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Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Office of the Inspector General

Review of Metro Call Boxes in Rail Stations and Major Bus Terminals

Report No. 26-AUD-01 **August 22, 2025**

Metro

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Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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DATE: August 22, 2025

TO: Metro Board of Directors
Metro Chief Executive Officer

FROM: Yvonne Zheng, Senior Manager, Audit
Office of the Inspector General

E-SIGNED by Yvonne Zheng
on 2025-08-22 13:41:38 PDT

SUBJECT: Final Report on Review of Metro Call Boxes in Rail Stations and Major Bus Terminals (Report No. 26-AUD-01)

INTRODUCTION

Call boxes are a vital safety and communication resource for passengers throughout Metro's rail and bus networks. As a prominent element of the transit system's safety infrastructure, their condition serves as a visible indicator of the agency's commitment to safety and operational excellence. Reliable, modern, and well-maintained call boxes are essential for ensuring public safety and delivering effective service. Conversely, neglected or poorly maintained call boxes can undermine public confidence and negatively affect perceptions of the entire transit system's quality and reliability.

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) conducted a review of customer-facing call boxes at Metro rail stations and major bus terminals. The objective was to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of these callbox telephones across Metro's rail system and major bus terminals.

Our review found that Metro has established adequate policies and procedures governing the operation and maintenance of customer-facing call boxes. Overall, the system is generally effective in terms of accessibility and response time, and the majority of inspected call boxes were found to be operational and well-maintained. Based on our physical inspection, the sampled call boxes were visible and strategically placed throughout Metro's Rail and Major Bus Terminal systems. In addition, Metro is generally compliant with all legal requirements regarding the installation and operation of these communication systems.

Following the start of our review, Metro independently assessed the call boxes in all rail stations and major bus terminals (G and J lines) - and initiated repairs on any units that were not functioning.

However, our review identified a few areas for improvement. Documentation of call records from customer-facing call boxes needs to be improved, as accurate records are essential for both operational efficiency and safety. Communication challenges were noted at particularly loud stations, where background noise interferes with audio clarity. Metro receives a substantial number of non-emergency and prank calls, which waste the time of phone responders (CCTV observers) and tie up resources that may be needed to handle real emergency calls. Implementing methods to reduce non-emergency calls on emergency lines could improve both efficiency and safety.

We recommend that call boxes be regularly cleaned and inspected for visible dirt, graffiti, or any external debris, to help maintain a positive public perception of the system, and ensure they are clearly identified for operational and maintenance purposes. Issues were noted in some camera systems, including coverage gaps and over-reliance on stationary cameras in certain areas. Metro should provide refresher training for Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Observers to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of monitoring and response efforts. Enhancing interdepartmental coordination is equally essential to support more efficient communication and timely action.

Addressing these issues will strengthen the reliability and functionality of call boxes, directly contributing to a safer, more user-friendly transit environment.

OBJECTIVES, METHODOLOGY, AND SCOPE OF REVIEW

The objective of this review was to assess whether customer-facing call boxes across Metro's rail system and major bus terminals are operational, effective, and efficient. This review focused on evaluating the operation of the call boxes, Metro's policies and procedures, system functionality, maintenance practices, documentation, and compliance with applicable regulations.

To achieve the objectives, we performed the following procedures:

- Tested sampled customer-facing call boxes;
- Obtained and reviewed Metro's policies and procedures for the operations of call boxes, including usage and maintenance;
- Interviewed Metro personnel, including staff in Rail Operations Control, Bus Operations Control, (Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems, System Security and Law Enforcement, and Information Technology Services;
- Performed physical inspection of customer-facing call boxes;
- Reviewed records and other pertinent documents.

