



On these pages you will find a sampling of viewpoints from some of our advertisers on the importance of safety and security in the public transportation industry.

Latest Technologies to Support Emergency Operations Management

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WHEN DISASTER STRIKES, PUBLIC AGENCIES, FIRST RESPONDER teams, emergency operations centers (EOCs), and corporate safety managers have two things in common: they need to react fast and respond effectively. Unfortunately, as we have seen in countless crises throughout the world in recent years, although they often react quickly, their effectiveness is jeopardized by their inability to coordinate and act upon relevant information in real time.

Indeed, a well-coordinated, immediate flow of information among all response teams is critical to minimize any additional loss of life, costly damage to private and public property, and even lawsuits that may ensue after the event. But the question remains: How, exactly, do you do it? With so many parties involved, is it possible to streamline and coordinate information, communication, resources, and documentation during a catastrophe event?

The answer is an unequivocal “yes,” and it comes in the form of Crisis Information Management Software (CIMS). Web-based emergency management communication systems can share real-time emergency information with public agencies, businesses, EOCs, and first responders.

CIMS is an invaluable tool that saves valuable time during emergency operations by rapidly coordinating, managing, and relaying vital information from a central location or remote sites to allow the efficient access and quick deployment of emergency resources. This enhances situational awareness and enables decision makers to work together on grids rather than operate in silos relying on their own limited information.

The old adage, “Knowledge is power,” takes on new meaning during a crisis when, through the use of a centralized online application, EOCs, control centers, and first responders can immediately access the same data to quickly analyze, coordinate, and distribute essential information to everyone involved with the rescue and

recovery efforts.

The advantages of web-based emergency management communications systems are numerous, but let’s examine just a few of the benefits of automation:

- **Improve information management.** Take a wide range of transit-related information from a variety of sources and organize it into a common web-based location that allows everyone responding to the crisis to collectively see, share, and act on the same relevant information at the same time. In addition to eliminating confusion, typically a huge factor in emergency response, receiving and responding to accurate information in real time saves time, money and, most importantly, lives.
- **Coordinate resources more effectively.** Link local, state, federal, volunteer, private, and worldwide resources to make better-informed decisions. Instead of operating independently, all emergency response personnel can easily work together to speed up recovery efforts and resolve the crisis far more rapidly than they would have otherwise.
- **Use online documentation instead of paper.** Eliminate manual processes and paper-based forms with a web-based solution that uses electronic status boards and online forms to drastically increase response times on the scene.
- **Save time and money on world-class training.** Of course, before they’re ready to respond to a disaster, all emergency response personnel must be expertly trained. Web-based tools make this process easier and more efficient by providing modules that support “tabletop” (mock) exercises of emergency situations. Since the training is online, users can be down the hall or on the other side of the world. Either way, emergency responders get best-in-class training at a fraction of the cost and time as traditional training methods.

The bottom line? Crisis Information Management Software is the most successful way to coordinate and respond to any emergency. By coordinating information, resources, communication, documentation, and training, these online systems are saving lives, money, and time every day.

BY RICK OPETT
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APTA STATISTICS SHOW THAT AMERICANS ANNUALLY MAKE more than 10 billion trips on public transportation: buses, commuter rail, subways, and light rail. Every day, transit officials around the world grapple with the complex issues of ensuring the safety and security of their passengers and employees while maintaining open access to their systems and keeping to tight timetables.

However, public transportation systems have been the target of nearly one-third of all terrorist attacks worldwide since 1991. From the 1995 sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway to the attacks on transit in Madrid in 2004, in London in 2005, and in India in 2007, terrorist organizations have made no secret that they are increasingly seeking out accessible targets—like those found in rail and public transit systems. Fortunately, unlike our foreign counterparts, the U.S. transit system has not yet suffered a major attack by a terrorist group.

As a result of the ever-increasing threat of transit terrorism,

Transit Employees Important to Security

many U.S. transit systems have invested heavily in developing new or upgrading existing electronic surveillance and security systems. In addition, transit officials increasingly realize that their front-line employees (conductors, drivers, porters, etc.) are the “eyes and ears” of the systems in which they work and that these personnel play a critical role in preventing incidents, as well as serving as potential first responders during a terrorist attack.

Because many transit agencies operate across municipal boundaries, front-line employees may find themselves in the position of coordinating or participating in emergency response activities involving several jurisdictions, regions, or states.

Recognizing the expanding role of transit employees, organizations such as APTA, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and the federal Transportation Security Administration stress the importance of providing awareness training so employees can learn to more effectively observe and report suspicious activity or

incidents that may pose a security risk. These training programs focus on providing employees with the basic tools and knowledge of where to look, what to look for, and what to report regarding a potential terrorist threat.

