



WMSC Commissioner Brief: W-0113 – Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons – Capitol South Station – May 13, 2021

Prepared for Washington Metrorail Safety Commission meeting on September 21, 2021

Safety event summary:

U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) investigating a suspicious package in the general vicinity of Capitol South Station cordoned off an area that included the escalator entrance to the station. The elevator remained open for Metrorail customers.

A Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) officer dispatched to the scene did not integrate their response within the USCP incident command system (ICS) structure, did not establish themselves as WMATA's on-scene commander, and did not establish a staging area for Metrorail's response. Metrorail later designated a Rail Transportation (RTRA) Supervisor as on-scene commander despite the presence of an MTPD officer. The MTPD officer reported the blocked entrance to MTPD dispatch.

An MTPD dispatcher then reported to the Rail Operations Information Center (ROIC) in the Rail Operations Control Center (ROCC) that USCP had closed the entrance to the station and that the station was closed. The Station Manager had also learned of the entrance closure, and that the elevator entrance remained open, but was not aware of the reason for the closure of the escalator entrance. The Station Manager did not communicate this to the Rail Operations Information Center (ROIC) in the ROCC. The ROCC then instructed the station manager to close the station and evacuate the station, place the elevator in override and close the gates. Metrorail trains bypassed (traveled through without stopping) Capitol South Station from 4:51 p.m. until 5:04 p.m. when the entrance was reopened.

Probable Cause:

The cause of the initial investigation was a package left behind in the area approximately one block from the station entrance. Metrorail's response was caused by a lack of clear communication and lack of compliance with the incident command structure.

Corrective Actions:

The ROCC issued its previously planned revisions to organizational and incident management roles and procedures.

The ROCC updated the information and process for displays on the "Big Board" at the front of the ROCC that is intended to display critical incident information to all parties to improve information sharing and awareness.

RTRA issued a personnel notice to supervisors emphasizing the requirement to immediately report unusual and emergency situations.

MTPD training materials will be reviewed by operational departments.

Metrorail will work to define the Incident Management Official (IMO) role that Metrorail implemented in spring 2021.

ROCC and MTPD are to conduct after action reviews for each emergency response event.

MTPD is to send an officer to the ROCC during each emergency as specified by Metrorail procedures.



Metrorail is to review and revise SOP 1A and associated emergency response checklists to include procedures for suspicious packages reported near a station entrance, with training on those revisions for Metrorail employees.

WMSC staff observations:

Metrorail's failure to participate in the ICS process contributed to confusion during this response and incomplete information to rely upon for this investigation. Unclear ICS practices lead to confusion between personnel in the field and personnel in dispatch/control centers.

Metrorail has not defined the IMO's role and responsibilities, yet IMOs have been carrying out a variety of tasks such as being directly involved as a Metro Transit Police Department liaison during service disruptions and other emergencies.

The WMSC is reviewing these areas and others as part of the Emergency Management and Fire Life Safety Audit (draft report expected in October).

Staff recommendation: Adopt final report.



Washington Metro Area Transit Authority
Department of Safety and Environmental
Management (SAFE)

FINAL REPORT OF INVESTIGATION A&I E21192

Date of Event:	May 13, 2021
Type of Event:	Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons
Incident Time:	16:48 hours
Location:	Capitol South Station
Time and How received by SAFE:	16:58 Hours – Everbridge Critical Notification
WMSC Notification Time:	17:25 hours – WMSC On-call phone
Responding Safety Officers:	WMATA SAFE: No WMSC: No Other: No
Rail Vehicle:	N/A
Injuries:	None
Damage:	None
Emergency Responders:	Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) and Office of Rail Transportation (RTRA).
SMS I/A Incident Number:	20210608#93733

Capitol South Station - Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons

May 13, 2021

Table of Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms	3
Executive Summary	4
Incident Site	4
Field Sketch/Schematics.....	5
Purpose and Scope	5
Investigation Process and Methods	5
Investigation Methods	5
Investigation.....	6
Chronological ARS Timeline	7
Weather	8
Findings	8
Immediate Mitigation to Prevent Recurrence.....	8
Probable Cause Statement.....	8
Recommendations/Corrective Actions	8
Appendix A – MTPD Report.....	10