This review covered the period from March 1, 2024, through February 28, 2025. The focus of the review was on customer-facing call boxes located throughout Metro's rail system and at major bus terminals, including:

Metro Rails:

- A Line: Azusa - Long Beach
- B Line: Union Station - North Hollywood
- C Line: Norwalk - LAX
- D Line: Union Station – Wilshire/Western
- E Line: East Los Angeles - Santa Monica
- K Line: Expo/Crenshaw - Redondo Beach

Metro Busway:

- G Line (formerly Orange Line) - Chatsworth to North Hollywood: A Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line that runs in the San Fernando Valley, primarily along a dedicated busway.

- J Line (formerly Silver Line) – El Monte to San Pedro: A Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line that operates on freeway express lanes (Harbor Transitway and El Monte Busway) between San Pedro, Downtown LA, and El Monte.

The G Line and J Line are part of the Metro's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system.

Based on the data provided by Metro's Information Technology Services, Metro has approximately 3,049 emergency call box phones in rail stations and major bus terminals. There are 1,482 customer-facing and 1,567 non-customer-facing call box phones. We selected a sample of 504 (34%) customer-facing call boxes located in 40 high-traffic areas for physical inspection.

This performance audit was conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusion based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusion based on our audit objectives.

BACKGROUND

The call box system is a critical component of the transit network, enabling direct communication between passengers and transit control centers. Call boxes are intended to provide riders with a reliable means of communication for requesting assistance, reporting emergencies or suspicious activity, and obtaining service information. They are a critical resource, particularly in areas where Metro staff are not present or during off-peak service hours.

After our review began, Metro independently performed an assessment of all call boxes and took steps to repair any non-functioning call boxes.

Metro is responsible for ensuring that these call boxes are clearly identifiable, fully operational, compliant with accessibility requirements, and regularly tested and maintained. Internal policies and procedures guide the installation, inspection, and repair of these devices, and their functionality plays an important role in Metro's overall safety and emergency response strategy.

Metro Operations is responsible for the maintenance of all call boxes across Metro's rail systems and major bus terminals. Specifically, the following departments are involved in call box operations:

- Maintenance of Way (MOW) Communications Systems – Responsible for maintaining and repairing the customer-facing call boxes across the system.

- Rail Operations Control (ROC) – Manages voice and data communications, among other responsibilities. ROC's CCTV Observers answer calls made from call boxes located in rail stations. ROC also oversees train control, power, station ventilation, and the monitoring of gas and fire sensors.

- Bus Operations Control (BOC) – Oversees and manages the entire bus fleet across Metro's bus system. BOC is responsible for service mitigation when unexpected events occur that affect bus activity, such as accidents, detours, medical emergencies, or criminal and suspicious activity. BOC has four CCTV Observers who answer calls from call boxes located along the G and J bus lines.

This review was initiated to assess the call box system and recommend necessary improvements.

RESULTS OF REVIEW

Based on the data provided by Information Technology Services (ITS), there are 1,482 customer-facing call boxes installed at 149 locations in six rail stations and two major bus lines (G and J), see Table 1:

Table 1 - Call Boxes by Rail/Bus Line

Line	Route	Number of Stations	Extension/ Call Boxes
A	Azusa - Long Beach	44	253
B	Union Station - North Hollywood	14	407
C	Norwalk - LAX	12	206
D	Union Station - Wilshire/Western	8	41
E	East Los Angeles - Santa Monica	29	383
G	Chatsworth - Canoga Park - North Hollywood	17	41
J	El Monte - Harbor Gateway/San Pedro	12	22
K	Expo/Crenshaw - Redondo Beach	13	129
	Total	**149**	**1,482**

(Note: Some stations are shared by two or more lines.)

We selected 504 call boxes across 40 high-traffic locations for physical inspection. Of these, only 295 units (59%) were physically located. The discrepancy is primarily due to the inclusion of non-customer-facing units in the dataset. Table 2 shows the number of call boxes found and inspected by line.

