

SWLRT and Minneapolis Fire Dept. Responses to Community Questions

December 2, 2021

Rail Safety

1. When an incident happens, such as damage to a freight rail track during construction, what kind of communication occurs between the entities like the railroad, the Project Office and emergency responders?

Taking a scenario where soil settlement requires urgent response to take the freight track out of service, the lines of communication are as follows:

- Staff who initially observe the settlement (Council or Contractor) contact the Contractor's Site Supervisor.
- The Site Supervisor contacts the field-based TC&W Flagger responsible for the area, LMJV Project Manager, LMJV Freight Rail Coordinator and the SWLRT CAR.
- The TC&W Flagger contacts TC&W dispatch to hold trains from passing through the affected area as needed. TC&W's Project Manager is also notified.
- In the event that a road must be closed or work must be conducted during extended hours, the CAR contacts the City's Public Works Project Manager.
- The City's Public Works Project Manager contacts City Traffic, Emergency Responders and other departments as needed.
- The CAR contacts SWLRT Safety and Security, Outreach and Communications, Project Leadership staff as needed.

Incidents may require the response of emergency services, depending on the severity of injuries or property damage that is sustained. All construction personnel undergo jobsite safety training encompassing the identification and reporting of safety issues. Safety training also includes recognizing when to escalate and call 911 for emergency services response.

If there are no injuries associated with an incident or the incident does not cause a roadway to close that could impact the response of emergency personnel, there are no direct communications to emergency services.

2. In a scenario where the freight rail track was damaged such as on September 29, people had to work late into the night to make repairs and they needed flood lights etc. Who is informed when this type of activity is needed?

For context, the incident on September 29, 2021 involved soil settlement under a segment of freight track where it crosses Cedar Lake Parkway. Soil settlement was observed by Contractor inspection staff, who notified the Contractor's Site Supervisor. TC&W Flagging staff and Project Manager, the Contractor's Project Manager and Freight Rail Coordinator and the SWLRT Council-Authorized Representative (CAR) were also notified. The track was taken out of service until repairs were completed, which required unplanned extended hours work. The CAR notified the City's Public Works Department of the need to work outside the normal construction work hours of 7:00 AM –

6:00 PM. It is generally understood that if a freight rail track is taken out of service, work must be completed to bring the track back into service as soon as possible. Note that this incident occurred during a period when the Cedar Lake Parkway was already closed to traffic and therefore did not require notification to emergency responders.

See also the response to Question 1 above for lines of communication regarding responses to freight track incidents.

3. What are the lines of communication and structure for responding to events including those that are more serious?

Anytime a freight rail element is impacted by SWLRT construction, it is treated as a serious condition that must be resolved immediately. See the response to Question #1 above for lines of communication.

4. How often is the track inspected? Explain that process in more detail. What do they look for? What do they do when they see a problem?

Freight rail track conditions are monitored multiple times per workday using an approved monitoring method. Methods include both automated electronic systems and manual visual inspection. Monitoring conforms to contract specifications, which are more conservative than FRA's track safety standards. If a track is inspected and found to be out of compliance, construction work is halted, and the railroad flagger is contacted immediately to coordinate the movement of trains until the track is brought into compliance. Inspections focus on the movement of or damage to the track/track bed or surrounding areas that could impact the track/track bed.

General Construction Safety

5. How long will W. 32d St. be the only access and egress for emergency vehicles for the 1000 residents of the Axon Green, Westwood, and Minikahda Cottages on Chowen and W. 32nd?

A segment of Chowen and Abbott Avenues is currently closed for the construction of the West Lake Quarter residential development. Once the WLQ development has concluded with their work, the SWLRT Project will continue to occupy this space until construction of the West Lake Street Station and Kenilworth Tunnel is complete. The Project Office is currently working with the SWLRT Contractor on the schedule for the tunnel work.

A paved road currently connects the Abbott Avenue side to the Chowen Avenue side. Emergency services are able to access Chowen Avenue through the worksite after hours by driving through the construction gates and along the paved road. This paved road will eventually be turned into a temporary pedestrian path to accommodate Cedar Lake Trail users, but the access for emergency vehicles will remain in place.

Within the SWLRT construction site, the Contractor stages equipment according to safety protocols and so that emergency responders can access the site after hours if required. Emergency response leaders have confirmed that if site access is needed and a construction gate is locked, responders carry equipment that can easily cut locks.

6. Are first responders involved when road closures are planned to ensure there's sufficient mobility in the area in case of an emergency and there's access to the site of a potential incident?

