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OVER-THE-ROAD-BUS INTELLIGENCE AWARENESS DAILY (OTRBIAD) REPORT

February 19, 2025

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY & INCIDENT REPORTS

At Least 2 Shot On Metro Bus In Tukwila, WA, Police Hunting For Suspects

FOX 13, 2/17/2025

[Tukwila, Washington] A shooting on a King County Metro bus sent two people to the hospital Monday evening. The incident occurred on Southcenter Boulevard in Tukwila, and authorities are still on the scene piecing together the details. According to the King County Sheriff's Office, one of the victims was hit in the leg. The other was hit in the chest and is in critical condition at Harborview Medical Center. Authorities report they are searching for three suspects. No arrests have been made. The bus driver, although unharmed physically, is coping with the emotional toll of the traumatic event. Greg Woodfill, head of the bus drivers' union, voiced his deep concern over the rising violence transit workers and riders are dealing with. <https://www.fox13seattle.com/news/shot-metro-bus-tukwila-wa>

Man In Critical Condition After Shooting Near CTA Blue Line In Broad Daylight

NBC Chicago, 2/18/2025

[Chicago, Illinois] A man is hospitalized and in critical condition after someone inside a vehicle opened fire in broad daylight near a CTA blue line train station. The shooting took place about 12:14 p.m. Tuesday in the 700 block of South Cicero, police said, when someone inside a black Nissan sedan fired shots at a 30-year-old male victim on the sidewalk. The victim sustained several gunshot wounds to the body, police said, and was transported to a nearby hospital in critical condition. No other injuries were reported. The vehicle fled southbound on Cicero following the shooting, police added. Photos and video from the shooting showed a large police presence with evidence markers set up across the road. No one was in custody and police were investigating. <https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/man-in-critical-condition-after-shooting-near-cta-blue-line-in-broad-daylight/3677161/>

Downtown CTA 'L' Trains Disrupted Due To Suspicious Package

CBS, 2/17/2025

[Chicago, Illinois] Chicago Transit Authority Loop 'L' service was disrupted downtown in the middle of the Monday evening rush due to the discovery of a suspicious package. The CTA said trains in Loop were standing at Washington/Wabash. The Brown, Orange, Purple, Green, and Pink lines run on the Loop

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tracks. Trains on all lines were moving again by 6:15 p.m., but with delays. However, the CTA said the Red and Blue lines — which run in the State and Dearborn Street subways, respectively, also experienced major during the disruption. The CTA did provide further information about the suspicious package or where it was found. <https://www.cbsnews.com/chicago/news/downtown-cta-l-trains-disrupted-police-activity/?intcid=CNM-00-10abd1h>

Houston Companies Rally To Mattapan Line Passengers Rescued By Raft After MBTA Milton Station Floods

WCVB, 2/17/2025

[Massachusetts] Several MBTA passengers were rescued with rafts from a trolley that was stranded in icy floodwaters in Milton, Massachusetts, Tuesday morning. The Milton fire chief said an overflowing ice dam inundated the Mattapan Line Milton station Tuesday morning. Initially, the MBTA said a water main break was suspected. "The trolley was going into the station, and the water didn't look that high before, but when we tried to keep going through, the water level kept getting higher, and then the power cut off," a passenger said. She's one of the six passengers who were aboard the trolley around 7:40 a.m. when water started rushing in, suddenly submerging the tracks and flooding the area. The MBTA released video showing frigid water seeping its way onto the tracks during the morning commute. "They came over in the wet suits, and the water was up to their knees, and the water was going up a little bit more and more, but then they got the boats — like the little raft — and they took us out two by two and we had on the life vest," another passenger said." <https://www.wcvb.com/article/mbta-milton-station-floods-mattapan-line-rescue/63828277>

Officials Issue Warning After Credit Card Skimmer Found At Phelan Gas Station

Victorville Daily Press, 2/18/2025

[Victorville, California] Law enforcement officials urged the public to be vigilant after a credit card skimming device was found affixed to a fuel pump at a Phelan gas station this week. The skimming device was found about 5:30 p.m. Monday at a 7-Eleven gas station at Phelan and Sheep Creek roads, according to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. A recent customer of the station notified the sheriff's department after spotting fraudulent charges to his bank account, officials said. "Deputies responded to the 7-Eleven, where the victim last used his debit card, and located a skimming device on one of the keypads," the agency said in a written statement. An investigation into who placed the device on the pump was ongoing. <https://www.vdailypress.com/story/news/crime/2025/02/18/credit-card-skimmer-found-at-phenan-gas-station/79089938007/>

ANALYST COMMENTARY: According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), "Skimming occurs when devices illegally installed on or inside ATMs, point-of-sale (POS) terminals, or fuel pumps capture card data and record cardholders' PIN entries. Criminals use the data to create fake payment