Table 2 - Call Boxes Inspected

Line	Route	Number of Stations	Call Boxes Inspected
A	Azusa - Long Beach	9	42
B	Union Station - North Hollywood	6	86
C	Norwalk - LAX	4	27
D	Union Station - Wilshire/Western	2	16
E	East Los Angeles - Santa Monica	7	66
G	Chatsworth - Canoga Park - North Hollywood	5	13
J	El Monte - Harbor Gateway/San Pedro	4	7
K	Expo/Crenshaw - Redondo Beach	3	38
	Total	**40**	**295**

Our review determined that all but eight of the inspected call boxes were fully functional at the time of inspection. In each operational case, call response times were consistently under 15 seconds, demonstrating prompt engagement by CCTV Observers from both Rail Operations Control (ROC) and Bus Operations Control (BOC). This performance aligns with the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) recommendation that 90% of 911 calls be answered within 15 seconds. Furthermore, the call boxes were determined to be ADA-compliant, highly visible, and easily accessible to the public.

We were informed that (Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems and Rail Transit Operations have been conducting system checks since February 2025. We were in the planning

stage of our review at that time. It is likely that many previously non-functional call boxes were repaired during that period.

Additionally, (Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems maintains comprehensive Policies and Procedures (P&P) and a Preventive Maintenance Plan covering all managed systems, including telephones. This plan outlines the required maintenance frequency and standards. ROC and BOC also have documented P&P governing CCTV Observer responsibilities.

Our review, however, found the following issues:

1. Physical Condition

We observed graffiti and unclean conditions on 37 call boxes, surrounding elevator doors, and on phones provided by elevator service vendors. We also noted that several call boxes exhibited rust, accumulated dirt, and surface damage. Please see Table 3.

Table 3 - Call Boxes Found Dirty or With Graffiti

Line	Route	Location	Grand Total
A	Azusa - Long Beach	Loc 0716 Florence	1
		Loc 0901 Union Station	2
A Total			**3**
B	Union Station - North Hollywood	Loc 702 7Th & Metro	3
B Total			**3**
C	Norwalk - Aviation/Century	Loc 0812 Aviation LAX	2
		Loc 0820 Harbor Fwy	3
		Loc 0824 Wilmington	2
C Total			**7**
D	Union Station - Wilshire/Western	Loc 0616 Wilshire/Western	3
		Loc 614 Wilshire/Normandie	2
D Total			**5**
E	East Los Angeles - Santa Monica	Loc_0536_1Stcentral	1
		Loc_1023-Culver City	3
		Loc-0965-Atlantic	1
		Loc-1013-Expo-Western	1
		Loc-1015-Expo-Crenshaw	1
		Loc-1037-DT Santa Monica	1
E Total			**8**
G	Chatsworth - Canoga Park - North Hollywood	Loc 1111 Sepulveda	1
		Loc 1117 Reseda	2
		Loc 1125 Canoga	2
		Loc 1129 Sherman Way	1
G Total			**6**
J	El Monte - Harbor Gateway/San Pedro via Downtown LA	Location 72	2
		Terminal 19	1
		Terminal 48	2
J Total			**5**
Grand Total			**37**

These conditions create a perception of neglect and potentially reduce customers' use of the system. Regular maintenance and cleanliness are essential to ensuring the call boxes are

perceived as reliable and safe. Clean, well-maintained call boxes signal that the system is monitored and cared for, which encourages people to use them when needed.

Currently, both Metro staff and the public can report graffiti and other maintenance issues, including call box disrepair and operability, through the Metro Transit Watch Mobile App or by calling the Facilities Maintenance hotline.

Pictures 1 and 2 are examples of graffiti-ridden call boxes.

Picture 1: A Line – Florence
Extension 73711

(2/28/2025)

Picture 2: B Line - 7th & Metro
Extension 51418

(2/20/2025)

Recommendations:

Facilities Contracted Maintenance

- Enhance routine inspection and cleaning protocols, especially in stations with high ridership (including elevator areas), to ensure all units are clean and free of graffiti.

System Security and Law Enforcement

- Establish anti-graffiti measures and increase surveillance, or use other methods, to deter vandalism.
- Conduct a staffing assessment to ensure sufficient personnel are available to effectively respond to and prevent vandalism and graffiti-related incidents and repairs.

