



**Safety and Operations Committee**

**Board Information Item III-A**

**Emergency Preparedness Update**

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

## Board Action/Information Summary

☐ Action ☒ Information

Document  
Number:  
205718

Resolution:  
☐ Yes ☒ No

### Presentation Name:

Office of Emergency Preparedness Update

### Project Manager:

Nickea Bradley

### Project Department:

Office of Emergency Preparedness

### Purpose/Key Highlights:

To update the Board on the strategy and progress associated with implementing the Incident Management Framework and the integration of the Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP). The following highlights are part of the Office's contribution to the Strategic Transformation Plan goal of Talented Teams:

- Top Talent - Ensure staff have an adeptness for emergency management and build an acquired ability to support our growing transit agency uniquely.
- Contribution - Provide consistent service to internal and external stakeholders by building resilience in Metro's fire, life, and safety capabilities.

### Interested Parties:

Jurisdictional partners and first responders.

### Background:

As part of WMATA's continued mission to serve as an industry leader in emergency preparedness, multiple functions within the Office of Emergency Management (an office within the Metro Transit Police Department since 2008), emergency management functions not associated with law enforcement (e.g., terrorism response, etc.) were transferred to Safety in June of 2021. OEP as we know it was formed later that year. In 2023, the Metro Integrated Command and Communications Center to centralize decision-making across modes. Procedures and training developed with the Incident Management Framework improve how Metro manages incidents and

align with national incident management standards.

Collaboration has enhanced between the operations, infrastructure, and safety departments in systematically improving the identification and mitigation of safety hazards before, during, and after emergencies.

## **Discussion:**

### **Strategic Context**

Investing in Talented Teams at Metro begins with how we prevent, mitigate, and manage emergencies. Equipping our employees across multiple operational departments, engaging our jurisdictional fire and police departments, and empowering the Safety team, is a priority initiative. The Safety Management System roadmap guides the strategy to change the safety culture. Outlined in detail in the Board-approved Agency Safety Plan, the Safety Management System also enables all employees to report safety hazards, be aware of what safety hazards may affect them, and know what the agency is doing to mitigate those hazards.

To further the collaboration, Metro has recently initiated accreditation under the Emergency Management Accreditation Program. Accreditation involves a rigorous assessment and third-party validation of Emergency Management best practices with all departments. Metro aims to secure accreditation to demonstrate and acknowledge emergency management maturity and improvement formally.

### **Coordination Across Functions**

Success relies on internal coordination. At the heart of Metro's growing ability to respond effectively and consistently to emergencies is the new Metro Integrated Command and Communications Center, which opened in October 2023. It leads the industry and pulls all core operational functions into one place, namely rail, bus, communications, maintenance, power, video monitoring and production, and emergency planning and exercising. The Center integrates and improves communication and coordination between modes, departments, and decision-makers, successively improving Metro's response to emergencies. It makes efficient and accurate communication and decision-making possible.

Metro's management of on-scene emergency incidents is the other critical part of ensuring effective and consistent incident management. Launched in July 2023, Metro instituted a new Incident Management Framework (IMF), which aligns procedures and training to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Incident Management System (NIMS) and makes it easier to communicate with jurisdictional fire and police departments.

The training goal for Metro staff with IMF is to be trained on two components (1) introductory training of the IMF delivered by computer-based and/or in-person classes (depending upon the role) and (2) NIMS Incident Management training. Eight-six percent of the required goal has been met exceeding 6,000 employees in completion

of the introductory training and 7,500 online NIMS trainings by Metro personnel.

Before Metro can measure improved, consistent results in incident response and decision-making, more practice, training, and real-life application are required. This year, we will deliver refresher training to thousands of employees and provide targeted scenarios to the training groups who most need the skills, knowledge, and competence to take on incident command.

### **Role of Safety Personnel**

Safety plays a critical role in overseeing, training, and supporting operational staff during emergencies. Response and Recovery Specialist staff from the Safety team own the Incident Management Framework documents and, in 2023, delivered training to Metro operational colleagues. Additionally, over 1,500 jurisdictional police and fire department first responders received training on managing incidents with Metro. These jurisdictional trainings range from hot sticking to tunnel familiarization. These specialists are also primary responders who provide technical assistance and incident command expertise during emergencies to support the WMATA on-scene incident field commander.

The Prevention and Mitigation team converts data from emergencies to inform and improve performance, prevent incidents from occurring, and mitigate the disruption or harm from emergencies. Focused in part on post-incident data, Prevention and Mitigation Specialists gather information from debriefs that occur at the scene after many incidents; staff who monitor the execution of the Incident Management Framework; and in-depth, collaborative After-Action Reviews (often with police or fire departments that attended the incident) following particularly complex or large incidents. There have been 28 After Action Reviews since the program started in 2022. Information from these sources is assessed and converted into mitigations. The Operations and Infrastructure organizations implement changes in most cases and Safety plays the role of facilitator and assurance.

Other Safety personnel focus on pre-emptive actions to identify and mitigate hazards before an incident. For example, Metro's Fire Marshal leads the Prevention and Mitigation team which leads an inspection program, that integrates other safety inspections, to cover building codes, fire detection, and fire protection systems in over 300 facilities and wayside locations. The team manages Emergency Action Plans for all Metro facilities and ensures staff executes drills. The Fire Marshal has also formalized participation in project lifecycles such as the seven new rail stations or battery electric buses. The role is also engaged in early project review through implementation via the Safety Certification process overseeing fire-life-safety elements of the acceptance testing.