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ARS	Audio Recording System
CAP	Corrective Action Plan
EOD	Explosive and Ordnance Disposal
ICS	Incident Command System
MSRPH	Metro Safety Rules and Procedures Handbook
MTPD	Metro Transit Police Department
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OSC	On-Scene Commander
RTRA	Office of Rail Transportation
ROCC	Rail Operations Control Center
ROIC	Rail Operations Information Center
RTC	Rail Traffic Controller
SAFE	Department of Safety and Environmental Management
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
USCP	United States Capitol Police Department
WMATA	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
WMSC	Washington Metrorail Safety Commission

Executive Summary

On Thursday, May 13, 2021, at approximately 16:54 hours, the Rail Operations Information Center (ROIC) notified the Department of Safety and Environmental Management (SAFE) of a station closure in progress at Capitol South Station due to a suspicious package. The Station Manager located at Capitol South Station was instructed by ROIC to evacuate the station prior to closing it and trains were directed to bypass the station.

Based on Audio Recording System (ARS), at approximately 16:48 hours, a Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) dispatcher notified ROIC that the United States Capitol Police Department (USCP) had closed Capitol South Station's escalator entrance, located on First Street, SE due to an investigation of a suspicious package located in the proximity of Capitol South Station.

At approximately 16:51, the ROIC Specialist instructed the Station Manager to evacuate all passengers from the platform and station by way of the station elevators and close the station gates. The Rail Operations Control Center (ROCC) Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) made announcements to all train operators to bypass Capitol South Station. At approximately 16:53 hours, the ROCC RTC instructed an RTRA Supervisor located at Eastern Market Station to report to Capitol South Station and at approximately 16:57 hours advised the RTRA Supervisor that they would be the On-Scene Commander (OSC) upon their arrival to Capitol South Station until the arrival of MTPD, implementing Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 1A. At approximately 17:00 hours, the RTRA Supervisor reported to the ROCC RTC that they were located on the platform at Capitol South Station and was then instructed to standby for the location of the Command Post.

At approximately 17:03 hours, the RTRA Supervisor informed the ROCC RTC that MTPD reported that Capitol South Station was clear to resume service. At approximately 17:04 hours, the ROCC RTC announced that Capitol South Station was open and instructed trains to service the station.

The probable cause of this event was the action by an unknown individual, leaving a package within the proximity of Capitol South Station's First Street, SE entrance, which resulted in an investigation by the USCP.