2. Audio and Communication

During our physical inspection of Metro call boxes, we observed that it was difficult for callers to hear call box operators in certain high-noise areas – particularly at some stations along C, G, and J Lines.

The primary cause of this issue appears to be the high volume of external noise from nearby vehicular traffic, which interferes with communication between callers and the CCTV Observers who receive the calls. As a result, callers may struggle to understand instructions or convey critical information.

Noise reduction around call boxes ensures clear and effective communication during emergencies. This, in turn, minimizes the risk of miscommunication, false alarms, and repeated calls due to unclear or incomplete exchanges.

Recommendations:

(Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems and Operations Engineering

- Explore external/outside noise-canceling technology and techniques at loud stations.
- Enhance the volume of the call boxes to overcome noise.

3. Identification and Numbering

We noted that several call boxes were either incorrectly numbered, not numbered, or displayed faded and unreadable labels, especially the numbers written manually. See Pictures 3 and 4.

Picture 3: E Line – Expo/Crenshaw
Extension 56153 – Faded Number

(2/26/2025)

Picture 4: B Line – 7th/Metro
Extension 51455 – No Number

(2/20/2025

Currently, Metro has a single button that a patron can push for either emergency or general inquiries/information.

Some call boxes were labeled with handwritten extension numbers, while others had typed labels affixed to them. Currently, Metro labels call boxes with an extension number for identification and operational purposes.

A call box ID functions like its "address" in the system. Call box identification helps Operations staff quickly locate and identify call boxes and locations that require service or an emergency response. Inaccurate or missing identifiers hinder timely maintenance and emergency response. An incorrect or missing ID can cause call box service delays, missed repairs, or wasted resources spent searching for the correct unit.

We were informed that Operations/ITS is engaged in a capital project to upgrade and replace older telephone equipment throughout the rail and bus terminal systems. When call boxes are replaced through their current capital project, it is important to implement clear and standardized numbering (labeling) for operational and maintenance purposes, and to ensure the updated equipment delivers loud and clear audio/communication through the speakers.

Recommendations:

(Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems

- Standardize numbering protocols across all stations and provide durable, clearly visible labels for identification and operational purposes.
- Ensure all numbering and signage is correct and resistant to vandalism and internal and external environmental conditions.

4. Call Records

In March 2025, ITS provided us with call records for all call boxes - both customer-facing and non-customer-facing - covering the period from March 2024 to February 2025.

The list showed a total of 335,009 outgoing calls from all call boxes. According to the CCTV Observers, these calls were made by patrons, Metro staff conducting equipment checks, and non-emergency or prank callers. They noted that most legitimate calls involved general inquiries or requests for directions and estimated that only 5% to 10% were related to major incidents such as medical emergencies or crimes.

Using the data provided by ITS, we extracted call records specifically from customer-facing call boxes. The results showed a total of 10,140 calls for 111 call boxes between March 2024 and February 2025, categorized as follows: 358 incoming calls, 78 outgoing calls, and 9,704 internal calls. (Incoming calls are those made from the call boxes to the CCTV Observers, while outgoing calls are those made by the CCTV Observers to the call boxes.)

However, the dataset contained very few records for the B and D Lines, suggesting it was incomplete. Furthermore, we were informed that the internal calls could be either incoming or outgoing, but the data did not differentiate between the two. As a result, it was not possible to determine the number of outgoing calls from customer-facing call boxes—an essential metric for understanding how frequently these devices are used by the public or Metro staff."

We also compared the extension numbers from the ITS list to our sample of customer-facing call boxes. Only 111 extensions, or 38%, matched the 295 samples we physically located. This discrepancy suggests the data were inaccurate and did not include all relevant call boxes. Additionally, the dataset lacked information on the type of calls (e.g., inquiries, emergencies, or prank calls).

As a result, we could not quantify or determine the type of calls made from each customer-facing call box.

