorail tunnel is little more than a blur of blackness and lights.

Outside the train, on foot, it's a complex and treacherous place, riddled with hazards that can cause injury or instant death.

For anyone other than a trained professional, it's a place best avoided unless there is no other route to safety. If entering the tunnel should become necessary, however, knowing what to expect is the surest way to remain safe.

The tunnel is lighted, but just barely. If an emergency knocks out power to the area, it could be even

darker, with only one in four lights illuminated.

Along one side of the tunnel is a raised walkway about two feet wide. Although it's the safest place to walk, it provides just enough room to move single file. In places, wiring and equipment mounted on the wall make the walkway even narrower.

The track bed is a far more dangerous place to walk. It's cluttered with hazardous obstacles, not the least of which are the two running rails and the high-voltage third rail, which powers the trains.

Identifiable by its white cover plate, the third rail carries 750 volts of direct current, enough to

kill instantly if touched.

There may be train traffic to worry about, too. In an evacuation organized by emergency responders, trains most likely will be kept clear of the area. But if traffic has not been stopped, the signs of an approaching train may be easy to miss.

Standing one recent evening on the walkway between Court House and Clarendon stations, the hint that a train was barreling around a curve was as subtle as a slight breeze.

By the time the train's headlights were in sight, there were only seconds for those in the tunnel to have their backs, arms and legs pressed firmly against the wall.

The train passed just inches from their noses.

Not surprisingly, Metro advises riders they are overwhelmingly better off waiting for help inside the train unless the situation is immediately life-threatening or they are told to evacuate by a Metro employee or emergency responders.

"That's the safest place to be until we can get help there," says Lem Proctor, Metro's chief operating officer for rail.

If riders need to get away from a dangerous situation in their car, the first option should be to move to the next car through the single doors at the ends of each car, he said.

A passenger-activated evacuation — using the emergency release

for the middle doors — should be a last resort.

"If there's an imminent threat of danger to yourself, that's what those doors are there for," says Chuck Novick, an emergency management coordinator at Metro. "You don't stay there and go down with the ship."

But, he cautions, the ultimate goal is to get a train into a station, which is the quickest and safest way to get passengers off the train and for responders to help those in need.

Opening the emergency exits would delay efforts to move a train, since the locks on those doors would have to be reset manually before the train could operate again.

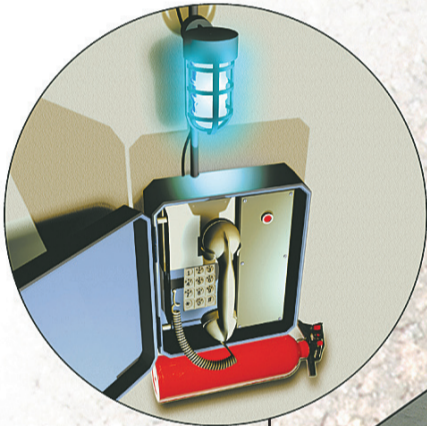
DANNY FREEDMAN (EXPRESS)

Evacuating a Train in a Tunnel

In almost all situations, evacuation of a train should be performed only under the supervision of the train operator, other Metro employees or emergency responders. If the situation is life-threatening and an immediate evacuation is necessary, follow the instructions below:

4 USE THE CALL BOX

Every 800 feet along the tunnel walkway there is a call box with a blue light on top. To communicate with Metro's Operations Control Center, open the box and dial "0."



3 STAY ON THE WALKWAY

Once clear of the train, walk along the walkway toward the nearest station (metallic signs on the tunnel wall indicate the distance). If a train approaches while you're on the walkway, put your back, arms and legs against the wall until it passes. Watch out for parts of the walkway marked with black and white lines and labeled "No Clearance." In those areas, there is not enough room for a train to pass you safely.



1 CONTACT THE OPERATOR

Before attempting to open the doors, contact the train operator by using one of the intercoms at each end of the rail car. Push the button to speak, release it to listen. Tell the operator your train car number and describe the problem briefly and clearly. Follow the operator's instructions. If you don't get a response immediately, wait and try again. The operator may be communicating with Metro's Operations Control Center or may temporarily be outside the train.

