



**WMSC Commissioner Brief: W-0223 – Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons – Spring Hill Station – April 21, 2022**

*Prepared for Washington Metrorail Safety Commission meeting on May 16, 2023*

**Safety event summary:**

An individual on board a Silver Line train who was making bomb threats was reported to Fairfax County Police and Metro Transit Police Department personnel by other Metrorail riders. Fairfax County Police relayed the information to the Rail Operations Control Center. The Metro Transit Police Department requested that the Rail Operations Control Center hold all trains between Wiehle-Reston East and Spring Hill Stations. Metro Transit Police personnel responded to Spring Hill Station and instructed the Train Operator of Train 604 to offload their train for life safety reasons.

Police took one person into custody, swept the train for any potential explosives, then released the train.

**Probable Cause:**

The probable cause of this evacuation for life safety reasons was a bomb threat.



Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority  
Department of Safety (SAFE)  
Office of Safety Investigations (OSI)

**FINAL REPORT OF INVESTIGATION A&I E22242**

<b>Date of Event:</b>	April 21, 2022
<b>Type of Event:</b>	Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons – (Bomb Threat)
<b>Incident Time:</b>	14:10 Hours
<b>Location:</b>	Spring Hill Station, Track 1 Wiehle-Reston Station, Track 2
<b>Time and how received by SAFE:</b>	14:10 Hours – Mission Assurance Coordinator (MAC)
<b>WMSC Notification Time:</b>	15:16 Hours
<b>Responding Safety Officers:</b>	WMATA: N/A WMSC: N/A Other: N/A
<b>Rail Vehicle:</b>	Train 604 (L3112/13x3233/32x3005/04T) Train 605 (L6061/60x6165/64x6172/73T)
<b>Injuries:</b>	None
<b>Damage:</b>	None
<b>Emergency Responders:</b>	Fairfax Police Dispatch/ Metro Transit Police Department
<b>SMS I/A Number</b>	20220426#99889

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>AIMS</b>	Advanced Information Management System
<b>ARS</b>	Audio Recording System
<b>CAP</b>	Corrective Action Plan
<b>CCTV</b>	Closed-Circuit Television
<b>MSRPH</b>	Metrorail Safety Rules and Procedures Handbook
<b>MTPD</b>	Metro Transit Police Department
<b>NOAA</b>	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
<b>RTC</b>	Rail Traffic Controller
<b>RTRA</b>	Office of Rail Transportation
<b>ROCC</b>	Rail Operations Control Center
<b>SAFE</b>	Department of Safety and Environmental Management
<b>SMS</b>	Safety Measurement System
<b>WMATA</b>	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
<b>WMSC</b>	Washington Metrorail Safety Commission

**Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority**  
**Department of Safety & Environmental Management**

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**Executive Summary**

On Thursday, April 21, 2022, at approximately 14:09 hours, Fairfax Police Department Dispatcher notified the Rail Operations Central Control (ROCC) of a bomb threat uttered by a customer aboard Train ID 604 or 605. At about the same time, Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) Dispatch contacted the OPS-4 Rail Traffic Controller (RTC), via landline, and requested to hold all trains between Wiehle-Reston East and Spring Hill Stations on both tracks. At approximately 14:10 hours, the RTC instructed Train 604 to hold their position at the platform for MTPD at Spring Hill Station, Track 1. The RTC then instructed Train 605 to hold position, at the platform, for MTPD at Wiehle-Reston East Station, Track 2 at approximately 14:13 hours.

At approximately 14:20 hours, Train 604 reported MTPD Officers on scene at Spring Hill Station. Three minutes later, the MTPD officer conducting the initial investigation instructed Train 604 to offload all passengers. The Train Operator for Train 604 relayed this to the RTC and the RTC subsequently granted permission to offload. Gap Train 775 was dispatched from West Falls Church pocket track. Single-track operations were initiated by the ROCC. At approximately 14:27 hours, the Train Operator of Train 604 stated MTPD commenced a sweep of Train 604 with a K-9 unit. At approximately 14:30 hours, the Train Operator of Train 604 stated MTPD had one individual in custody. At approximately 14:37 hours, the Operator of Train 604 reported MTPD K-9 concluded their sweep and declared the train was clear.

At approximately 14:35 hours MTPD arrived on scene of Wiehle-Reston Station with a Rail Supervisor in order to commence the investigation of Train 605. At approximately 14:55 hours, MTPD finished clearing Train 605 and released it back into service.

The ROIC Report articulated that Metrorail service was disrupted for approximately 28 minutes in total.