As noted on page 4, of the 504 call boxes selected for inspection, we were only able to physically locate 295 units (59%) during our fieldwork. This was primarily due to the inclusion of non-customer-facing units in the original dataset.

The ITS Architect explained that he created the list of call boxes to assist the OIG, but stated that "*input from RailComm/Ops in regards to customer-facing or not would be required for absolute accuracy.* " He further explained that he had requested input from Rail Communications several times but had not received a reply. He added that his team "*only provides the programming of the telephones, which include dial tone and routing capabilities. All cabling, monitoring, physical phones, and physical locations are under RailComm.*"`

Having call records from customer-facing call boxes - and categorizing them by type - is important for several key operational, safety, and planning reasons. Some benefits of maintaining accurate and complete call records and categorizing them by call types include the following:

- **Safety & Emergency Response**: Ensures urgent calls are prioritized and helps improve incident response times, allocate emergency personnel more effectively, and identify areas with recurring safety issues.

- **Service Planning**: Highlights usage trends to guide resource allocation and infrastructure improvements. Call records show how frequently call boxes are used, indicating which locations are highly or under-utilized. Knowing the types of calls helps determine if more security patrols, customer service staff, or signage are needed in certain areas.

- **Operational Efficiency**: Provides insights that can improve staff training, shift scheduling, and maintenance planning. Understanding the nature of calls can help shape staffing models and training programs. If call boxes consistently generate complaints or technical support requests, maintenance teams can target those units for inspection or upgrades.

- **Data-Driven Decisions**: Supports evaluation of call box effectiveness and potential technology upgrades. Usage data can help justify the cost of maintaining, upgrading, or decommissioning underutilized call boxes.

- **Accountability:** Provides documentation for audits, investigations, and public transparency. Documenting calls ensures there is a clear trail for audits, public records requests, or incident investigations. It also helps assess whether current policies around customer assistance and safety are effective or need revision.

- **Customer Service Insights**: Reveals recurring passenger concerns and improves communication strategies. Frequent general inquiries may reveal common points of confusion or frustration for passengers, leading to improved signage or announcements. It

also improves public perception and trust, demonstrating that concerns raised through call box usage are logged and addressed, and can build public trust in the system.

Recommendations:

(Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems

- Conduct a comprehensive review and validation of the call box inventory to ensure accurate categorization of customer-facing and non-customer-facing units.
- Update the inventory records based on field verification, document changes as they occur, and implement a periodic audit process to maintain inventory and data accuracy going forward.
- Work with Information Technology Services to verify the accuracy and integrity of data used in the reports.
- Identify methods to document and categorize the type or purpose of the calls, e.g., informational, emergency, testing, mischief, and prank calls.

Information Technology Services

- Coordinate with (Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems to obtain accurate data and generate relevant and useful reports, including the number and type or purpose of calls received from call boxes.

5. Prank Calls

According to the CCTV Observers, more than 50% of the calls they received were non-emergency or prank calls. Prank calls are mischief or nuisance calls from people not seeking assistance or reporting an emergency.

Other transit agencies also face challenges with a high volume of prank, mischief, or non-legitimate calls. For example, New York City (NYC) Transit uses the "Help Point" intercom system, which allows subway customers to contact transit personnel directly. Each device features two buttons: a green button for general information and a red button for emergencies. According to a report MTA/OIG Report #2024-11 dated November 2024, "*Almost three-quarters of Help Point calls were not from customers in need of assistance or information. OIG found that 50% of all Help Point calls were labeled "mischief calls," and another 22% were calls made by agency personnel testing the system. Only the remaining 28% of calls were from customers seeking emergency assistance or information. While this percentage of "real calls" was surprisingly low, it still amounted to 39,742 calls in six months."*

Prank calls made through call boxes in transit operations can disrupt emergency response, waste staff time and resources, delay service, and undermine passenger safety and trust. They also increase operational costs.

Metro's Customer Code of Conduct (Section 6-05-240) outlines the enforcement steps for any violations, including tampering with Metro facilities such as communication systems (e.g., call boxes). Consequences may include warnings, fines, ejection, or exclusion from the system.

