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**WMSC Commissioner Brief: W-0244 Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons – Fort Totten Station – April 18, 2023**

*Prepared for Washington Metrorail Safety Commission meeting on October 24, 2023*

**Safety event summary:**

On Tuesday, April 18, 2023, Fort Totten Station was evacuated for life safety reasons due to possible munitions found off Metrorail property.

At 5:33 p.m., the Metropolitan Police Department contacted the Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) and requested closure of Fort Totten Station. MTPD personnel notified the Rail Operations Control Center (ROCC) at approximately 5:42 p.m. and requested trains be held outside Fort Totten Station. The ROCC Assistant Operations Manager relayed those instructions to the Rail Traffic Controllers.

Multiple agencies were dispatched to the scene including a United States Army Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) Unit and D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services. The U.S. Army Unit recommended the station be closed.

The Metropolitan Police Department established an incident command post, which MTPD joined. At 6:32 p.m., a Unified Command Post was established.

Trains were held at Brookland and Takoma stations on the Red Line and at West Hyattsville and Georgia Ave – Petworth stations on the Yellow/Green lines.

Incident Command provided permission for trains to resume service through the area without stopping at Fort Totten Station, and rail service resumed.

Following the removal of the possible munitions from the area, the station was cleared to reopen with normal service.

**Probable Cause:**

The probable cause of this event was the discovery of possible munitions off Metrorail property.



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

**FINAL REPORT OF INVESTIGATION A&I E23267**

<b>Date of Event:</b>	April 18, 2023
<b>Type of Event:</b>	Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons
<b>Incident Time:</b>	18:41 Hours
<b>Location:</b>	Fort Totten Station
<b>Time and How received by SAFE:</b>	18:42 Hours SAFE/MAC
<b>WMSC Notification Time:</b>	19:29 Hours
<b>Responding Safety Officers:</b>	WMATA: Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP) WMSC: None Other: None
<b>Rail Vehicle:</b>	None
<b>Injuries:</b>	None
<b>Damage:</b>	None
<b>Emergency Responders:</b>	United States Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), DC Fire and EMS (DCFEMS), Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD)
<b>SMS I/A Incident Number:</b>	20230420#107849

# Fort Totten Station – Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons

April 18, 2023

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### **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

<b>AOM</b>	Assistant Operations Manager
<b>ARS</b>	Audio Recording System
<b>CCTV</b>	Closed-Circuit Television
<b>DCFEMS</b>	DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services
<b>EOD</b>	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
<b>MAC</b>	Mission Assurance Coordinator
<b>MHZ</b>	Megahertz
<b>MPD</b>	Metropolitan Police Department
<b>MTPD</b>	Metro Transit Police Department
<b>NOAA</b>	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
<b>OEP</b>	Office of Emergency Preparedness
<b>RTRA</b>	Office of Rail Transportation
<b>ROCC</b>	Rail Operations Control Center
<b>SMS</b>	Safety Measurement System
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedure
<b>SAFE</b>	Department of Safety
<b>SOCC</b>	Security Operations Control Center
<b>WMATA</b>	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
<b>WMSC</b>	Washington Metrorail Safety Commission

**Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority**  
**Department of Safety – Office of Safety Investigations**

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**Executive Summary**

*\*Note that all times listed are approximate and may contain minor variations due to differences between systems of record. \**

On Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 17:33 hours, the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) contacted the Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) and requested an MTPD Officer to respond to the Fort Totten Station and assist with closing it due to the discovery of two unidentified and possibly hazardous containers on a property 400 yards away. The containers were not on WMATA property. There were no rail station cameras that recorded the off-property event.

At 18:41 hours, the Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons event occurred at Fort Totten Station. Emergency responders were dispatched and included the United States Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), the DC Fire and EMS (DCFEMS), the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), and the Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD). WMATA was notified of the event by MPD.

MPD established a command post and MTPD joined them. The US Army EOD recommended that Fort Totten Station close out of an abundance of caution, location, and the possibility of the canisters containing hazardous material.

At 18:32 hours, the Unified Command post was established between Fort Totten Drive and Gallatin Street. The station was evacuated, and trains bypassed the station on both the red and green lines. A bus bridge was established between Fort Totten, Brookland, and Takoma stations. 342 passengers were transported via the bus bridge during the event.

