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PUBLIC TRANSIT SAFETY ISSUES

Hydraulic Fluid Spill Incidents

In April, ATU Local 113 President Marvin Alfred revealed to TTC Board members and the public that there had been a serious hydraulic fluid spill on subway track in January, preventing trains from stopping safely and that this information regarding critical safety risks, both to transit workers and riders, had not been reported to the TTC Board. TTC then followed up by implementing new guidelines, but even more – and more serious – problems occurred.

Thanks to Local 113 members expertise and knowledge, TTC management was forced to come clean and admit the scale of the problem at the TTC Board Meeting at the May meeting. They have finally disclosed that in total, there have been seven separate incidents of hydraulic fluid leaking on subway tracks this year alone caused by work cars – none of which were made public by TTC management previously.

Here is a summary of what Local 113 shared with the TTC Board:

- **Incidents:**
  - **January 14:** Track & Structure was sent to inspect eastbound track between Pape to Donlands Stations because trains could not stop, and wheels were spinning. The hydraulic fluid leak was spread out from Lansdowne to Donlands Stations, as well as at Greenwood Yard which led to determine where the hydraulic fluid came from on the main line.

  - **January 17:** While heading into morning service, hydraulic fluid was reported on the tracks southbound north of St Clair West station. Operators were instructed to reduce speed to 25kph but were still unable to fully stop or control the speed of the train, in some incidents the train accelerated to well over the speed limit.

  - **April 30:** After meeting with Local 113 representatives for subway operators, TTC put in place updated instructions for managing service in the case of slippery track caused by a hydraulic fuel leak.

  - **May 13:** Nearly four months to the day after the first incident another identical and even more serious incident occurred with the same work car. Transit

Control were instructed to store the disabled car in Lower Bay Station but decided instead to tow the car to Greenwood Yard, leaking fluid along the way. Knowing the track was unsafe, TTC management decided to begin normal morning service – then the overshoots started. There were multiple reports of trains being unable to stop and overshooting their platforms. It wasn't until around 7:00 am that service was suspended when a train overshot the platform at Broadview Station by four doors – an entire car length. This time, service on Line 2 across the middle of the City, and the min transfer points to Line 1, was suspended for 12 hours, including both peak periods.

- The fact that **nearly identical incidents** are allowed to take place, and never reported to the TTC Board, is unacceptable.

- It is possible that **proper maintenance** could have prevented the May 13 service disruption entirely; dedicated operating funding for SOGR (state of good repair) for an aging fleet of work car vehicles may have prevented this. Mid-level Management is forced to meet service KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) set by TTC's Executives.

- **Better decision-making by TTC management** could certainly have prevented the disabled car from leaking on Line 2 at all and could have kept subway service from running on unsafe track.

- **TTC is failing to maintain the system.** This is causing service disruptions and putting workers and riders at risk. The facts behind the May 13 disruption were only made public because of the intelligence and expertise of Local 113 members, who came forward with the facts even in the face of potential discipline from management.

- **There is a culture of lack of accountability and lack of respect for safety at TTC that needs to change.** The lack of transparency and poor decision-making about safety-critical issues raises doubts about TTC management's ability to makes these necessary changes. Given the failure to disclose, let alone deal with, the prior incidents, we strongly recommend an outside investigation be launched.