By enforcing consequences or preventive measures such as informational or public awareness campaigns, transit agencies can maintain a safer, more efficient, and trustworthy system.

Metro may decide to implement a bifurcated call box system in which callers can select one button for emergency assistance and another for general information or inquiries.

Recommendation:

(Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems

- Consider installing clear signage stating that the emergency call box is for emergency use only, and misuse is subject to penalties.

6. Training

CCTV Observers receive a six-week training program when they are first hired. When an additional Metro station or location is commissioned with additional call boxes and surveillance cameras, CCTV observers take part in an initial walkthrough to familiarize themselves with its layout and the location of call boxes and cameras. There is no formal refresher training provided after recruitment. According to some CCTV Observers, when new tasks arise, they rely on peer-to-peer knowledge sharing rather than structured instruction.

The absence of refresher courses may limit staff preparedness and reduce their effectiveness in handling incidents and maintaining situational awareness.

Refresher training is essential to maintaining high standards of safety, efficiency, and responsiveness. As technology, protocols, and equipment continue to evolve, regular, periodic, and refresher training helps staff stay up to date with current tools, software, and procedures. Ongoing education can also strengthen emergency response capabilities and promote consistent, proactive system monitoring.

Recommendations:

Rail Operations Control and Bus Operations Control

- Consider implementing refresher courses or as-needed training for all CCTV Observers and other personnel involved in call box operations, to include the use and features of the new call boxes installed in the system.

7. Interdepartmental Coordination

Based on our interviews with ROC CCTV Observers, they receive calls from multiple departments - Metro Ambassadors, General Services, Maintenance of Way Communications Systems, and external contractors – who independently check the call boxes. This ensures frequent verification of call box operability but may lead to some redundant activity and unnecessary call volume. Excessive system checks by multiple departments contribute to inefficiencies.

Interdepartmental coordination is essential in handling and maintaining call boxes in transit operations because it ensures that the system functions efficiently and safely. It also ensures accurate reporting, accountability, and adherence to safety and legal standards.

Recommendation:

Rail Operations Control, Bus Operations Control, (Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems, and System Security and Law Enforcement

- Enhance coordination among departments involved in call box maintenance, inspection, and testing to ensure call box checks are adequate, effective, and reduce redundant call box checks and inefficiencies.

8. Upgrade

In June 2023, Metro entered into a contract with Birdi Systems to design, build, test, furnish, and install Call Point prototypes for a total contract amount of $486,531.08. The telephone equipment is intended to provide a more visible and direct line to emergency and customer services. The Call Point Blue Light Project is aimed at replacing the existing emergency telephones, gate telephones, and passenger telephones. Phase 1 involves installing three Metro Call Point prototypes at each of two rail stations—7th/Metro Center and Willowbrook/Rosa Parks—originally scheduled between March 7, 2025, and June 30, 2025.

However, the project was delayed. Based on Contract Modification No. 3 dated May 3, 2025, the "*Contractor shall complete all services under the Contract by December 31, 2025.*" According to the Executive Officer of Infrastructure Engineering & Maintenance, this was "*due to equipment*

fabrication issues and the integration of a new speech-to-text translation feature supporting 10 languages, which was not included in the original Statement of Work (SOW).”

Phase 2 is systemwide deployment at all stations with a Life of Project budget of $13.95 million.

Recommendation:

Operations Engineering

- Once the prototypes of the Call Point Blue Light Project are installed, evaluate their effectiveness and conduct a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis based on the knowledge gained from the Call Point Blue Light Project..

9. Camera Limitations

Although not initially within the scope of our review and objectives, we identified several concerns related to the cameras used by CCTV Observers. These staff members are responsible for responding to calls from customer-facing call boxes and for monitoring real-time video feeds across the transit system. Their role is critical in ensuring passenger safety, supporting efficient operations, and enabling timely responses to incidents.