The U.S. Army EOD personnel were able to retrieve and remove the containers without incident.

At 20:51 hours, an MTPD official at the unified command post near Fort Totten Station notified the Rail Operations Control Center (ROCC) that the area was clear. The station reopened to passengers, and rail service was restored.

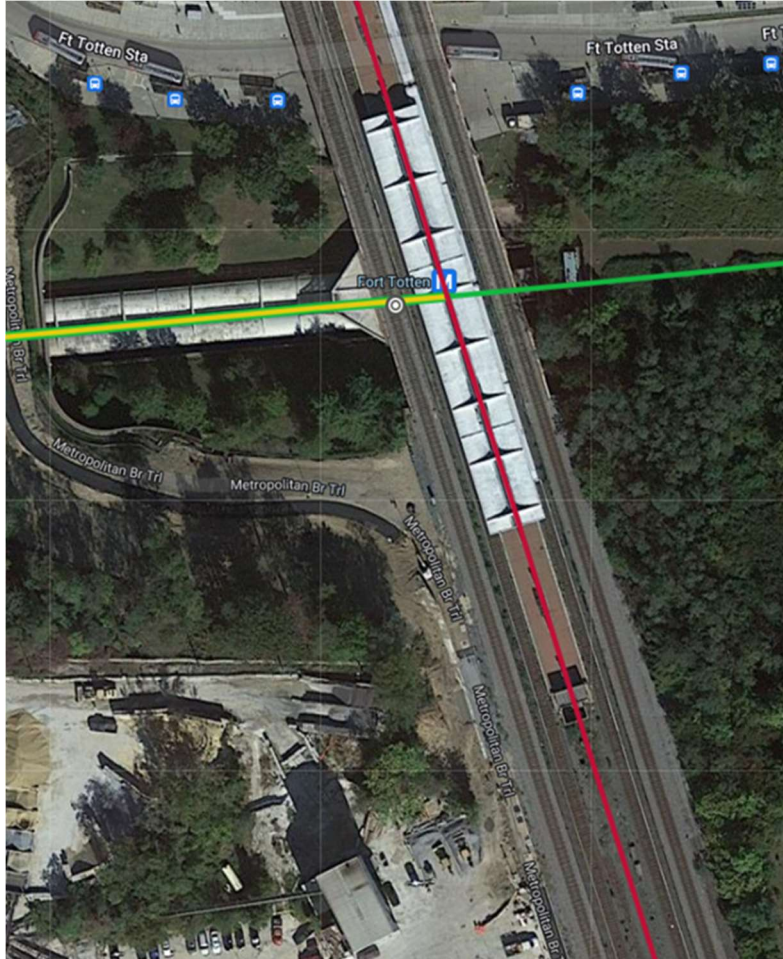
There was no damage or injuries reported during this incident.

The probable cause of the Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons event at Fort Totten Station was the detection of potentially hazardous material on non-WMATA property and the recommendation of First Responders.

## **Incident Site**

Fort Totten Station

## **Field Sketch/Schematics**



*The above depiction is 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**

The investigative methodologies included the following:

- Site Assessment through 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 – Collection of relevant work history information and process documentation contained in WMATA systems of record. These records include:
  - Metrorail Safety Rules and Procedures Handbook (MSRPH)
  - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
  - Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP)
  - Metropolitan Transit Police Department (MTPD)
  - Rail Operations Control Center (ROCC) Incident Report
- System Data Recording Review – Collection of information contained in Metro Data Recording Systems. This data includes:
  - Audio Recording System (ARS) playback
  - Open Megahertz (MHZ)

### **Investigation**

On Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 18:41 hours, an Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons event occurred at the Fort Totten Station. A construction worker noticed two containers on a construction site 400 yards from Fort Totten Station at Fort Totten Park (Fort Totten Drive and Gallatin Street, NE). The devices were not on WMATA property.

The Audio Recording System (ARS) revealed that at 17:33 hours, MPD contacted MTPD and requested an MTPD Officer assist with closing Fort Totten Station due to the findings at Fort Totten Park and its proximity to Fort Totten Station. Emergency responders, including the United States Army EOD, DCFEMS, MPD, and MTPD were dispatched to the scene.