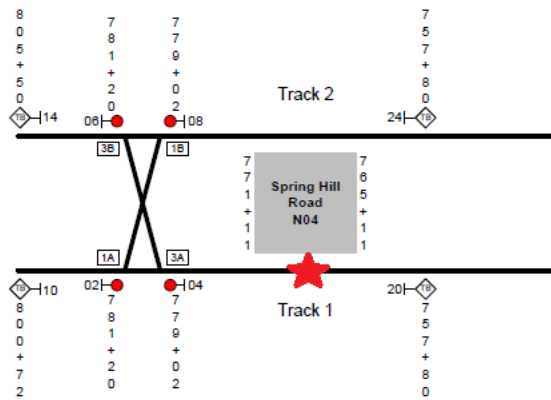
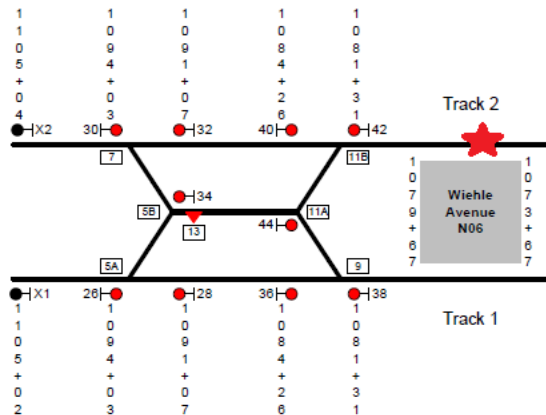
The probable cause of the Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons event was a criminal action by a passenger (Bomb Threat) that resulted in the evacuation and inspection of two trains. The subsequent investigation revealed no presence of a real or perceived explosive or incendiary device.

**Incident Site**

Site One: Train 604 at Spring Hill Station, Track 1

Site One: Train 605 at Wiehle-Reston Station, Track 2

## Field Sketch/Schematics



\*Approximate location of event. Not to scale.

## Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this accident 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.

## Investigative Methods

Upon receiving notification of the Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons event on April 21, 2022, SAFE dispatched a cross-functional team to assess the scene and conduct a subsequent investigation. SAFE team members worked with relevant WMATA subject matter experts to review the incident's facts and data.

The investigative methodologies included the following:

- Site Assessment through video and document review

- Informal Interviews – Collected through conversations with individuals during the investigation to provide background and supporting information. Written statements were reviewed from personnel present during the event.
- Documentation Review – A collection of relevant work history information and process documentation contained in Metro systems of record. These records include:
  - Metrorail Safety Rules and Procedures Handbook (MSRPH)
  - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
  - MOC Assistant Superintendent Summary Log
  - MTPD Event Report
- System Data Recording Review – A collection of information contained in Metro Data Recording Systems. This data includes:
  - Audio Recording System (ARS) playback [Radio and Landline Communications]
  - Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV)

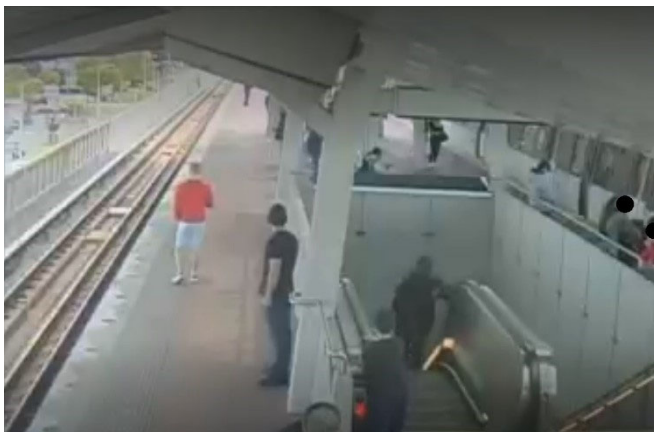
## **Investigation**

On Thursday, April 21, 2022, at approximately 14:09 hours, Fairfax Police Department notified the Rail Operations Central Control (ROCC) of a bomb threat uttered by a customer aboard Train 604 or 605.

A combination of the Rail Office Information Center (ROIC) Report and the Audio Radio System (ARS) Playback were consulted in order to determine the sequence of events.

At approximately 14:09 hours, MTPD Dispatch called OPS-4 Controller, via landline, and requested to hold all trains between Wiehle-Reston East and Spring Hill Stations on both tracks.

At approximately 14:10 hours, the ROCC instructed Train 604 to hold position at the platform for MTPD at Spring Hill Station, Track 1. The ROCC then instructed Train 605 to hold position upon arrival at the platform for MTPD at Wiehle-Reston East Station, Track 2 at approximately 14:13 hours.