2 OPEN THE EMERGENCY DOORS

Each car has three sets of automatic doors. The middle doors can be opened using the emergency door release on the car wall next to the center doors. Look for the raised walkway on the lighted side of the tunnel and use the emergency door release on that side. Lift the panel and pull down on the red handle. Then slide the left door panel open and step down onto the walkway.

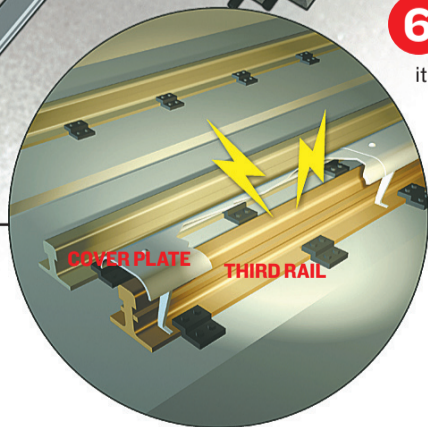


5 CROSSING THE TRACKS

At intervals, the walkway switches from one side of the tunnel to the other — or may run between two sets of tracks. To get from one walkway to another, cross the track bed, being careful to avoid all metal objects and water. Also watch for equipment in the track bed, which may pose a tripping hazard.

6 AVOID THE RAILS

The third rail — identifiable in most places by its white cover plate — is the conduit that powers the trains. Its 750 volts of direct current is enough to kill instantly if touched. Do not sit or stand on the cover plate. The running rails — the tracks on which the train wheels roll — carry an electric current as well and also must be avoided. Even if a power outage affects the tunnel lights, electricity may continue to course through the rails. If you must walk in the track bed, use extreme care.



7 EMERGENCY EXITS

If you come to an emergency exit before reaching a station (they're located every 2,500 feet in the tunnels and are marked with lighted exit signs), exit that way, unless you have been instructed otherwise by Metro or emergency personnel. The staircases lead to overhead doors. Push them open to reach the surface.

SOURCE: METRO

ILLUSTRATION: BAKEDMEDIA INC.

Ground-Level or Above-Ground Evacuation

Exiting a Metro train outdoors may seem less daunting than evacuating in a tunnel, but passengers should exercise caution and leave the train only if instructed or if it becomes absolutely necessary.

As with tunnel evacuations, the first step should be to attempt to con-

tact the operator from the train's intercom. If an evacuation is necessary, look for the following details to choose which side of the train to exit.

On an elevated track: Find the side with a railing or walkway. Open the middle doors using the emergency door release.

On ground level: Exit on the side away from the other set of tracks and the third rail.

As with tunnels, there are emergency phones located every 800 feet on the ground and on raised walkways. If you are unable to contact Metro for instructions, walk to the next station.



Q&A

QUESTIONS FROM RIDERS

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Q If there's a D.C. evacuation emergency, will the Metro run on a rush-hour schedule regardless of what time of day it is?

If possible, Metro would ramp up service during an emergency. On Sept. 11, 2001, the system ran back-to-back rush-hours. But you should not assume Metro could simultaneously handle everyone who drove into the city as well as those who commuted via Metro. In fact, it can't. Be prepared to shelter in place or get home another way.

Q If we have to evacuate a station, will the station's exit gates all be open, or will passengers have to find their farecards?

Most likely they will be open. If an alarm inside a station is triggered by smoke or heat, the fare gates will open automatically. The gates also will open on their own during a power outage. The station manager can open all the gates from the kiosk; he can switch the escalators so most or all run upward as well.



During an emergency, station managers can set the escalators to "up."

Q Are Metro stations and trains equipped with emergency lights that activate in case of a power failure?

Yes. Batteries will provide emergency lights and communication on trains for about two hours. Emergency lighting and communication, as well as other functions, can continue for at least three hours in stations and parking garages. Tunnels have at least three hours of emergency lighting, though at a reduced level. Few elevators and escalators would move, but

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What If ...