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cards and then make unauthorized purchases or steal from victims' accounts." These devices come in many shapes and sizes, the more sophisticated of which are often located internally and connected to the wiring of the machine they are skimming from. While these devices are hard for consumers to visually detect, there are some signs that they may be present. To recognize fuel skimming devices at fuel pumps, it is important to check tamper seals and make sure the credit card reader housing on the pump matches housings at nearby pumps before inserting any form of payment. Most gas stations will have tamper tape and safety seals across dispenser doors to protect against internal skimming devices. Do not use a pump if the tape or seal has been broken, and do not use a pump if the credit card reader housing is loose or appears to vary in design from other pumps at the same station. More information on fuel theft, vehicles used to steal fuel, and fuel skimmers and how to recognize them can be found at:

<https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/fcic/pdf/Current%20TX%20Trends%20Fuel%20Theft%20and%20Skimming.pdf>. An FBI bulletin regarding skimming can be found at: <https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/scams-and-safety/common-frauds-and-scams/skimming>

TERRORISM & EXTREMISM

Suspect In Deadly Stabbing Attack In Austria Motivated By 'Islamic Terrorism', Say Authorities

Sky News, 2/16/2025

[Austria] A man accused of killing a 14-year-old boy and injuring five other people in a stabbing attack in Austria was motivated by "Islamic terrorism", say authorities. The victims included two 15-year-old boys and three men aged 28, 32 and 36. They were attacked with a folding knife in the southern city of Villach on Saturday. Four of them are receiving hospital treatment and one is being treated for minor injuries. A 23-year-old Syrian was arrested after the rampage, which is being treated as an "Islamic terror incident". Austria's interior minister Gerhard Karner said the suspect had alleged ties to the Islamic State group and radicalised himself online within a very short period. IS flags were discovered on the walls of the suspect's apartment during a search, according to police. <https://news.sky.com/story/deadly-stabbing-attack-in-austria-was-islamic-terror-incident-say-authorities-13310609>

LGBTI Hate Crimes In Europe Hit Record Level In 2024, Report Says

Detroit News, 2/18/2025

[Europe] Governments across Europe and Central Asia increasingly targeted lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people last year as a means of promoting laws that undermine broader civil liberties and democratic values, according to an annual report by a Brussels-based advocacy organization. This trend, alongside what ILGA-Europe described as the growing normalization of sexism and hate speech directed at LGBTI people, has driven what it says is an unprecedented surge in violence. Authorities in Finland,

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Germany, Norway, and Portugal reported “a significant increase in crimes motivated by perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression,” ILGA-Europe found. In France, anti-LGBTI offenses rose 13% and in the Netherlands they rose 25%. Both tracked 2023, the last year in which data was available. <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/world/2025/02/18/lgbt-hate-crimes-in-europe-hit-record-level-in-2024-report-says/79065232007/>

SECURITY & SAFETY AWARENESS

Study: Moving Bus Hub Away From Government Square Expensive, Bad For Riders
Cincinnati.com, 2/18/2025

[Cincinnati, Ohio] Metro's transit hub should remain at Government Square in the heart of Downtown Cincinnati, a study released Tuesday found. The study, done in the wake of an increase in violence at the bus hub early last year, analyzed the service impact of relocating Metro's operations and ridership. Government Square, Metro's largest transit hub located near Fountain Square at Fifth Street between Walnut and Main streets, serves approximately 7,500 passengers daily and accounts for half of all boardings Downtown. The study assessed the feasibility of relocating operations to the Riverfront Transit Center and other Downtown locations. <https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/politics/2025/02/18/metro-study-found-keeping-hub-at-government-square-best-option/79079961007/>

Metro's Successful TAP-to-Exit Program Expands to Union Station Beginning Feb. 18
Metro, 2/18/2025

[Los Angeles, California] The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is expanding the Board-approved TAP-to-Exit program to Union Station (B/D Lines) beginning Feb. 18. Turnstiles at the historic transportation station will be latched at both the entrances and exits to the rail lines, so riders will need to tap their TAP card or scan their valid Metrolink fare to enter and exit the station. Metro began informing riders about the expanded program on Feb. 11 via signage at Union Station and the distribution of brochures, both available in English and Spanish. On Feb. 18, Metro Ambassadors and TAP Blue Shirts will be on-site to assist passengers with loading their fares, while representatives from Metro's LIFE program will help enroll income-qualified riders. The education period will last through Tuesday, Feb. 25, after which security and law enforcement officers will begin issuing citations for those who do not have valid fares. <https://www.metro.net/about/metros-successful-tap-to-exit-program-expands-to-union-station-beginning-feb-18/>