We noted limitations in the functionality of certain surveillance cameras. The 360-degree cameras in use are stationary and cannot be manually adjusted, which restricts the field of view and reduces situational awareness. Additionally, some camera feeds remained static for extended periods, diminishing the effectiveness of live monitoring.
CCTV Observers raised several operational issues during interviews, including playback delays, low-resolution footage, and blind spots. Of particular concern was the absence of any camera coverage at specific locations, such as the Willow Station parking lot on the A Line, which remains unmonitored.

These findings underscore the need for upgraded equipment, faster maintenance response times, and more strategic camera placement. Enhancing the current surveillance and communication infrastructure to meet modern standards will strengthen real-time monitoring capabilities and significantly improve situational awareness, operational efficiency, and commuter safety.

Utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation within the video camera and recording systems can help identify emergency and threat situations more efficiently. AI systems can detect anomalies and irregularities within live video feeds and recorded footage. For example, if a physical item is left unattended in a public area or someone enters a restricted zone after hours, AI-enabled cameras and systems can recognize these potential threat conditions and trigger an alert. Incorporating AI into these systems can help those (CCTV observers) responsible for

monitoring emergency and threat conditions, accelerate response times, and reduce video observation fatigue. AI can help move responses from reactive defense to proactive threat management.

Recommendations:

(Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems and Operations Engineering

- Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the existing camera infrastructure to identify performance gaps and limitations.
- Ensure any new system being considered meets Metro's needs as an upgrade to high-resolution, reliable camera systems with enhanced capabilities such as pan, tilt, and zoom (PTZ) functionality for improved coverage and flexibility, and will replace obsolete call boxes and legacy cameras with a unified system that offers superior image quality and remote monitoring capabilities.
- Consider integrating Artificial Intelligence and automation in any future camera systems deployed in Metro Rail Stations.

Rail Operations Control, Bus Operations Control

- Continue to hold regular meetings and discussions with CCTV Observers to identify recurring issues in surveillance monitoring.

System Security and Law Enforcement

- Expand surveillance coverage by installing functional cameras in previously unmonitored areas, such as the Willow Station patron and employee parking lot.

CONCLUSION

Our review found that Metro has established adequate policies and procedures governing the operation and maintenance of customer-facing call boxes. Overall, the system is generally effective in terms of accessibility and response time, and the majority of inspected call boxes were found to be operational and well-maintained. Based on our physical inspection, the sampled call boxes were visible and strategically placed throughout Metro's Rail and Major Bus Terminal systems. In addition, Metro is generally compliant with all legal requirements regarding the installation and operation of these communication systems.

Following the start of our review, Metro independently assessed the call boxes in all rail stations and major bus terminals (G and J lines) - and initiated repairs on any units that were not functioning.

However, our review identified a few areas for improvement. Documentation of call records from customer-facing call boxes needs to be improved, as accurate records are essential for both operational efficiency and safety. Communication challenges were noted at particularly loud stations, where background noise interferes with audio clarity. Metro receives a substantial number of non-emergency and prank calls, which waste the time of phone responders (CCTV observers) and tie up resources that may be needed to handle real emergency calls. Implementing methods to reduce non-emergency calls on emergency lines could improve both efficiency and safety.

We recommend that call boxes be regularly cleaned and inspected for visible dirt, graffiti, or any external debris, to help maintain a positive public perception of the system, and ensure they are clearly identified for operational and maintenance purposes. Issues were noted in some camera systems, including coverage gaps and over-reliance on stationary cameras in certain areas. Metro should provide refresher training for Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Observers to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of monitoring and response efforts. Enhancing interdepartmental coordination is equally essential to support more efficient communication and timely action.

Addressing these issues will strengthen the reliability and functionality of call boxes, directly contributing to a safer, more user-friendly transit environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend the following:

A. Physical Condition

Facilities Contracted Maintenance

1. Enhance routine inspection and cleaning protocols, especially in stations with high ridership (including elevator areas), to ensure all units are clean and free of graffiti.