Different emergencies require different responses. Know how to react and what to expect.



Tokyo commuters react to a sarin gas attack on the subway in March 1995.

... You and those around you suddenly become sick?

PRIORITY: GETTING OUT

Symptoms indicating a chemical attack could initially be minor: eye, nose or throat irritation, tightness of chest, dizziness, nausea.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- If you're in a station, get out.
- If the train is moving, notify the operator immediately so he can initiate an evacuation.
- Crossing to another car while the train is moving is extremely dangerous. Don't do it unless the threat is imminent.
- If the train doesn't stop in the tunnel and no instructions are given, get off at the next station. The doors will open even if the operator is incapacitated.

IN THE MEANTIME, YOU CAN:

- Breathe through whatever is handy — your clothes, paper towels, etc. Use two to three layers if possible. Take shallow breaths.

- Close your eyes.

- Try to cover exposed skin.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

First on the scene will be the jurisdiction's fire and EMS department, who will determine what the agent is so that victims can be treated accordingly. Meanwhile, victims will be removed to an area at a safe distance from the attack for treatment and decontamination.

An emergency is no time for modesty. Decontamination will most likely mean taking off all of your clothes (contact lenses, too) and plunging into a shower — a sort of car wash for humans. The procedure takes place in discreet tents; paper clothing will be provided when you're done. Say goodbye to your clothes and belongings. Anything that's been touched by a hazardous substance must be destroyed.

... An unknown substance is released in a train or station and nothing happens?

PRIORITY: STAYING PUT

If people show no obvious symptoms following the release of a substance, it could be a biological agent — or a hoax. (If you want to get technical, it also could be a mustard-gas attack, in which symptoms can take a minimum of two hours to manifest.) Even the infamous ricin, a biotoxin, takes at least a few hours to cause symptoms.

A biological attack would likely be carried out covertly. Most symptoms would not emerge for days or weeks, preventing immediate countermeasures. The risk of an undetected biological weapon is just one more excellent reason to wash your hands with soap and water after riding the Metro.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Immediately alert the train operator using the intercoms at the ends of each train car or the station manager via the intercom pylons.
- Move as far away from the substance as you can. If you are on a train, do not cross to another car. Do not leave the station.
- Cover your mouth and nose and breathe through whatever you've got. Take shallow breaths.

- Cover exposed skin.

- Don't dig into the Cipro stash in your purse. Wait for decontamination or treatment instructions.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

More than likely, you're not going to be allowed off the train or out of the station because you could contaminate others. The area will be quarantined while a HAZMAT team sent by the jurisdiction's fire and EMS department conducts an investigation and evaluates each passenger. Then it's decontamination time.



A Fairfax County firefighter wields chemical and radiation detectors.

FRANK JOHNSTON/TWP



The BabyScape hood fits kids 3 years and under. (\$170, 800-957-8955)

Breathe Easy | If you decide you want a respirator, find a knowledgeable salesperson. Be wary of survivalist Web sites that look as if they were put up overnight. Even expensive gear is not foolproof. (WASHINGTON POST)

→ **N95 DISPOSABLE RESPIRATOR** (\$1-\$6 at hardware and paint-supply stores). Protects against dust, radiological debris and some biological hazards, including anthrax. Hard to fit on children and men with beards.

→ **ELASTOMERIC HALF MASK** (\$10-\$40 at hardware

and paint-supply stores). Protects against biological and radiological particles; some chemicals if fitted with organic vapor and/or acid gas filters; dust and debris. No beards.

→ **ESCAPE HOOD** (\$150-\$600 at personal safety stores and Web sites). Protects against radiolog-

ical, biological and chemical agents, including nerve agents such as sarin and VX. Simple to put on and covers entire head.

→ **GAS MASK** (\$150-\$400 at personal safety stores and Web sites). Can protect against biological, radiological and chemical agents, depend-

ing on filter canister. Can be hard to don and must fit precisely to work well. Safeguards eyes and face. No beards.

→ **SMOKE HOOD** (\$70-\$900 at personal safety and travel supply stores and Web sites). Most can filter carbon monoxide for roughly 15 minutes.