*Figure 1: Train 604 held at Spring Hill Station.*

At approximately 14:20 hours, Train 604 reported MTPD officers on scene at Spring Hill Station to investigate. Three minutes later, the MTPD officers conducting the initial investigation instructed Train 604 to offload all passengers. The Train Operator of Train 604 relayed this to the ROCC and the ROCC subsequently granted permission to offload. Gap Train 775 was dispatched from West Falls Church pocket track. Single-track operations were commenced by the ROCC.

At approximately 14:24 hours, Train 605 was contacted by MTPD and held in position at Wiehle-Rest Station, Track 2 to allow for MTPD Officers to commence initial investigation of the train. At the same time, the Train Operator of Train 604 reported MTPD commenced a sweep of Train 604 with K-9 units.

At approximately 14:30 hours, Train Operator of Train 604 stated MTPD had one individual in custody. The sweep of Train 604 concluded at approximately 14:37 hours. At approximately 14:35 hours, MTPD arrived on scene of Wiehle-Reston Station with a Rail Supervisor in order to commence the investigation of Train 605. At approximately 14:38 hours, MTPD confirmed Train 604 can be released and placed back in revenue service. Train 604 was reloaded and continued in revenue service to Largo Town Center Station, Track 1. At approximately 14:55 hours, MTPD finished clearing Train 605 and released it back into service.

Metrorail service was disrupted for approximately 28 minutes in total.

### **Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD)**

Upon review of the MTPD Report, MTPD officers originally contacted the suspect after receiving information from another customer, which included, a physical description, as well as information of the suspect stating he was planning to retrieve an explosive device in order to “Blow up the Metro, the White House and the Mall.” Another customer stated he overheard the suspect state he was planning to “Blow up Dulles Airport.”

The individual was also observed stating he had to return to Wiehle-Reston in order to facilitate the action.

MTPD detained an individual matching the description.- The suspect was positively identified by the original customer who provided MTPD with the description and further information. The suspect was then placed under arrest.

Further, per WMATA SOP 14.5.1.5, MTPD determined there was no need to evacuate Spring Hill Station, nor did they require a command post or create an After-Action report. This was mostly due to the swift action of MTPD officers on scene locating, identifying and detaining the suspect and assessing the threat.

MTPD did not recover any actual or suspected explosive or incendiary devices of any nature.

### **Chronological ARS Timeline**

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

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Incident Date: 04/21/2022      Time: 14:10 hours  
Final Report – Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons  
E22242

Drafted By: SAFE 705 – 06/12/2022
Reviewed By: SAFE 71 – 06/15/2022
Approved By: SAFE 71 – 06/17/2022

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<b>Time</b>	<b>Description</b>
14:09:45 Hours	RTC instructed Train 604, Track 1 approaching Spring Hill Station, to hold position at Spring Hill Station. Train 604 acknowledged. [Radio]
14:09:58 Hours	RTC instructed Train 605, Track 2 approaching Wiehle-Reston Station instructed to hold position at upon arrival at the platform. Train 605 acknowledged. [Radio]
14:12:20 Hours	RTC inquired if MTPD can be observed on scene. Train 604 advised not observed. [Radio]
14:15:37 Hours	RTC instructed Train 606, Track 2 approaching McLean Station instructed to hold position at McLean Station. Train 606 acknowledged. [Radio]
14:15:49 Hours	RTC asks if MTPD can be observed on scene. Train 604 advised not observed. [Radio]
14:16:48 Hours	RTC instructed Train 604 to continue to advise customers of delay and to continue to standby. [Radio]
14:17:59 Hours	RTC instructed 604, 605 and 606 to hold position due to a MTPD investigation. All acknowledged. [Radio]
14:19:12 Hours	RTRA Supervisor advised to go to scene. Maintenance Unit attempts to contact RTC [Radio]
14:20:30 Hours	Train 604 advised RTC they have observation of MTPD units on scene. [Radio]
14:23:23 Hours	Train 604 advised ROCC that they have been instructed to offload train at the request of MTPD. ROCC acknowledged and gave permission to offload customers [Radio]
14:23:51 Hours	ROCC also advised Train 604 that they are now on-scene commander. Train 604 acknowledged [Radio]
14:25:27 Hours	ROCC advised Train 606 to continue on from Greensboro Station towards Spring Hill Station. ROCC also advised single-track operations would be taking effect. [Radio]
14:26:04 Hours	ROCC advised trains would be single-tracking from Wiehle-Reston Station via Track 1, Track 2 was declared out of service. [Radio]
14:27:13 Hours	Train 604 advised ROCC that an MTPD officer was sending K-9 assets to sweep the train. ROCC requested information of serviceability of Track 2 Spring Hill from MTPD via Train 604. Train 604 advised ROCC to standby. [Radio]
14:28:14 Hours	ROCC instructed Train 606 to standby at Spring Hill Station, prior to opening doors. [Radio]
14:28:36 Hours	Train 604 advised that Track 2 at Spring Hill Station was cleared for use per MTPD. [Radio]
14:30:01 Hours	Train 604 advised ROCC MTPD had one customer in custody. [Radio]
14:33:29 Hours	Train 604 advised ROCC that K-9 was in the process of conducting sweep through train. ROCC instructed Train 607 to hold at Spring Hill Station on arrival. Train 607 acknowledged. [Radio]
14:37:28 Hours	Train 604 advised ROCC that K-9 had concluded sweep and declared all clear. [Radio]
14:39:06 Hours	ROCC instructed Train 604 to reload train and go back into revenue service when safe to do so. [Radio]

