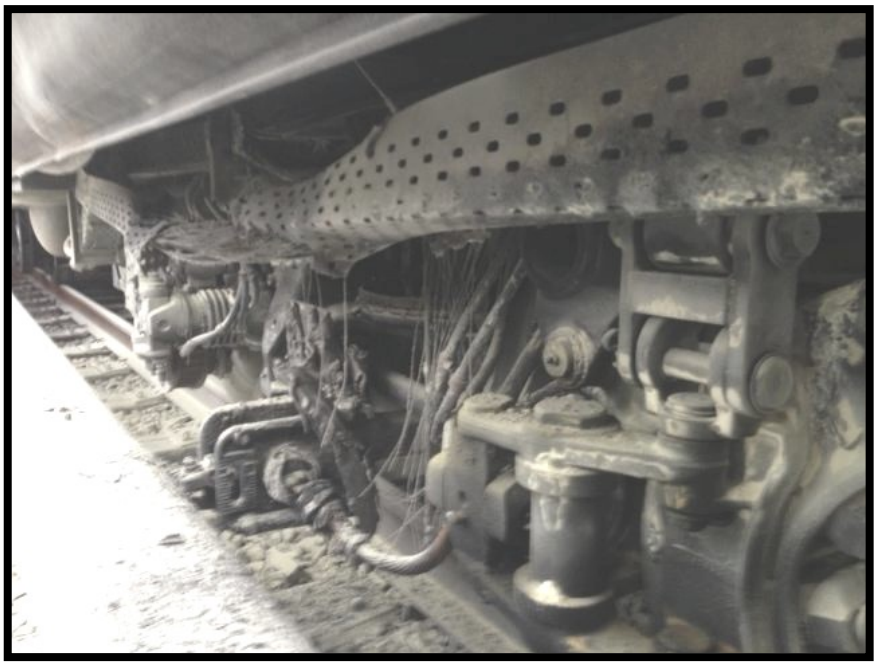
SILVER SPRING METRO TRAIN FIRE
14 MAY 2013



BATTALION CHIEF DAVID POLIKOFF

EVENT SUMMARY

INCIDENT LOCATION:
8450 Colesville Road
LOCATION DESCRIPTION:
Silver Spring METRO Station
INCIDENT DATE:
14 May 2013
OPERATIONAL PERIOD:
18:09-19:44
INCIDENT TYPE:
METRO-BOX (0102)
UNITS:
PE719 PE701 E754 PE716 PE707 AT719 T716 TK834 RS742B M742 M844 A701B A716 BC702 BC701 D1 D2 RAIL CWFULL NCRCIG TG7C E720(RAIL702) FM756,752,751 BC884 EMS700 SA700 M812 M712 SP700 DC700

BACKGROUND:
At 18:09 hours ECC subsequent to two telephone reports ECC dispatched a METRO-BX assignment for the Silver Spring METRO Station. The first caller reported multiple explosions but was unsure about any fire and/or smoke. The second caller reported a fire with smoke but assumed it to be an electrical issue.

The dispatch was appropriate for the incident as determined by the nature of the 911 calls. However, responding units were not made aware in a timely fashion of the reported “explosions” on the train.

INITIAL FRS ACTION(S):
PE701 arrived first. The driver from PE701 established a water supply and charged the station connection.

The initial on scene report (IOSR) was smoke showing from the street level. PE701 then assumed command and advised all units to Level 1 stage with the exception of PE701, PE719 and AT719.

PE701 then proceeded to the platform level with his crew. The station manager had already evacuated the entire station of customers in addition to closing the station completely. All escalators had been stopped. Upon arrival onto the platform, PE701 found an unoccupied train with significant smoke coming from the underside of the middle pair of cars.

PE701 provided an update via radio and requested the special service units to report to the platform and act as Safety Control Units (SCU).

PE701 then contacted the METRO Operations Center (OCC) via the blue light box (BLB) at the northern end of the platform.

The OCC Superintendent advised that the third rail power had been removed to the affected track the entire length of the station. He also advised that all train movement, on both tracks, had been suspended. By this time BC702 was on the scene and had been assigned the Platform Division. PE701 relayed this information to Platform Division and recommend deployment of WSAD's.

