

WMATA (METRO) OPERATIONS TRUCK COMPANY'S ROLE AS THE SAFETY CONTROL UNIT

Ladder companies dispatched on a Metro incident are assigned with a very important function. As the **Safety Control Unit**, they are tasked with the responsibility of assuring safe suppression and rescue operations during a tunnel or above ground incident. There are specific task that help to facilitate this mission:



- Power removal of the third rail.
- Testing and monitoring third rail power with the Warning Strobe and Alarm Device (WSAD).
- Chocking trains.
- Discharging filter capacitors.
- Monitoring crews for fatigue and breaches of safety.

The equipment listed in Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission Policy 24-06AM for truck companies includes:

- Full protective clothing including SCBA (45 or 60 Min.) and hand light
- Portable radio
- Metro jump bag
- WSAD
- Forcible entry equipment
- Flood light with 50' cord reel

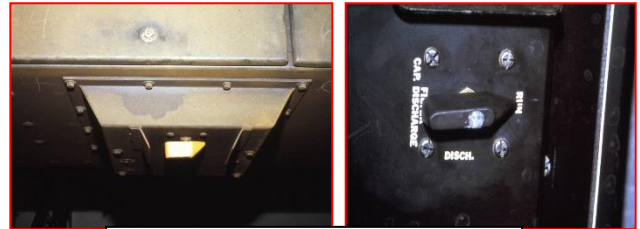
On any Metro incident involving fire, collision, derailment, or other mass casualty occurrence, a Metro Box Alarm assignment will be dispatched which includes five engines, three trucks, one rescue squad, two command officers, and an EMS unit. In the event it is a tunnel incident, the first and second engines and the first truck company will assemble at the designated entry point. Once the first engine has obtained the location and nature of the incident including the status of the third rail, the status of the ventilation system, and has established communications with ROCC, all three units will proceed to the right-of-way (ROW) as a recon group. The fourth and fifth engine companies and the second truck will also report to the designated entry point and form as one unit as they await further instructions from the incident commander. In addition to Safety Control Unit responsibilities, the third due truck company is also responsible for smoke management then accountability when all other responsibilities have been fulfilled. If the decision is made to initiate fire attack or rescue, then the truck companies will begin Safety Control responsibilities.

As the Safety Control Unit, the truck companies should verify that third rail power has been deactivated by ROCC then test each section with a volt probe (the volt probe must be functionally tested prior to entering the ROW). Once the third rail power has been confirmed down both by ROCC via the blue light box and the Safety Control Unit, the WSAD should be placed in service on each side of the incident. Next, it is imperative that the train wheels are chocked on the opposite side of the train from the third rail before operations begin. If a Chopper-series car is involved in the incident, the filter capacitor discharge switch (FCDS) must then be activated to release stored electrical current from the storage banks.

Once these procedures have been implemented, operations may then begin on the ROW while maintaining communications with the Command Post. All personnel operating within the ROW must be monitored for unsafe acts and signs of fatigue. All unsafe conditions must be reported back to the command post and/or intercepted immediately. Once all operations have discontinued and personnel and equipment have been removed from the ROW, notification must be made to the incident commander. Before power is restored to the third rail, all wheel chocks must be removed in conjunction with the WSAD. The WSAD is the last piece of equipment to be removed from the track bed.

For additional more detailed information regarding WMATA incident response, consult the Emergency Services Manual for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Passenger Rail Safety Subcommittee.

Blue light box w/red mushroom button



Filter capacitor discharge



Placement of WSAD by Safety Control Units



Placement of train wheel chocks