Time	Description
14:46:43 Hours	Rail Supervisor on scene with Train 605 reported that MTPD was approximately halfway through search and clearance of train. [Radio]
14:55:15 Hours	Rail Supervisor on scene with Train 605 advised that MTPD cleared the train. [Radio]

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

## Related Policies and Procedures

The following policies and procedures were adhered to during the course of the incident

SOP 1A: Command, Control and Coordination of Emergencies on the Rail System

SOP 14: Bomb Threat/Suspicious Package/Unattended Package

## Weather

On April 21, 2022, at the time of the incident, NOAA recorded the temperature as 59° F, with light rain in places and with an average of 55% humidity and an average windspeed of 10.7 MPH. Weather was not a contributing factor in this incident (Weather source: NOAA – Location: Washington, DC).

## Human Factors

### Fatigue Risk

WMATA personnel were not identified as contributory in this event. The biomathematical fatigue modeling application (SAFTE-FAST Web SFC) was not applied for this event.

### Post-Incident Toxicology Testing

WMATA personnel were not identified as contributory in this event. Post-Incident Toxicology Testing was not conducted.

## Findings

- No individuals were injured, and no property was damaged as a result of the incident.
- No incendiary or explosive devices were recovered.
- One passenger was identified and arrested in reference to the incident, no others were identified or arrested.
- Revenue service was delayed by approximately 28 minutes.
- The ROIC Report reflects Train Operator of Train 604 designated as On-Scene Commander at 14:10 hours; however, the ARS playback indicates that ROCC identified Train 604 as On-Scene Commander at 14:23 hours.
- WMATA personnel complied with SOP #14 when responding to this incident.

## Immediate Mitigation to Prevent Recurrence

- MTPD were dispatched immediately and identified and arrested the suspected person who uttered the bomb threat, at Spring Hill Station, negating the need for a Command Post or Station Closure.

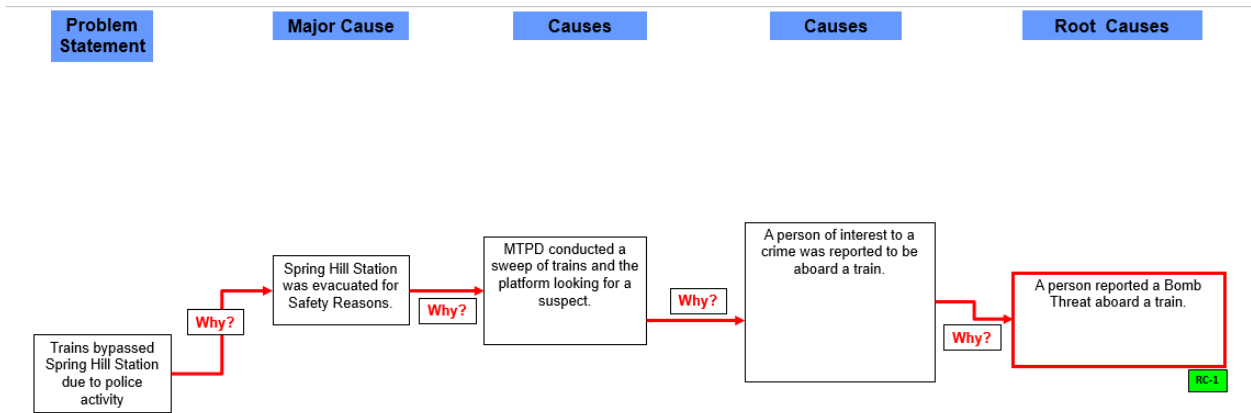
**Probable Cause Statement**

The probable cause of the Evacuation for Fire Life Safety Reasons event was a criminal action by a passenger (Bomb Threat) that resulted in the evacuation of two trains. The subsequent investigation revealed no presence of a real or perceived explosive or incendiary device.

**SAFE Recommendations/Corrective Actions**

SAFE has no recommendations or corrective actions due to the criminal nature of the incident.

## Appendix A – Root Cause Analysis



## Root Cause Analysis