ANALYST COMMENTARY: Violent acts across the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) system increased by 16 percent from March 2024 to April 2024, driving a push for additional public safety efforts on the transit system. According to data compiled by the three law enforcement agencies contracted to conduct enforcement action on LA Metro - the Los Angeles Police

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Department (LAPD), the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LACSD), and the Long Beach Police Department – from April 2023 to March 2024, 96 percent of violent offenders arrested on the system had evaded fares upon entering the system. Regarding the findings, Gina Osborn, the former Chief Safety and Security Officer for LA Metro, claimed that "not every fare evader is a criminal, but pretty much every criminal is a fare evader." On 28 May 2024, LA Metro rolled out a new pilot program at their North Hollywood Station called "Tap to Exit" designed to combat fare evasion and crime by requiring riders to tap their fare cards to exit the station. Those who did not have a fare card to tap were subjected to citations and, in some cases, ejected from the system. Since the implementation of the Tap to Exit pilot, violent incidents at the North Hollywood Station have dropped by over 40 percent, general "crime" has dropped by 55%, and according to LA Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins, "incidents of vandalism, concerns about safety and security have gone down by 50 percent." In addition to the reduction of crime, the system has allowed the LA Metro to collect over \$130,000 from fare evaders since its conception. LA Metro is planning on making the program permanent in all end-of-line stations by the end of 2025.

Sacramento Drivers Could Soon Receive Tickets From Bus-Mounted AI-Powered Cameras

FOX 40, 2/18/2025

[Sacramento, California] The City of Sacramento will begin issuing tickets on Wednesday to cars for certain parking violations with the help of bus-mounted cameras powered by artificial intelligence. SacRT said cameras mounted on the front of 100 buses are equipped with an artificial intelligence program by California-based Hayden AI to detect vehicles illegally parked at bus stops. The camera will record suspected violations and send the evidence to be reviewed by a Sacramento city employee before the \$100 citation is issued. SacRT spokesperson Jessica Gonzales said keeping bus stops clear is vital for serving disabled riders. "They (bus drivers) report back to dispatch if they can't pick up a passenger because they couldn't pull up to the bus stop, and maybe that passenger was in a mobility device meaning the ramp had to be deployed," Gonzales said. "And if you can't pull up to the curb, that ramp can't be deployed. That passenger is a pass-up." <https://fox40.com/news/local-news/sacramento/sacramento-bus-mounted-ai-powered-cameras-hayden-ai/>

CYBERSECURITY

New Chinese Hacking Campaign Targets Manufacturing Firms to Steal IP

Infosecurity Magazine, 2/11/2025

Check Point is set to reveal a new Chinese cyber campaign targeting suppliers of manufacturers in "sensitive" domains in the US and across the globe. In an exclusive interview with Infosecurity at the firm's CPX 2025 conference, Lotem Finkelstein, Check Point's Director of Threat Intelligence & Research,

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said his team was working on a new investigation into a Chinese hacking group. Finkelsteen confirmed his team had observed the threat group actively infiltrating the networks of firms that supply components for the manufacturing industry, including in “sensitive” domains, and many other sectors. These primary targets include suppliers of chemical products and physical infrastructure components like pipes. Some are Check Point’s customers. Check Point plans to release a full report on the campaign in the next few weeks. “These companies did not explicitly need to be better protected than they are and couldn’t expect to be targeted by nation-state actors as powerful as this one,” Finkelsteen said.

<https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/new-chinese-hacking-ip-theft/>

ANALYST COMMENTARY: This campaign is part of a larger trend of cyber espionage linked to China that targets supply chains in an attempt to obtain high-value targets. The focus on component suppliers, particularly in vital manufacturing and infrastructure, is on par with previous activities in which Chinese APTs attempted to map out industry supply chains and steal intellectual property. The exploitation of recently revealed vulnerabilities (one-days), which enables attackers to launch an attack before companies have a chance to patch their systems. A recent example of one-day exploitation involves the Chinese APT group Salt Typhoon (RedMike) targeting vulnerabilities in Cisco’s IOS software, which runs on routers and switches. This strategy, which is frequently used in campaigns by organizations like Volt Typhoon and Salt Typhoon, points to a move toward more covert initial access techniques that use compromised edge devices, such as Operational Relay Boxes (ORBs) and IoT hardware, to gain ground. It is more difficult to identify and distinguish the operations of these Chinese APT groups due to the growing tendency of tool-sharing. As a result, companies need to concentrate more on robust, proactive defenses—like protecting edge devices, implementing patches quickly, and embracing zero-trust principles—rather than trying to counter actor-specific indicators. To avoid becoming a point of entry for cyber espionage, organizations should review their security posture, which includes vendor risk management and threat detection on network perimeters.

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