At the forefront of this training effort, Amtrak began an aggressive program in 2007 to provide all 12,000 of its operations employees (personnel working on trains and in rail yards) with security awareness training. This training would help them better understand threats to America’s rail systems; recognize possible weapons; identify suspicious activities/behaviors; and define their individual roles and responsibilities in helping reduce the risk of a terrorist attack targeting Amtrak trains and operations. In addition to classroom training, participants handled “mockup” packages and devices terrorists might use to attack a train or passenger area—helping to heighten employee awareness about the possible threat posed by seemingly harmless packages or luggage.

Since beginning the program, Amtrak continues to participate in emergency preparedness exercises to evaluate the effectiveness of its emergency plans, policies, and procedures to assess the need for enhanced or new emergency training.

Preparing for and responding to terrorism is a significant challenge. And although many transit agencies, like Amtrak, are assuming a larger role in both terrorism mitigation and response efforts, of the approximately 500 transit agencies in this country, fewer than 100 have formal transit police or security departments to direct counterterrorism initiatives.

Thus, there is no doubt that each transit employee plays a vital role in ensuring passenger safety and security.

However, as long as terrorism remains a high-consequence event, it would be foolhardy not to train and prepare for the potentially catastrophic results of a terrorist attack on a bus, train, major rail hub, or single station.

DriveCam: Protecting Its Most Precious Cargo

BY ERIC COHEN
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WITH SAFETY AS ONE OF ITS HALLMARKS, MV TRANSPORTATION HAS HAD programs in place to prevent collisions and protect its drivers and passengers. However, over the years, MV found that a larger investment did not necessarily mean a safer fleet.

To get to the root cause of the problem, MV needed to improve its safety infrastructure throughout the entire company: top to bottom, coast to coast. This involved a variety of initiatives, all focused on improving safety:

- comprehensive safety manual;
- inclusive safety maintenance manual;
- state-of-the-art driver training program;
- comprehensive driver Instructor selection, training, and certification program;
- safety awareness activities/communications; and
- DriveCam’s Managed Services Program.

Although DriveCam was helping to improve MV’s safety results, the management company knew it could do better.

“Like many companies, we thought we could manage this type of program ourselves,” said Alex Guariento, MV’s senior vice president of safety. “But we quickly learned we lacked uniformity and the ability to benchmark against other companies.”

That’s when the decision was made to transition MV’s entire fleet of more than 5,000 vehicles to DriveCam’s Managed Services Program, which provided uniform and timely review, better importing tools, easier field access to event clips, and more intelligent reporting and dashboards. The change produced terrific results. According to Kevin Klika, MV Transportation’s chief operating officer: “We’ve always seen good results with DriveCam, but with Managed Services, our ROI [return on investment] has increased dramatically. We look forward to even better results in the future.”

The transition to Managed Services resulted in MV’s managers no longer wasting their time on non-risky events, but rather concentrating on the key behaviors that lead to risky driving in their fleet. Specifically, managers could now track and apply attention where it should be—to their drivers. By having driver-specific information, MV inherently gained aggregate information so it could look at systemic issues throughout the company.

DriveCam is one part of a comprehensive safety program infrastructure initiated throughout MV Transportation. The initiatives included development of a comprehensive safety policy manual for all of its divisions, featuring 35 best practices for guidance throughout its field operation and an in-depth Maintenance Safety Manual. These were created in conjunction with a state-of-the-art

Driver Instructor Certification Program (ICP) focused on instructor recruitment, selection, training, and certification.

Coupled with the ICP, MV also developed a state-of-the-art Driver Training Program focused on best practices, based on modern adult education principles, using objective performance standards throughout. Begun in July 2009 and completed in December, this 33-module program has already helped drive accidents down significantly.

More important than any one of these programs is the uniformity of them all being used in conjunction with each other to prevent collisions and protect MV’s passengers and drivers. A side benefit is that MV’s liabilities are now much more defensible than they’ve ever been. Few questions remain as to the appropriateness and thoroughness of the training received by MV’s drivers since the company uses proven standards of defensive driving performance in its training, sees the root cause of each risky driving incident, provides its drivers with state-of-the-art training, and offers continuous coaching to improve driving performance.

MV believes that if it’s going to be in business, it will operate in a safe, ethical manner. In fact, one recent area of safety improvement is the requirement that all of MV’s paratransit passengers must now wear seatbelts (as long as the client permits it). This is definitely a cultural shift in the industry and one where MV is leading the charge—both within its own company and throughout the industry.