... There is an explosion, a fire or smoke?

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

In case of a fire on a train, one person should notify the operator using the intercom while another attempts to put the fire out.

There are two fire extinguishers on most trains; they are stored at the far ends of each car, usually under a seat. (If you're in the car with the operator, one extinguisher will be in the cab.) Some trains have only one extinguisher per car; it will be in the operator's cab or at the end of the train where the cab would be.

OTHERWISE:

→ If you're in a station, get out if you can. If not, call the station manager from one of the intercom pylons or 911 from any pay phone or from your cell phone. It's a good idea to familiarize yourself with all the exits of your regular stations so if you have to get out fast you won't be confused.

→ If you're on a train, notify the operator and follow instructions.

→ If there are no instructions, wait for rescuers if you can.

→ Crossing to another car when the train is stopped is safer than attempting to exit the train in a tunnel. But changing cars while the train is moving is very dangerous.

→ Breathe through two or three layers of fabric, napkins, etc. —



CLAIRE DUGGAN

A fake fire rages in a car at Metro's training facility in Landover, Md.

wet if possible.

→ You won't be able to tell if an explosion is that of a "dirty" bomb (i.e., a conventional bomb that disperses radioactive material — not a full-on nuclear weapon, which you would not survive). Even if you're not wounded, don't wander away from the scene. Remain in the area and await instructions. You may need to be decontaminated.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

An organized evacuation by rescuers. When you've been removed to a safe place, victims will be triaged and medical care will ensue. (EXPRESS)

SOURCES: METRO, D.C. FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Subway Survivalism

Be a safe commuter without weighing down your briefcase

When the Department of Homeland Security encouraged it, you bought the plastic sheeting and the duct tape. But those eight jugs of water won't help on the Metro. Here are some light-weight ways to be ready:

Light Source. A key-chain flashlight will do; so will those plastic rods that snap to produce an eerie glow. (A two-pack of 12-hour camper's glowsticks goes for about \$3 or \$4.) "You'd be surprised what a tiny light can do to give you some comfort," says Chuck Novick, an emergency management coordinator at Metro.

Radio. They actually sometimes work underground, and above ground they will be critical conduits for instructions from authorities. Stash a few extra batteries, too.

Whistle. "If you're stuck in debris, you need to have a fail-safe way to signal responders," says Lara Shane, communications director

for Ready, the preparedness division of DHS. "Yelling or screaming can put you at risk for inhaling par-

ticles in the air."

Face Protection. If you refuse to be seen in public with a protective mask, have something on you to shield your nose and mouth from dust, debris and smoke, even if it's just dense-weave cloth. "A plain T-shirt or even a raincoat can work," Shane says.

A paper medical mask can aid small children who have trouble holding their faces. Any barrier should fit snugly over both nose and mouth so unfiltered air doesn't seep through.

Depending on the agents released, putting cloth or paper over your face may not help you. But it's better than nothing.

City Map. "Some commuters know the areas around their Metro stops, but are lost in the city," says Fred Goodine, an assistant general manager for Metro. You may need to get home or to work from an unfamiliar Metro stop, very possibly on foot. (See back page.)

Other Essentials. Pack a few energy bars and a bottle of water. Commuters dependent on medications should keep a few extra pills handy. Identification documents and important phone numbers also are a must. ANGIE C. MAREK



Q&A

QUESTIONS FROM RIDERS

Continued from page E8

elevators would have up to eight hours of emergency lighting, communication and ventilation. Fifteen stations have backup generators to supplement battery power, and mobile generators could be taken to some other stations.

Q If the lights are out, can I touch the third rail?

No. It's entirely possible for the lights to be off and for the third rail to still be electrified. The two are controlled by separate power circuits. It's safest to regard the third rail as something you should never touch. Emergency responders are taught to check and constantly monitor the third rail whenever they're working near the tracks, even if they've been told it's been powered down.



CLAIRE DUGGAN

Rescuers at Metro's training facility practice monitoring the third rail.