MTPD notified ROCC of the report. At 17:44 hours, the AOM instructed the Radio RTC to hold all rail traffic outside of Fort Totten Station. At 17:50 hours, the Rail Operations Information Center (ROIC) requested a bus bridge.

At 18:20 hours, the Radio RTC instructed all trains to bypass Fort Totten Station due to police activity.

At 18:25 hours, MPD requested MTPD have an officer respond to Fort Totten Drive Northeast and Gallatin Street Northeast to help coordinate a response to suspicious containers near the Fort Totten Station. At 18:32 hours, an Incident Command post was established between Fort Totten Drive Northeast and Gallatin Street Northeast.

Fort Totten Station was recommended to be closed by the US Army EOD due to the possibility of items containing hazardous gas. It was advised due to the item's location and possible contents of the items that the station be evacuated out of caution. At 18:32 hours the station was evacuated, and trains were instructed to bypass the station. Buses were allowed to remain in service and a bus bridge was established between Fort Totten, Brookland, and Takoma stations.

At 19:18 hours, personnel were able to contain and remove the items without incident.

At 20:00 hours, Fort Totten Station was reopened, and normal train service resumed.



## **Chronological Event Timeline**

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

<b>Time</b>	<b>Description</b>
17:33:10 hours	<u>MTPD</u> : Contacted MTPD and requested an MTPD Officer assist with closing Fort Totten Station. [Telephone – 5D]
17:44:24 hours	<u>AOM</u> : Advised RTC to hold all rail traffic outside of Fort Totten Station. [Telephone]
17:44:46 hours	<u>Button RTC</u> : Verified that MTPD was closing Fort Totten Station.
17:50:00 hours	<u>ROIC</u> : Bus bridge requested with personnel and buses assigned. [Phone]
18:20:52 hours	<u>Radio RTC</u> : Announced all trains to bypass Fort Totten Station due to police activity. [Radio-Ops 1]
18:36:29 hours	<u>Radio RTC</u> : Announced all trains to bypass Fort Totten Station due to police activity. [Radio-Ops 1]
18:38:56 hours	<u>MAC</u> : Notified WMSC of the offsite munitions found by a construction worker 300-400 yards from Ft. Totten station. [MAC telephone]
18:45:00 hours	<u>Button RTC</u> : Notified AOM that MTPD would close Ft. Totten station. AOM: Acknowledged. Instructed RTC to bypass Ft. Totten station
18:56:30 hours	<u>Radio RTC</u> : Advised all trains to bypass Fort Totten Station. Normal service to resume at Brookland Station. [Radio-Ops 1]
19:18:20 hours	<u>Button RTC</u> : Confirmed with AOM that a munition was found by EOD. [Telephone]
19:25:49 hours	<u>Radio RTC</u> : Advised all trains to bypass Fort Totten Station. Normal service to resume at Brookland Station. [Radio-Ops 1]
19:28:19 hours	<u>Bus Bridge</u> : Field Transit supervisor updated BOCC on bus departures from area. [Radio]
20:51: 16 hours	<u>MTPD</u> : Advised all units and ROCC that the munitions were cleared from the adjacent property. Ft. Totten would be in service. [MTPD – 2X]
21:00:19 hours	<u>Radio RTC</u> : Advised all trains that Fort Totten Station was reopened. [Radio – Ops 1]

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

## **Weather**

At the time of the incident, NOAA recorded the temperature at 66° F, wind speed of 13 miles per hour, and wind direction was generally west. Weather was a contributing factor in this incident (Weather source: NOAA – Location: Washington DC) and influenced the recommended response from first responders.

## **Related Rules and Procedures**

- SOP #1A – Command, Control and Coordination of Emergencies on the Rail System
- MTPD General Order 375

## **Human Factors**



## Fatigue

The biomathematical fatigue modeling application (SAFTE-FAST Web SFC) was not applied for this event.

## Fatigue Risk

The biomathematical fatigue modeling application (SAFTE-FAST Web SFC) was not applied for this event.

## Post-Incident Toxicology Testing

This incident did not meet the criteria WMATA's the Drug and Alcohol Policy and Testing Program 7.7.3/6.

## Findings

- Potentially hazardous materials were located near Fort Totten Station.
- US Army EOD recommended evacuation of the station.