Incident Site

Capitol South Station

Field Sketch/Schematics

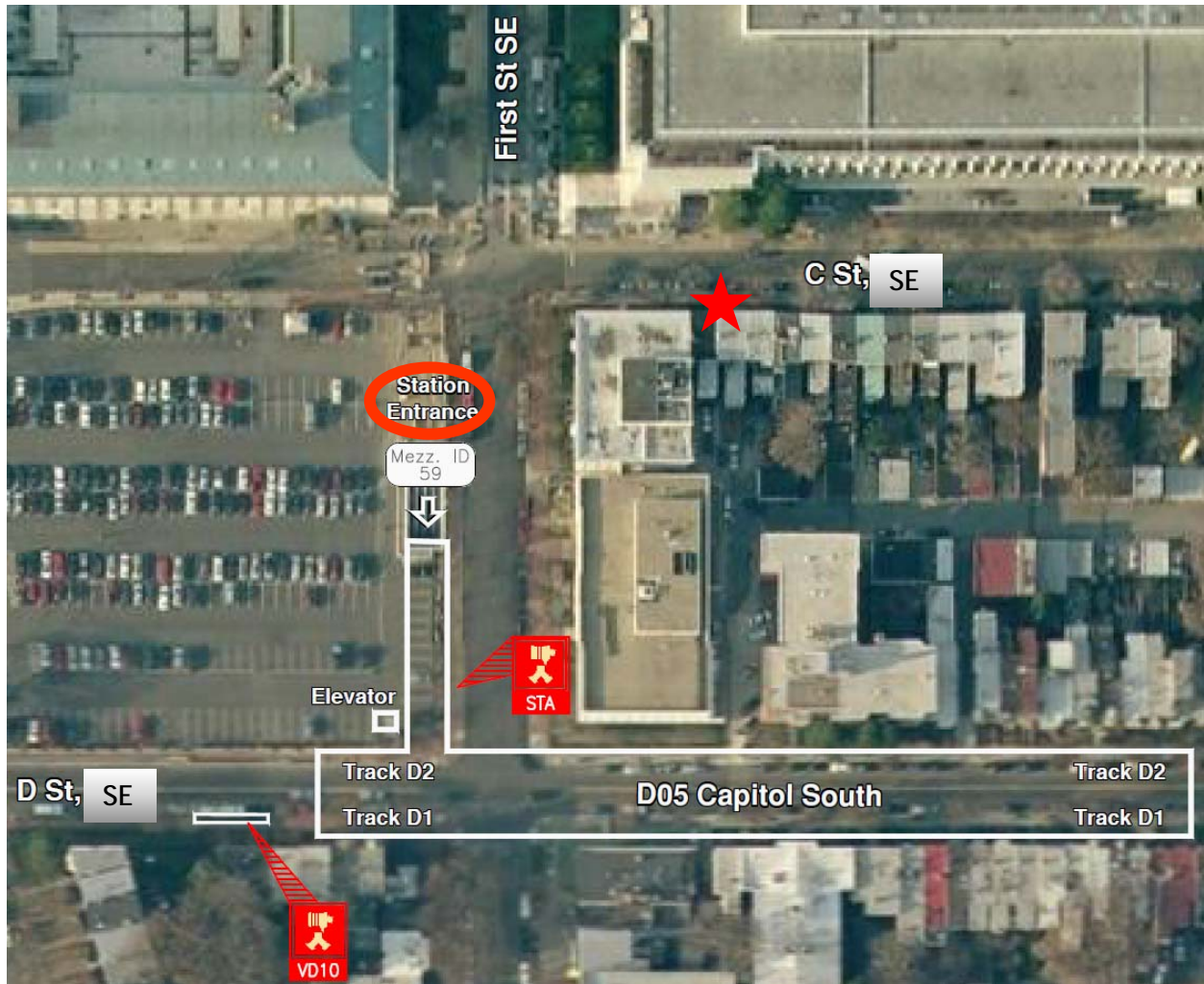


Diagram 1 – Satellite view of the area around Capitol South Station, depicting the location of the package (star icon) and the proximity to the restricted station entrance (circled).

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this incident investigation and candid self-evaluation is to collect and analyze available facts, determine the probable cause(s) of the incident, identify contributing factors, and make recommendations to prevent a recurrence.

Investigation Process and Methods

Upon receiving the notification of the Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons at Capitol South Station on May 13, 2021, SAFE conducted a subsequent investigation. SAFE team members worked with relevant WMATA subject matter experts to review the incident's facts and data.

Investigation Methods

The investigative methodologies included the following:

- Site Assessment through document review

- Documentation Review – A collection of relevant work history information and process documentation contained in Metro systems of record. These records include:
 - Metro Safety Rules and Procedures handbook (MSRPH)
 - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) data
- System Data Recording Review – A collection of information contained in Metro Data Recording Systems. This data includes:
 - Audio Recording System (ARS) playback include OPS 2 Radio

Investigation

The USCP initiated a suspicious package investigation which included cordoning off an area that included the escalator entrance to Capitol South Station on First Street, SE. The isolation of the area between where the suspicious package was located in the 100 Block of C Street, SE and Capitol South Station’s First Street, SE entrance prevented customers from entering and exiting the station via the escalators. However, Capitol South Station’s elevator entrance located on D Street, SE remained open for customer usage. The USCP notified MTPD of a suspicious package in the proximity of Capitol South Station and the entrance into the station on First Street, SE was restricted. An MTPD Unit was dispatched to the scene, and upon arrival the MTPD Unit did not establish ICS procedures. The responding MTPD Unit failed to establish their position as OSC and designate a staging area after securing the incident location. This is not in compliance with “SOP 1A. 4.3 The OSC is responsible for overall control and coordination of all WMATA activities at incident scene. The Station Manager at Capitol South Station was informed that the escalator entrance on First Street, SE was restricted from customer usage. The Station Manager did not report this communication to ROIC. This action was not in compliance with *Metrorail Safety Rules and Procedures Handbook (MSRPH), GR 1.32 - Employees involved in, witnessing, or informed of an accident or incident, to include near misses, on the Metrorail System shall inform their supervisor, Transit Police, ROCC and/or other appropriate authority as soon as possible, and shall file a written report requirements.*

