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The new look is the latest addition to the list of several reforms MTS has already made to its security department

San Diego - The San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) is introducing a new look for its security officers to reflect the agency's commitment to security reform, which has included revised use of force policies, a fare citation diversion program, adopting the principles of the "8 Can't Wait" campaign and the third-party review of its security policies. The new look replaces the traditional blue uniforms with brighter uniforms to provide greater visibility of staff so riders can easily identify them for assistance if needed.

"The significant social justice issues involving law enforcement all over the country have made us even more aware of how we want to engage with the community," said Monica Montgomery Steppe, Chair of the MTS Public Security Committee and San Diego City Councilmember. "We've made a concerted effort to place the focus on serving riders and the new uniforms reflect this new approach."

The 64 internal MTS Code Compliance Inspectors (CCI) will immediately begin wearing their new uniforms, which will include a bright yellow band to the upper body. The 158 contracted Transit System Security (TSS) officers will begin wearing their new uniforms this summer, and will switch from a traditional law enforcement dark blue to light blue. Together, CCIs and TSS officers are responsible for patrolling 53 stations, three Trolley lines and 95 bus routes.

"Over the past year, MTS Security has been working diligently with the Public Security Committee to explore ways to better serve our customers by emphasizing our role as ambassadors to our riders," said Al Stiehler, MTS Director of Transit Security and Passenger Safety. "We have been adopting principles, guidelines and implementing policies to be of better service to our community, and the new uniforms align better with that approach."

Since last July, MTS has been pursuing security improvements including:

- Banning carotid restraints and choke holds, including the prohibition of using knee pressure on the neck, throat or head
- Adopting a "duty to intervene" if MTS security officers witness excessive force by another employee
- Adopting many of the principles in the "8 Can't Wait" campaign and as a guideline for its use-of-force policy
- Implementing a fare citation diversion pilot program to help riders caught without a fare avoid court fees and criminal citation

- Hiring former New York MTA Chief Al Stiehler as new director of transit security and passenger safety
- Conducting an outside peer review of its security practices which has led to approximately 65 recommendations for improvement
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MTS operates 95 bus routes and three Trolley lines across 10 cities and unincorporated areas of San Diego County. Frequencies and spans have been restored to near-pre-COVID-19 levels. Updated schedules can be accessed on the MTS website. MTS requires people to wear face coverings at all times, and practice physical distancing when possible.

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