## Immediate Mitigation to Prevent Recurrence

- MPD, DCFD, MTPD, and US Army EOD were dispatched to secure the areas and remove the devices.
- Fort Totten Station was evacuated of all personnel and passengers.
- Bus Bridge was established to transport passengers away from the area.

## Probable Cause Statement

The probable cause of the Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons event at Fort Totten Station was the detection of potentially hazardous material on non-WMATA property and the recommendation of First Responders.

## Recommended Corrective Actions

Corrective Action Code	Description	Responsible Party	Estimated Completion Date
	No Corrective Actions		

## Appendices

### Appendix A – Station Manager Incident Report

The below narratives summarize the incident and represent the statements made by the involved individual. As such, times and details may present a conflict with the data contained in systems of record.

WMATA/RTRA Incident/Accident Report (Other than Motor Vehicle) Page 1 of 1

Additional Information- Complete this page for any incident where the information is available and when additional space is needed for incident description.

Customer Involved ☐ Employee Involved ☒ Witness ☐

Last Name, First Name [REDACTED] Employee # 077837

Date of Birth N.A. Sex MA Home Phone N.A. Work Phone [REDACTED] Cell Phone 501 211 4131

Home Address Forttotten N.A. Mezz #28 Email Address [REDACTED]

Nature of Injury/Illness N.A.

Assistance Offered: Accepted ☐ Declined ☐

If Transported:

Hospital: N.A. Ambulance Number: N.A. Arrival: N.A. Departure: N.A.

Customer Involved ☐ Employee Involved ☐ Witness ☐

Last Name, First Name N.A. Employee # N.A.

Date of Birth N.A. Sex MA Home Phone N.A. Work Phone N.A. Cell Phone N.A.

Home Address N.A. Email Address N.A.

Nature of Injury/Illness N.A.

Assistance Offered: Accepted ☐ Declined ☐

If Transported:

Hospital: N.A. Ambulance Number: N.A. Arrival: N.A. Departure: N.A.

Police/Fire/Other Agencies Involved

Jurisdiction/Arrival Time Transit - 7:05 P.M. Name [REDACTED] Badge/Unit Number [REDACTED]

Jurisdiction/Arrival Time Safety - 7:07 P.M. Name [REDACTED] Badge/Unit Number [REDACTED]

DESCRIBE THE INCIDENT (continued or witness statement); Include what you did to correct the problem and who you notified and when. Describe any property damage and the extent of any injuries.

6:45 P.M. Transit O.S.C. [REDACTED] notified me to close station, I called  
central at 6:48 P.M. to update. Supervisor [REDACTED] arrived at 7: P.M. Supervisor  
[REDACTED] arrived 7:03 P.M. Shut down station 7:04 P.M. Plant [REDACTED] arrived 7:07 P.M.  
Notified by central to normal up station, and Supervisor [REDACTED] 8:50 P.M.  
Station open to normal 8:53 P.M. Hot wash 9: P.M.

Employee Completing report

Employee Name (print) [REDACTED] Employee Signature (sign) [REDACTED] Employee # [REDACTED] Date: 4/18/23

50.7538 04/12 White Copy: Division or Supervisor Yellow Copy: For any incident involving escalators or elevators; remains in kiosk for use of elevator/escalator inspectors

Document 1 - Station Managers Incident Report.

Incident Date: 04/18/2023 Time: 18:41 hours  
Final Report – Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons  
E23267

Drafted By: SAFE 708 – 06/17/2023  
Reviewed By: SAFE 707 – 06/19/2023  
Approved By: SAFE 71 – 06/20/2023

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## Appendix B – ROCC Alert



### **RESOLVED: B2: Police Activity - Fort Totten**

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#### **RESOLVED - FINAL UPDATE**

**Resolution Summary:** US Military has packaged both containers. They will remain on scene, however, deemed the area safe. The station has been re-opened. BOCC has been notified. Bus bridges have been canceled. Strategic buses will remain in place for one hour. This is the final update.