The MTPD notified ROIC of the reported suspicious package, USCP restricting entry to the station’s escalator entrance on First Street, SE, and that an MTPD Unit was on the scene. The ROIC Specialist contacted the Station Manager at Capitol South Station, the Station Manager confirmed that they were aware of the entry restriction at First Street, SE and reported that the station was open and customers were entering and exiting the station via the elevator on D Street, SE, but they were not aware of the ongoing suspicious package incident. The ROIC Specialist instructed the Station Manager to evacuate the station, place the elevator in override and close the gates.

The ROIC Specialist contacted the ROCC Assistant Superintendent and made notification of the reported suspicious package incident near Capitol South Station and did not report that MTPD was on the scene. The ROCC Assistant Superintendent instructed RTCs to notify all rail lines and terminals to bypass Capitol South Station. The ROIC and ROCC did not designate MTPD or the Station Manager as the On-Scene Commander and Forward Liaison, to initiate SOP 1A. Although, MTPD was already on the scene, ICS was not initiated. The ROIC Specialist notified SAFE that Capitol South Station was in the process of being evacuated and closed due to a suspicious package. The ROCC RTC dispatched an RTRA Supervisor to Capitol South Station. Upon arriving to Capitol South Station, the RTRA Supervisor was designated as the On-Scene Commander by ROCC RTC. A short time later, the RTRA Supervisor reported to ROCC RTC that MTPD was on scene at Capitol South Station and confirmed that the station was safe to re-open. The ROCC restored revenue service to the station and advised all train operators to service the station.

Note: After investigation and inspection of the suspicious package, USCP Explosive and Ordinance Disposal (EOD) Team deemed the suspicious package as non-hazardous and Capitol South Station was safe to re-open for customer service.

Chronological ARS Timeline

A review of ARS playback, i.e., phone and radio communications, revealed the following timeline:

Time	Description
16:48:56 hours	<u>MTPD Dispatch</u> : Contacted ROIC Specialist and informed them that USCP had closed the Capitol South Station escalator entrance due to a suspicious package located in the proximity of the station, and MTPD units were on the way (Phone).
16:51:11 hours	<u>ROIC Specialist</u> : Contacted the Capitol South Station Manager and verified that USCP had closed the station escalator entrance and the elevator was still accessible and in use. Station Manager was instructed to close the station and place the elevator in override. (Phone).
16:51:40 hours	<u>ROCC RTC</u> : Informed all train operators that Capitol South Station was being bypassed due to police activity (Ops 2).
16:53:02 hours	<u>ROIC Specialist</u> : Contacted the ROCC Assistant Superintendent and all Blue, Orange, and Silver Line terminals to inform them of Capitol South Station being bypassed due to a suspicious package (Phone calls).
16:53:53 hours	<u>ROCC RTC</u> : Contacted an RTRA Supervisor located at Eastern Market Station and dispatched them to Capitol South Station. <u>RTRA Supervisor</u> : Acknowledged (Ops 2).
16:54:10 hours	<u>ROIC Specialist</u> : Notified SAFE On-call Safety Officer that Capitol South Station was being bypassed due to a suspicious package (phone).
16:56:26 hours	<u>ROCC RTC</u> : Informed all train operators that Capitol South Station was being bypassed due to police activity (Ops 2).
16:57:02 hours	<u>ROCC RTC</u> : Contacted an RTRA Supervisor and informed them that once at Capitol South Station, they would be the On-scene commander until MTPD arrives and initiated SOP 1A. <u>RTRA Supervisor</u> : Acknowledged (Ops 2).
16:59:56 hours	<u>ROCC RTC</u> : Informed all train operators that Capitol South Station was being bypassed due to police activity (Ops 2).
17:00:36 hours	<u>RTRA Supervisor</u> : Informed ROCC of their location at Capitol South Station Platform. <u>ROCC RTC</u> : Acknowledged, instructed RTRA Supervisor to standby for command post location. (Ops 2)
17:03:47 hours	<u>RTRA Supervisor</u> : Informed the ROCC RTC that MTPD reported all clear and service can be resumed. <u>ROCC RTC</u> : Acknowledged and instructed the RTRA Supervisor to stand by. <u>RTRA Supervisor</u> : Acknowledged (Ops 2).
17:04:10 hours	<u>ROCC RTC</u> : Announced to all train operators that Capitol South Station was back in service. <u>RTRA Supervisor</u> : Acknowledged (Ops 2).
17:05:30 hours	<u>ROCC RTC</u> : Announced to all train operators that Capitol South Station was back in service (Ops 2).