System Security and Law Enforcement

2. Establish anti-graffiti measures and increase surveillance to deter vandalism.

3. Conduct a staffing assessment to ensure sufficient personnel are available to effectively respond to and prevent vandalism and graffiti-related incidents and repairs.

B. Audio and Communication Issues

(Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems and Operations Engineering

4. Explore external/outside noise-canceling technology and methods at loud stations.

5. Enhance the volume of the call boxes to overcome noise.

C. Identification and Numbering

(Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems

6. Standardize numbering protocols across all stations and provide durable, clearly visible labels for identification and operational purposes.

7. Ensure all numbering is correct and resistant to internal and external environmental conditions.

D. Call Records

(Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems

8. Conduct a comprehensive review and validation of the call box inventory to ensure accurate categorization of customer-facing and non-customer-facing units.

9. Update the inventory records based on field verification, and implement a regular audit process to maintain inventory and data accuracy going forward.

10. Work with Information Technology Services to verify the accuracy and integrity of data used in the reports.

11. Identify methods to document and categorize the type or purpose of the calls, e.g., Informational, emergency, testing, mischief, and prank calls.

Information Technology Services

12. Coordinate with (Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems to obtain accurate data and generate useful reports, including the number and type or purpose of calls received from call boxes.

E. Prank Calls

(Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems

13. Consider installing clear signage stating that the emergency call box is for emergency use only, and misuse is subject to penalties.

F. Training

Rail Operations Control and Bus Operations Control

14. Consider implementing refresher courses or as-needed training for all CCTV Observers and other personnel involved in call box operations, to include the use and features of the new call boxes installed in the system.

G. Interdepartmental Coordination

Rail Operations Control, Bus Operations Control, (Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems, and System Security and Law Enforcement

15. Enhance coordination among departments involved in call box maintenance, inspection, and testing to ensure call box checks are adequate, effective, and reduce redundant checks and inefficiencies.

H. Upgrade

Operations Engineering

16. Once the prototypes of the Call Point Blue Light Project are installed, evaluate their effectiveness and conduct a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis based on the knowledge gained from the pilot program.

I. Camera Limitations

(Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems and Operations Engineering

17. Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the existing camera infrastructure to identify performance gaps and limitations.

18. Ensure the new system being considered meets Metro's needs as an upgrade to high-resolution, reliable camera systems with enhanced capabilities such as pan, tilt, and zoom (PTZ) functionality for improved coverage and flexibility, and will replace obsolete call

boxes and legacy cameras with a unified system that offers superior image quality and remote monitoring capabilities.

19. Consider integrating Artificial Intelligence and automation in any future camera systems deployed in Metro Rail Stations.

Rail Operations Control, Bus Operations Control

20. Continue to hold regular meetings or discussions with CCTV Observers to identify recurring issues in surveillance monitoring.

System Security and Law Enforcement

21. Expand surveillance coverage by installing functional cameras in previously unmonitored areas, such as the Willow Station patron and employee parking lot.

MANAGEMENT COMMENTS TO RECOMMENDATIONS

This report was sent to the affected Metro departments on July 30, 2025, with a request for a management response by August 15, 2025. Metro management has advised us that the recommendations are still under review and has requested additional time to provide a thorough and complete response. The recommendations will be monitored and followed up by Metro's Management Audit Services Department, and all responses will be recorded and evaluated upon receipt.

OIG EVALUATION OF MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Metro Operations requested additional time to submit a thorough and complete response. Therefore, we consider all issues related to the recommendations still open and outstanding.

Management Comments to Draft Report

This report was sent to the following Metro departments on July 30, 2025, with a request for a management response by August 15, 2025. Metro management has advised us that the recommendations are still under review and has requested additional time to provide a thorough and complete response. The recommendations will be monitored and followed up by Metro Management Audit Services Department, and all responses will be recorded and evaluated upon receipt.

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System Security and Law Enforcement

(Maintenance of Way) Communications Systems

Operations Engineering

Information Technology Services

Rail Operations Control

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