When a road closure of any kind is planned, the City of Minneapolis Traffic Department alerts fire/life/safety departments so that they are aware and can plan for how they can respond to areas affected by the closure.

7. What is being done about the health impacts from construction dust?

Dust is an unfortunate side effect of heavy construction. In summer of 2021, dust was especially difficult to control due to area drought conditions. The Contractor follows best management practices, such as routinely watering areas like haul roads and dirt piles where dust can be generated as well as applying water to concrete cutting operations.

8. The Cedar Lake Parkway crossing is not safe for cars, peds, bikes, construction activity or freight. Cars don't stop for the little stop signs. The pavement condition is not safe for bikes and pedestrians. The crossing area for pedestrians could be better marked.

During the summer of 2021, a community member documented a construction vehicle that did not follow safe practices as it crossed Cedar Lake Parkway. The Project Office investigated and conducted further analysis regarding public and construction traffic in this area. More explicit signage was installed for both public motorists and construction vehicle operators. Signs are in place instructing motorists using Cedar Lake Parkway that they are entering a construction zone and urged to exercise caution. Larger stop signs were installed to direct construction traffic to stop and yield to motorized and nonmotorized traffic on Cedar Lake Parkway. Additionally, construction flaggers are used during especially high-construction traffic days, as well as when construction vehicles must use Cedar Lake Parkway to turn around to enter the construction site. The Project Office continues to monitor this area and coordinate with City of Minneapolis Public Works staff to ensure that trail and parkway user safety is prioritized.

9. What is being done in terms of public safety associated with all the additional people and cars in the area during construction? Is there any effort to monitor the area with that in mind?

SWLRT workers typically park and work within the designated construction site. Even though SWLRT construction activities occur within the prescribed construction limits, workers will occasionally park or work outside of the construction site for specific reasons, such as conducting survey work or meeting with community stakeholders. Construction site supervisors are aware of who enters and leaves the sites that they supervise and communicate with Council and Contractor safety and

security staff if people are on site without proper credentials or personal protective equipment (PPE).

If a community member is uncomfortable with a vehicle or individual that may be affiliated with SWLRT construction, the best practice is to document details of the vehicle or clothing of the individual (especially logos or names of companies) and to call the SWLRT Construction Hotline to report this information and the Project Office will follow up.

Emergency Preparedness

10. A flow chart would be helpful to clarify relationships [regarding who is notified during an emergency]. Who's in charge of what? Where should a person direct their concerns or questions?

For SWLRT construction related incidents see the response to Question 1 above. The City will respond at the meeting regarding non-construction related incidents.

11. What is the evacuation plan for residents close to the freight and Swlrt rail lines in the event of an accident that risks major fire, explosion or dangerous fumes?

Evacuation Plans are dependent upon the factors of the incident. There are many things that factor into an evacuation plan to include but are not limited to:

- The type of hazard involved
- The weather and the wind direction
- Topography in and around the incident

The Incident Commander of the scene will take into account all of the variables and decide if an evacuation is warranted and if so how large the evacuation zone will be as well as the direction of evacuation. The plan will be communicated to residents by multiple communication vehicles at our disposal which may include but are not limited to:

- Direct messaging pushed out to cell phones and other electronic devices using the I-PAWS system
- Traditional media
- Social media
- Door to door notifications by firefighters and law enforcement officials on scene

12. What is the gathering point they should head to from their respective residences?

A gathering point cannot be determined ahead of time. It must be determined based upon the factors of the incident.

13. How will everyone be informed ahead of time that, especially if they live in a dense area with few streets like West Maka Ska, they should walk not drive to their specific gathering points? There can be situations with tank cars filled with explosive/flammable substances that residents must

evacuate themselves; when there is no time to wait for assessments by fire fighters. There must be a plan in place shared with residents ahead of time. Where to go, how to get there.

These types of determinations cannot occur ahead of time. Residents will be notified via multiple means of communication which may include but are not limited to:

- Direct messaging pushed out to cell phones and other electronic devices using the I-PAWS system
- Traditional media
- Social media
- Door to door notifications by firefighters and law enforcement officials on scene

14. Many residents have a desire for localized emergency planning including hyper-local evacuation plans. Is that possible? Could there be neighborhood-based planning?

Evacuation plans are highly dependent upon the factors of the incident. This makes neighborhood-based planning difficult. It is most important for community members to be aware of how they can receive updates as listed in Question 11.