Q Inside the trains, will emergency messages be understandable? Many times you can't decipher what the train operator says over the PA system.

If you don't understand what is being said, talk with the operator through the intercoms at either end of every rail car.

Q Is there a mechanism for broadcasting information to passengers in trains or tunnels if there is an emergency and our train operator is incapacitated?

No, but some information could come from Metro's eAlert system, which can send e-mails to computers, PDAs, cell phones or pagers (subscribe at: www.wmata.com/riding/alerts/metro_rail_alerts.cfm).

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No Time for 'Can You Hear Me Now?'

How to stay connected during an emergency

That fancy new cell phone may take pictures and shoot video, but will it work in Metro's tunnels?

Though Verizon has a monopoly on the Metro system's airwaves, other major carriers can piggyback off Verizon's signal via roaming technology, notably Sprint PCS, which boasts a compatible network.

For Cingular, T-Mobile and AT&T customers, the key is buying a phone with analog capability. Most major cell phone manufacturers make multi-network phones that have both analog and digital capability, and many older phones are analog only. These can roam onto the Verizon network, says John Johnson, a spokesman for Verizon

Wireless. Service will likely be spotty, though.

During disasters, a large influx of calls can overload even the best of systems. Instead of dialing repeatedly, send a text message, which will work on any phone roaming on the Verizon network. "It's a store-and-send-later technology," Johnson explains. "Text messages slip through when real-time calls can't." Other underground options: PDAs and Blackberries, although you'll need a Verizon-issued device.

Though Nextel phones aren't reliable underground (all Nextel phones are digital, says spokesman Scott Sloat), users may have a bet-

ter chance of getting through to other Nextel phones on the surface using the walkie-talkie-esque DirectConnect function than a regular cell phone call. Emergency responders have priority on the DirectConnect system, however.

Designating a single contact in another state can also help bypass jammed local lines. Each family member can check in for news of the others.

But cell phone use might not be ideal in the moments after a disaster. First responders urge commuters to listen for instructions. And Metro officials say riders will need both hands free to help neighbors and push open doors.

ANGIE C. MAREK



Text messages can often get through when cell phone calls can't.

CLAIRE DUGGAN

Q&A

QUESTIONS FROM RIDERS

Continued from page E9

Metro's Operations Control Center would know the location of the train, and if the operator couldn't be reached, personnel would be dispatched.

Q If we're waiting in an underground station and there's an event in the upper station — an explosion, a fire, a chemical attack — should we seek cover in the tunnel? Take a train to the next station?

Generally, you should not seek refuge in the tunnel. And chances are good that trains would stop running, at least for a little while. Check first for guidance from the station manager, Metro staff or responders. Underground stations with only one exit also have emergency exits at either or both ends of the platform, which can be used if the main exit is unreachable. They are marked with illuminated exit signs.

Q Are any Metro stations equipped with defibrillators in case someone has a heart attack? Where are they located?

Defibrillators are installed at all Virginia stations, and in the District at Metro Center, Gallery Place-Chinatown, L'Enfant Plaza, Judiciary Square, McPherson Square, Foggy Bottom, Smithsonian, Farragut North and Farragut West. The eventual goal is to place them in all stations. The defibrillators are kept either in the manager's kiosk or in a cabinet nearby. Riders should seek the manager if they think a defibrillator is needed.

COMPILED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF LT. RON BODMER OF METRO TRANSIT POLICE

ON THE WEB

Need more copies? Download a PDF of the full Metro Emergency Guide | www.readexpress.com

Discussion: Express's Danny Freedman and Holly Morris take reader questions Monday, June 28, at 1 p.m. | washingtonpost.com/liveonline

Prepare: Facts on chemical, biological, radiological weapons | washingtonpost.com/preparedness



WALKING AWAY: Rather than panic, Pentagon employees evacuated in an orderly fashion after a plane crashed into the building's outer ring on Sept. 11, 2001.

The Tao of Crisis

People stay surprisingly calm during disasters

Henry Fischer has a soft spot in his heart for the moments after a crisis.