MTPD radio and telephone transmissions were not available before the deadline of this report.

****Note:** Times above may vary from other system's timelines based on clock settings.

Weather

On May 13, 2021, at the time of the incident, NOAA recorded the temperature as 71° F and mostly cloudy with an NNW wind speed of 10 mph. SAFE has concluded that weather was not a contributing factor in this incident (Weather source: NOAA – Location: Washington, DC.)

Findings

- USCP initiated a suspicious package investigation on the 100 block of C Street SE and prevented customers from using the First Street entrance to Capitol South Station.
- The suspicious package was located approximately 158 feet from Capitol South Station's First Street, SE entrance.
- MTPD did not establish ICS after arriving on the scene at approximately 15:33 hours. MTPD failed to establish a staging area after securing Capitol South Station's First Street, SE entrance. This is not in compliance with "SOP 1A. 4.3 The OSC is responsible for overall control and coordination of all WMATA activities at incident scene SOP 1 A.5.4.1 OSC will confirm over the radio when they have linked up with IC and give a status report SOP 1A 5.4.8 All responders shall report to the staging area once established."
- The Station Manager at Capitol South Station was notified of the restriction into the station's First Street, SE entrance and did not immediately notify ROIC. This action was not in compliance with *Metrorail Safety Rules and Procedures Handbook (MSRPH), GR 1.32 - Employees involved in, witnessing, or informed of an accident or incident, to include near misses, on the Metrorail System shall inform their supervisor, Transit Police, ROCC and/or other appropriate authority as soon as possible, and shall file a written report requirements.*
- WMATA did not integrate its response within the ICS structure established by USCP.
- MTPD conducted a secondary sweep of the station after USCP cleared the suspicious package on C Street SE as non-hazardous.

Immediate Mitigation to Prevent Recurrence

- Capitol South Station was evacuated and closed, trains bypassed the station.

Probable Cause Statement

The probable cause of this event was the action by an unknown individual, leaving a package within the proximity of Capitol South Station's First Street, SE entrance, which resulted in an investigation by the USCP.

Recommendations/Corrective Actions

The following are the recommendations and corrective actions identified as a result of this investigation. These recommendations and corrective actions are tracked using WMATA's Safety Measurement System Incidents/Accidents (SMS I/A) Module and are verified by SAFE upon completion. The responsible department is identified in the corrective action code. Refer to the SMS I/A module for additional information.

Corrective Action Code	Description
93733_SAFECAPS_RTRA_001	RTRA issued Personnel Notice emphasizing the importance and requirement to immediately report unusual and emergency situations to ROCC or other appropriate reporting authority (e.g., MTPD, Supervisor). The Notice was reissued to supervisors in July and August as a guidance document to emphasize with frontline employees during their Daily Activities.
93733_SAFECAPS_ROCC_001	In order to clarify and improve roles and responsibilities, ROCC developed and issued revised organizational and incident management procedures, including 700-ROCC-ALL-03-01, <i>Operational Roles in the Rail Operations Control Center</i> , and 100-ROCC-ALL-03-01, <i>Incident Management in the ROCC.</i>
93733_SAFECAPS_ROCC_002	In order to improve information availability and sharing among ROCC personnel, the ROCC team developed the “Big Boards” initiative that will display critical incident information to all parties within the room at the same time. The go-live date is scheduled for September 9, 2021.