PE701 also requested that someone from the command staff contact OCC so he could be relived to focus on the fire. PE701 was advised that communications were being made via radio by a Metro Transit Police supervisor on the platform. He advised OCC of this and hung up. Due to the fire being in the middle of the consist, PE701 decided to gain entry to the other side of the train by going trough an unaffected car, as opposed to all the way around. A bulkhead ladder was used on the side of the car to access the track bed. PE701 was ordered by BC702 to recon the fire and extinguish if possible.

PE701 decided to use dry chem. as opposed to water due to the possibility of stray current within the car electrical system. Once on the trackbed, PE701 found the fire to be electrical in nature and used several dry chemical extinguishers to extinguish.

While we certainly wanted to, confirm or rule out the presence energetic materials as soon as possible, there was no visible physical evidence of an explosion, detonation, or of anything other than an electrical failure.

FRS ACTION PLAN:
BC701 arrived on scene, received an update from PE701, an then assumed command. BC701 assigned:

- BC702 to Platform Division with PE701, PE719, C742
- T716 to Safety Control Group with AT719 and RS742
- Chief 705C to METRO Liaison.
- Other units continued to stage

C705C set up the conference call with OCC to keep the flow of communication from OCC to the command post. Command had the highest ranking METRO Transit Police officer get in the command post with me and C705C to set up a unified command.

The control objectives were to:

1. To account for safety of operating personnel
2. Determine the extent of the fire and extinguish if possible
3. To determine the validity of the reported explosions

Because of the nature of the call (explosions) the Ops. Chief wanted to clear the train and platform for explosives using bomb dogs provided by MCPD. Chief Goldstein handled that end of the incident.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

1. ECC missed the importance of notifying or dispatching FEI on the initial assignment
2. Units assigned to place WSADs did so very quickly, however, they did not monitor the WSADs-given the distance between the WSADs and the incident location and when considering ambient noise it was possible that the devices could have alarmed and not been noticed.
3. Platform Division did not confirm that the train was chocked
4. Platform Division did not wear a complete set of PPE
5. Given the limited ingress and egress there should have been fewer people in the routes of travel. We corrected this issue during the incident.
6. Platform Division did not bring a phone to the platform. Having one would have allowed for monitoring of the conference line.
7. Initially only one special service (AT719) was told to report to the platform while other were to stage. I should have allowed at least one more to continue as a SCU.
8. Given the nature of electricity within these types of incidents, dry chem. will normally be the preferred extinguishing agent.

GOOD POINTS

1. PE701 quickly staged units allowing time for his to establish control of the operation, gather intelligence, and set up operations while limiting the number of units in the action area.
2. Units took assigned positions and proceeded to the correct points to render the scene safe. A good flow of communications allowed this incident to stay very low key.
3. BC702 utilized 7M to deliver sensitive information that if fell on the wrong ears (Media) most likely would have been blown out of proportion.
4. Metro officials did an excellent job evacuating both the train and station prior to FD arrival. That station and the trains are normally packed at that time period.

LESSON(S) LEARNED

1. Not all METRO employees are created equal and there was a real struggle to develop an action plan. In this case a technician needed to completely isolate the involved train car from he third rail prior to restoring third rail power to move the train.
2. ECC should have taken the time to notify initial companies about the possible explosions PRIOR to incident dispatch.
3. We should have created a wider isolation area due to the possibility of a previous explosion and the subsequent possibility for secondary devices
4. Station Evacuation-While not our problem --- one element of impact was that post-blast - all passengers on the platform where ushered into the inbound B2 train and moved to Takoma. That potentially put victims and or the bomber/perpetrator into a occupied train.
5. Inline with the concern about blast/explosion and the need to shut down the B2 line - we needed to shut down the outbound line for CSX. As it passed directly to the outside of the B1 ROW - it was the closest and most exposed to the core incident site
6. Unified Command-A good job was done by all to support unified command and reps at the command post. When requested and on scene the WMATA Transit PD and MCPD Patrol Sgt operated at the command post until the event was turned over to WMATA

APPENDIX I

INCIDENT AUDIO 7A

INCIDENT AUDIO 7C

INCIDENT GEOMETRY (FROM PLATFORM AREA)

Each of these links are to files hosted elsewhere and may require download before viewing.