### **Funding Impact:**

Development and implementation of IMF is included in the budget and within Metro's strategic transformation plan. This presentation is an update on the progress in accordance with the Strategic Transformation Plan.

**Previous Actions:**

As documented in the SMS Roadmap 2022 and 2023.

**Next Steps:**

The Board will receive an update as part of the mid-year Safety update on all areas of safety and the implementation of Safety Management System.

**Recommendation:**

Information Only

# Prevention, Mitigation and Management of Emergencies

Safety & Operations Committee  
March 7, 2024

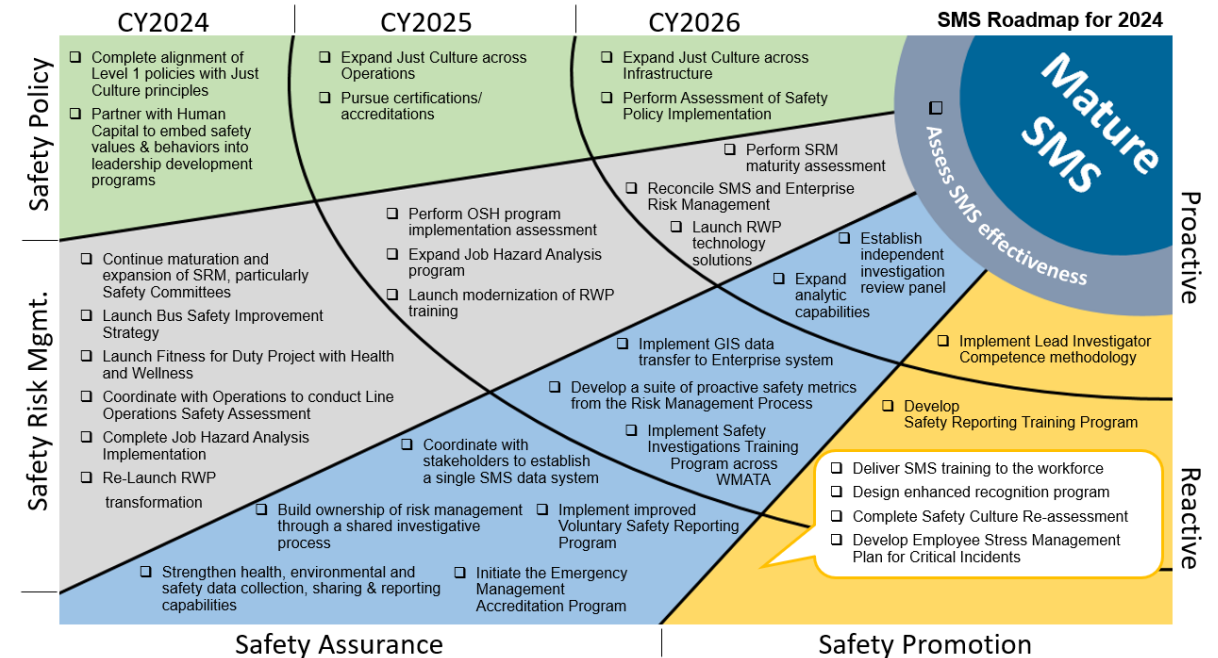


# Talented Teams, a strategic goal from Your Metro, the Way Forward



## Systematically improving risk management

- Reducing risk through improved prevention, mitigation and management of emergencies is a top strategic priority:
  - **Strategic Transformation Plan:** Talented Teams
  - **Agency Safety Plan:** Safety Management System
  - **Certification:** Embarking on Emergency Management Accreditation Program





# Collaborating throughout the Emergency Management Lifecycle

- Maturation to prevent, prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate emergencies
- Internal coordination between multiple functions in Operations, Infrastructure and Safety



# Prioritizing communication during emergencies



- Launched in October 2023
- Command Line
- Centralization of functions
  - Rail
  - Bus
  - Communications
  - Maintenance & Power
  - Video
  - Planning & Exercising

# Improving the Management of Emergencies

- Launched new framework in July 2023
- Aligned to FEMA standards and best practices
  - **Procedures:** drafted new procedures and guidelines
  - **Training:** over 6000 employees trained
- Maturing in 2024





# Training and overseeing incident management



## Training: Response & Recovery Coordination Specialists

familiarize jurisdictional fire and police departments with the Metro system

**Support: Primary Responder Program** coordinates unified incident command between Metro and first responders



# Identifying lessons learned to reduce risk

- **Pre-Incident Focus:** Initiates the Emergency Management Lifecycle
- **Safety Management System:** Links incidents to the safety strategy
- **Tracking:** Monitors incident management performance and communicates lessons learned
- **Improvement:** Facilitates After-Action Review Program to identify hazards and mitigate safety risk

28

Total After-Action Review meetings conducted to date. 2022 - Present

36

Improvement Actions identified

28

Actions completed and closed



# Reducing the likelihood and severity of incidents



- **Preventive Inspections:** Integrated with other Safety teams, verify code and other regulations to proactively identify hazards
- **Emergency Preparation:** Formalized program of emergency drills to exercise local Emergency Evacuation Plans with jurisdictions
- **Project Engagement:** Formalized role in Safety Certification, Project Review and Acceptance Testing