As noted in the Corrective Actions section of Event Report E20488, although MTPD’s training and exercises cover the required material that should be utilized in the event of an emergency, opportunities for improvements exist:


- MTPD SOP 1A training materials should be reviewed at least annually, to ensure process changes and rule updates are reflected in the material. (90755_SAFECAPS_SAFE_004)
- The newly created Incident Management Official’s role should be clearly defined when emergency response procedures are enacted. This includes supporting the Incident Commander when SOP 1A is followed. As part of the ICS structure, the IMO should serve as the Safety Officer, whose responsibilities include overseeing the safety of the first responders (90755_SAFECAPS_SAFE_006).
- Mandatory In-Service Training should include reviews of the SOPs noted above, which are covered during new recruit training (90755_SAFECAPS_MTPD_007).
- ROCC and MTPD should conduct after action reviews after each emergency response incident (90755_SAFECAPS_MTPD_009).
- MTPD utilizes the IMO as their ROCC representation; until all IMO personnel have been trained in MTPD procedures, an officer should still be deployed to the ROCC to ensure proper communication channels are maintained in the event of an emergency (90755_SAFECAPS_MTPD_010).

SAFE recommends WMATA review and revise SOP 1A and associated checklists to include procedures when a suspicious package is reported in the proximity of a station entrance. After the review and revisions are completed, conduct annual recertification training of all WMATA employees on revisions to SOP 1A.

The following table lists internal and external Corrective Actions currently in progress that address the Root Cause and/or Contributing Factors identified in this investigation:

Corrective Action Plan	Source	Description	Estimated Closure:
WMSC-20-C0051	WMSC	Metrorail must fully record and adequately retain all communications that are tied to operations and emergency response.	July 2022

Appendix A – MTPD Report

		Event Report	
		Metro Transit Police Department ORI-DCMTP0000	
Type of Report Closed		MTPD CCN 2021-0002187	Local Jurisdiction District of Columbia
Event Location			
Street 355 First St Se		City, State WASHINGTON, DC 20003	
Date and Time of Event From 5/13/2021 3:44:02 PM To		Date and Time Reported 5/13/2021 3:45:03 PM	
Reporting Officer (Print) [Redacted]	Badge # [Redacted]	Second Officer (Print) [Redacted]	Badge # [Redacted]
Supervisor's Name (Electronically Approved)			
Incidents			
Incident: Other Incident		Location Type: Rail Station	
Incident Detail: Interruption to Rail Service			
Narrative Information			
Capitol South was closed and trains were bypassing the station between 1651 hours to 1703 hours due to an off jurisdiction suspicious package that was close to the station. TSOC [Redacted] was notified by Sgt. [Redacted] at 1720 hours, TSA-05-14472-21.			
If second CCN is available, insert here:		Additional Narrative on Supplemental Report	

MTPD CCN:
ORI-DCMTP0000

Event Report Page 1 of 3

Figure 1 - MTPD Report page 1 of 3.

Additional Narrative

I received a call that US Capitol Police was working a suspicious package at the 100 block of C St. SE, which is within close proximity to the Capitol South Metro station entrance. Once I arrived I observed Capitol Police was restricting access into our station via the escalators at 1544hrs. However, the station was still open, and patrons were allowed to utilize to elevators to enter and exit the station. It is unknown who ordered the entrance of the station to be restricted but it was not MTPD. At 1651 hours the station was closed, and trains were bypassing the station until 1703 hours. At that time I conducted a secondary K9 sweep of the Capitol South Metro station and found nothing unusual. The package was X-rayed by US Capitol Police EOD and was deemed non hazardous. The station was back to full service at 1703 hours. ICS was not established for this incident.

TSOC [REDACTED] was notified by Sgt. [REDACTED] at 1720 hours, TSA-05-14472-21.

Figure 2 - MTPD Report page 2 of 3.



MTPD CCN:
ORI-DCMTP0000

Event Report Page 3 of 3

Figure 3 - MTPD Report page 3 of 3 (blank).