

CONCURRENT SESSION 7 – COVID-19 TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH EFFORTS

LA Metro's Journey Through COVID – Exploring Technologies & Finding Practical Solutions

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As the case with many other Transit Agencies in the US and around the world, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) has had to manage the COVID-19 pandemic while continuing to operate and maintain the transit systems for both bus and rail. During the span of 2+years which is still evolving, LACMTA tested cleaning products, developed applications of new technologies to our transit vehicles and adopted the latest most effective strategies to battle this pandemic. This presentation will take the audience through the various stages and steps taken to help reduce COVID exposure, how best to evaluate and apply technologies for both bus and rail as well as building assets to prevent the spread of COVID and provide realistic data and expectations achieved.

During the onset of the pandemic, LACMTA began exploring various disinfection technologies and chemical-based disinfectants. The disinfection technologies included ultraviolet-C (portable and built-in), chemical misting units (portable and built-in), air filtration units, and antibacterial coating material. Each technology was researched for both efficiency and efficacy and a cost-benefit-analysis was performed. By partnering with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), value was brought to LACMTA's decision making process and the technologies were tested in a controlled lab environment for efficacy prior to being tested on rail vehicles, buses, stations, etc. The EPA has helped to eliminate risk decisions and significant expenditures on technologies that do not meet a 3-log (or 99.9%) reduction of virus/bacteria.

Along with the technical evaluations of these technologies comes the real-life applications and implementation into the day-to-day operations and maintenance activities. Management of scope, schedule, budget, and resources become key factors for consideration and actual deployment. The importance of doing things right the first time without adding more stress on the organization is critical in the successful deployment and sustainability of the strategies used during this pandemic. LACMTA use of lessons-learned and best practices along with a dedicated team working and focusing our efforts collectively with the EPA's support has produced a no nonsense approach with clear expectations and positive results."