**Customer Impact:** Green Line, Red Line no delays, Headways being determined.

**Operational Response:** MTPD is on the scene.

**On-Scene:** MTPD on scene

#### **Additional Information**

**Incident Date/Time:** 04-18-2023 21:04

*Document 2 - ROCC Final Update Alert page 1 of 2*

**Incident Level: B2**  
**Location: Fort Totten**  
**Area: Outside platform**

*Incidents develop quickly. Please excuse typos.*

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**Incident Level Legend**

	A Serious	B Major	C Minor	D No Harm
1 Multiple Lines				
2 One Line				
3 No Impact				

THIS ALERT IS INTENDED ONLY FOR THE PROPER RECIPIENT(S). IT IS CONFIDENTIAL AND MAY CONTAIN SENSITIVE OR OTHERWISE NON-PUBLIC SAFETY OR SECURITY INFORMATION. IT CONTAINS PRELIMINARY INFORMATION BASED ON THE BEST DATA AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF TRANSMISSION AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE OR MODIFICATION AS ADDITIONAL OR NEW INFORMATION OR DATA IS SECURED. IF YOU ARE NOT THE PROPER RECIPIENT, PLEASE DELETE THIS MESSAGE. ANY UNAUTHORIZED REVIEW, COPYING, OR USE OF THIS MESSAGE IS PROHIBITED. TO UNSUBSCRIBE, PLEASE REPLY TO [RCLIAISON@WMATA.COM](mailto:RCLIAISON@WMATA.COM)

Document 3 - ROCC Final Update Alert page 2 of 2

## Appendix C – Office of Emergency Preparedness Report (OEP)

Submitted by: [REDACTED]



### SAFE OEP Incident Response Report

#### Overview

<u>Incident Date/Time:</u>	<u>Responder 1:</u>	<u>Additional Responders:</u>
2023-04-18	[REDACTED]	N/A
18:42	<u>MAC 1:</u> [REDACTED]	<u>Incident Type:</u>
<u>Incident Location:</u>	<u>MAC 2:</u> N/A	Other Significant Issue
Fort Totten Drive and Brooklyn Ave NE		

#### Incident Metrics

<u>OPS Channel:</u> OPS 1	<u>On Scene Time:</u> 19:10
<u>MTPD Channels:</u>	<u>Disregard Time:</u> N/A
["MTPD 2x"]	<u>Time of Recovery:</u> N/A
<u>Bus/Rail Yard Channel:</u> N/A	<u>In-Service Time:</u> 21:06
<u>Initial Incident Time:</u> 18:42	<u>Command Est. Time:</u> 18:42
<u>Dispatch Time:</u> 18:44	<u>Transfer of Command Time:</u> N/A
<u>Response Time:</u> 18:48	

#### Incident Personnel

<u>Metro IC:</u> Cruiser [REDACTED]	<u>Maintenance Lead (ERT):</u> N/A
<u>Jurisdictional IC:</u> District of Columbia	<u>Investigations Lead (MTPD):</u>
<u>Fire Liaison ROCC:</u> [REDACTED]	N/A
<u>Forward Liaison (RTRA Supervisor):</u>	<u>Investigations Lead (Safety):</u> N/A
N/A	<u>Transportation Lead (Bus TFS):</u> N/A
<u>Forward Liaison (MTPD):</u> [REDACTED]	

Document 4 - OEP Incident Response Report page 1 of 2

Submitted by: [REDACTED]

### Incident Overview

Was Power removed: No

Red Tag (if applicable):N/A

#### Incident Narrative:

A contractor behind the Fort Totten Metro station, was widening the road back to the concrete plant and unearthed two pieces of military ordnance's. The DCFD Fire Department responded and set up a command post, due to the wind direction and possibility of chemicals being in one of the shells, the decision was made to close Fort Totten Station and bypass it. A bus bridge was established. The devices were not on WMATA property. The station was reopened @ 21:08.

#### Incident Successes:

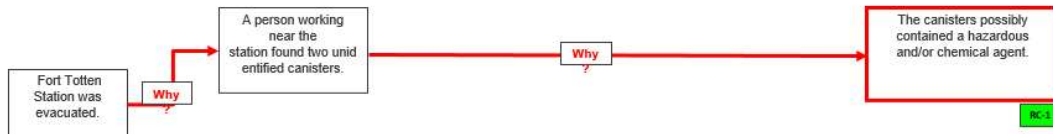
MTPD did a good job closing the station.

#### Opportunities for Improvement:

N/A

*Document 5 - OEP Incident Response Report page 2 of 2*

## Appendix C – Root Cause Analysis



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### Root Cause Analysis

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

