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Disbanding Of Subway Emergency Response Team Could Put Riders In Danger, Says N.Y. Lawyer

Elimination of emergency unit raises concerns about the safety of subways riders, says Attorney Steven J. Schwartzapfel.

New York, NY (PRWEB) July 2, 2009 -- The recent decision by New York City Transit to disband the emergency response team that responded to subway problems raises questions about the safety of citizens in the event of a subway accident or catastrophe, a New York attorney says.

"It's a decision that appears to put finances first and consumer safety second," said Steven J. Schwartzapfel, founding partner of [Schwartzapfel Truhowsky Marcus P.C.](#), a NY personal injury law firm.

The dedicated seven-member emergency response unit was created after a series of bungled responses to emergencies in the subway systems revealed a need for a coordinated response. The unit had won praise during its 13-month existence for improving communication among police, fire and transit officials answering emergencies.

The unit responded to 463 incidents--roughly two a day--between Aug. 1, 2008 and March 21, 2009, the only period for which data was available, The New York Times reported. In about one-third of those incidents, such as fires and flooding, a command post was established for coordination with police and fire departments.

But transit agency leaders had deemed the unit unnecessary, even comparing the team to Maytag repairmen, suggesting they were rarely needed, according to news reports.

"To compare this emergency response unit to Maytag repairmen is insulting to the unit, the public and all who use the NYC transit system," Schwartzapfel said. "It makes light of the serious responsibility the team had to coordinate emergency responses. If you've ever been stranded in a subway for very long, you'll wish that unit were still in place."

Since the unit was eliminated, New York City Transit President Howard H. Roberts Jr. has acknowledged that the transit agency made a hasty decision and should have kept the team in place until a broader overhaul of the subway management was completed.

About Schwartzapfel Partners: [Schwartzapfel Truhowsky Marcus P.C.](#) is one of the most prominent and well-respected plaintiff personal injury and estate litigation firms in New York. With over 150 years of combined experience and highly competent co-counsel throughout the country, Schwartzapfel Partners serves all your legal needs.

The firm concentrates in all types of [personal injury litigation](#), including subway, train and auto accidents, medical malpractice, nursing home neglect, wrongful death, defective products and drugs, construction accidents, workplace injuries, workers' compensation and Social Security disability. To contact the law firm, call 1.800.966.4999 or go to [www.fightingforyou.com](#) for more information.

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