"It is one of the few situations where you can assume the best about people," says the sociologist, who runs the Disaster Research Group at Pennsylvania's Millersville University. "It's the most refreshing time to look at my fellow human beings. I come away with great hope."

Fischer isn't fooling himself. Forget the every-man-for-himself thing. While blockbuster flicks paint pictures of chaos after crises, 50 years of research shows that such behavior is rare.

In reality, most disaster experts say calm altruism almost always wins out over craziness. "It's not going to look like a Godzilla movie," says Keith Berkery, disaster operations manager for the American Red Cross of the National Capital Area.

"People generally hold it together."

So why do we hear so much about "panic" after disasters? It's a case of faulty definitions. What we are seeing is actually fear: victims running down the street to seek shelter — a rational response to danger.

True panic would be those people mowing down small children in their path and exhibiting the overwhelming self-interest and anxiety that inhibits prudent decision-making.

The fact is, people in most bad situations don't act badly. It's been borne out time and again, says veteran Arlington County Fire Chief Edward Plaughter, and was even the case on Sept. 11.

When he arrived at the burning Pentagon, "people weren't running and screaming," he recalls. "They were assisting their colleagues, rendering aid where they could, and leaving the building."

CROWD CONTROL

Metro plays a role in evacuating the city in an emergency. However:

- In an evacuation situation, don't pour onto public transit. The system can't handle the entire city at once.
- Shelter in place or have a Plan B for leaving the city. Wait for instructions from authorities and expect a gradual evacuation.

There are multiple reasons for this goodness. For one, victimhood — everyone suffering the same unexpected tragedy — spurs bonding and the desire to help others.

Personal experiences also help people cope in bad situations; everything from fender-benders to a relative's death builds skills that emerge during tough times. Finally, some experts say the lessons we learn as children during school fire drills — walk nicely, single file

— actually come back to us.

Believe it or not, that behavior even extends to the Metro, where an ordinary day finds commuters jostling for space and glaring at escalator riders who stand to the left.

In fact, says Plaughter, people are "better behaved in the Metro than anywhere else. The enclosed surroundings mean they follow orders really well."

One has only to read stories of subway shutdowns to get the gist. When a fire halted the Red Line on March 18 and resulted in the evacuation of about 15,000 riders, Connecticut Avenue was packed with annoyed, but not panicked, passengers.

It was the same in New York City last August, when the Northeastern blackout stopped the subways and thousands were safely evacuated. And it was evident in 1989 when University of Vermont sociologist and disaster researcher Alice Fothergill was on a San Francisco subway platform during the Loma Prieta earthquake.

"An announcer came on and told us it was an earthquake and to evacuate," she says. "We all walked, nobody ran."

All this talk of calm, however, doesn't mean panic never occurs. But it's more likely when people feel their chances for escape are rapidly dwindling. For instance, when fire engulfed The Station nightclub in West Warwick, R.I., in February 2003, dozens were trampled in the rush to evacuate.

The problem is that such stories can deter officials from sharing critical news out of fear of inciting panic, says Fischer. "Policymakers think we are so fragile," he says. But we're not. "The challenge is getting real, accu-

"If you present calm, and the people around you present calm, that spreads."

—ARLINGTON COUNTY FIRE CHIEF EDWARD PLAUGHER



DARK VICTORY: New Yorkers calmly mingle after the blackout of 2003.

rate information in a timely fashion to the people who need it."

And Metro says that's part of its plans. Metro Transit Police Chief Polly Hanson says the idea is to improve the flow of information to passengers with more-coordinated responses to shutdowns. New efforts include a "go-team" of employees who would be dispatched to answer stranded riders' questions, she says.

While riders must listen to the authorities, natural leaders should gather people around them to share information and help those who need extra assistance. People take cues from those around them, says Plaugher. "If you present calm, and the people around you present calm, that spreads."

So don't panic. It's better for everyone. SAMANTHA LEVINE

RESOURCES

Getting Home or Away

Experts can't emphasize enough the importance of having a plan in the event of an emergency. That means familiarizing yourself with the emergency plans of the areas in which you live and work, and with your children's school emergency procedures. Know the hospitals along your family's Metro routes, and know how you will get home if a station or the entire system shuts down. This information will get you started. (EXPRESS)

Buses

Learn how to get home (or to bypass a subway snarl) by bus in the event of a station or line closing. It's not likely that a fleet of buses will be waiting outside a closed station, especially during rush hour, so knowing the nearest bus stop can save a lot of time and trauma.

Free, colorful bus maps are available at every Metro station. Or go to rideguide.wmata.com, specify your beginning and end points and select "Bus only" for a customized route.

Brochures detailing how to get to nearby rail stations via bus are available at Farragut North and West, Gallery Place-Chinatown, L'Enfant Plaza and Metro Center.

Trails

Don't rule out the scenic route home if Metro shuts down or you need to escape an area on foot or by bike.

- Rock Creek Park Trail
 - C&O Canal Tow Path Trail
 - Capital Crescent Trail
 - Suitland Parkway Trail
 - Custis Trail (I-66)
 - Mt. Vernon Trail (via 14th Street Bridge)
- For more information: waba.org, www.bikewashington.org and www.commuterconnections.org

Getting Information

District

Schools: www.kl2.dc.us/dcps/emergency/emergprephome.html
 Emergency plan: dc.gov/citizen/preparedness/index.shtm

HOSPITALS

- Children's National Medical Center, NW
www.cnmc.org
- Georgetown University Medical Center, NW
www.georgetownuniversityhospital.org
- George Washington University Medical Center, NW
www.gwhospital.com
- Greater Southeast Community Hospital, SE
www.greatersoutheast.org

- Hadley Memorial Hospital, SW
4601 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave.
- Howard University Hospital, NW
www.huosp.org
- Washington Hospital Center, NW
www.whcenter.org
- Walter Reed Army Medical Center, NW
www.wrampc.amedd.army.mil

Maryland

- FREDERICK COUNTY
Schools and emergency plan:
www.co.frederick.md.us (Click on "Preparing for an Emergency")
- HOWARD COUNTY
Schools: www.howard.kl2.md.us/ourschools/emergency.html
Emergency plan: www.co.ho.md.us/DOA/DOA_PIO_Preparedness.htm
- MONTGOMERY COUNTY
Schools: www.mcps.kl2.md.us/info/emergency
Emergency plan: www.montgomerycountymd.gov (Click on "Emergency Preparedness")

- HOSPITALS (on or near the Metro)
- Holy Cross Health, Silver Spring
www.holycrosshealth.org
- Montgomery General Hospital, Olney
www.montgomerygeneral.com
- National Naval Medical Center
www.bethesda.med.navy.mil
- Shady Grove Adventist Health Care, Rockville
www.adventisthealthcare.com
- Suburban Hospital Health Care System, Bethesda
home.suburbanhospital.org
- Washington Adventist Hospital, Takoma Park
www.adventisthealthcare.com
- PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
Schools: www.pgcps.pg.kl2.md.us/emergency/ehome.html
Emergency plan: www.goprincegeorgescounty.com/Government/AgencyIndex/OEP/homeland.asp
- HOSPITALS (on or near the Metro)
- Laurel Regional Hospital
www.laurelregionalhospital.org



TWP
Commuters file down Connecticut Avenue after a Red Line fire in March.

(also serves Montgomery County)
 Prince George's Hospital Center, Cheverly
www.dimensionshealth.org/pghc.shtml

Virginia

- CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
Schools: www.acps.kl2.va.us/schools.php
Emergency plan: ci.alexandria.va.us/citymanager/emergency_guide.html
- HOSPITALS (on or near the Metro)
- Inova Alexandria Hospital
www.inova.org/iah
- Inova Mount Vernon Hospital, Alexandria
www.inova.com/imvh
- ARLINGTON COUNTY
Schools: www.arlington.kl2.va.us/about/emergency_prepare.html
Emergency plan: www.co.arlington.va.us/emergency
- HOSPITALS (on or near the Metro)
- Northern Virginia Community Hospital, Arlington
www.nvchospital.com
- Virginia Hospital Center Arlington

Know how to get home using the Metrobus system.



WMATA

- www.virginiahospitalcenter.com
- CITY OF FALLS CHURCH
Schools: www.fcpcs.kl2.va.us/crisis.htm
Emergency Plan: www.ci.falls-church.va.us/safety/emergencypreparedness
- HOSPITALS (on or near the Metro)
- Inova Fairfax Hospital, Falls Church
www.inova.org/ifh
- FAIRFAX COUNTY
Schools: fcps.edu/suptapps/directory
Emergency plan: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/emergprepefforts.htm
- HOSPITALS (on or near the Metro)
- Inova Fair Oaks Hospital, Fairfax
www.inova.com/ifoh
- Reston Hospital Center
www.restonhospital.com
- PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY
Schools: www.pwcc.edu/crisis/crisisinfo.html
Emergency plan: www.pwcgov.org/default.aspx?topic=010058

- Other Resources
These agencies publish a selection of survival guides and maintain emergency-oriented Web sites.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency:
To order a free copy of FEMA's comprehensive disaster-specific "Guide to Citizen Preparedness," call the FEMA Publications warehouse (1-800-480-2520) or download it at www.fema.gov/areyouready.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Emergency Preparedness:
www.bt.cdc.gov
- Department of Homeland Security Preparedness Guidelines: www.ready.gov
- FBI Terrorism Information: www.fbi.gov/terrorism/terrorism.htm
- Red Cross: redcross.org



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MILE

M Metro Station H Hospitals

Downtown at a Glance

Safety experts say one of the best ways to prepare for an emergency is to be familiar with your surroundings and have an evacuation plan ready in case a disaster interrupts your normal routine. This map can be used to chart an alternate route via city streets or Metrorail in the event of an emergency.

The District:

Metrorail Stations:

- Archives/Navy Memorial: 701 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
- Capitol South: 301 1st St. SE
- Dupont Circle: 1351 19th St. NW; 1535 20th St. NW
- Eastern Market: 725 Pennsylvania Ave. SE
- Farragut North: 1717 L St. NW; 1720 L St. NW; 1705 K St. NW
- Farragut West: 837 17th St. NW; 900 18th St. NW
- Federal Center SW: 401 3rd St. SW
- Federal Triangle: 350 12th St. NW
- Foggy Bottom: 900 23rd St. NW
- Judiciary Square: 435 4th St. NW; 410 F St. NW
- L'Enfant Plaza: 650 Maryland Ave. SW; 800 D St. SW; 400 7th St. SW
- McPherson Square: 820 Vermont Ave. NW; 1400 Eye St. NW
- Metro Center: 607 13th St. NW; 665 11th St. NW; 701 12th St. NW; 1200 F St. NW
- Mt. Vernon Square: 700 M St. NW

- Navy Yard: 1200 Half St. SE; 1155 New Jersey Ave. SE
- Smithsonian: 1201 Jefferson Dr. SW; 1200 Independence Ave. SW
- Union Station: 605 First St. NE; 625 First St. NE
- Waterfront: 399 M St. SW

Hospitals:

- George Washington University Hospital: 2300 Eye St. NW
- Georgetown University Medical Center: 3800 Reservoir Road NW

Virginia:

Metrorail Stations:

- Arlington Cemetery: 1000 Memorial Drive
- Pentagon: 2 South Rotary Road
- Pentagon City: 1202 South Hayes St.
- Reagan National Airport: 2400 S. Smith Blvd.
- Rosslyn: 1850 N. Moore St.

EXIT STRATEGY | EMERGENCY EVACUATION ROUTES



Evacuation Routes Dividing Line Evacuation Direction

SAFE ESCAPE: The District has designated 25 evacuation routes in the event of an emergency. Unless otherwise determined, Pennsylvania Avenue will serve as the dividing line. Those to the south will be told to move south, west and east, while those to the north will evacuate to the north, west and east. **Evacuation plan:** More from the D.C. government: www.ddot.dc.gov