

NEW YORK

The MTA Has a Message for Television Watchers

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The [Metropolitan Transportation Authority's](#) 5-year-old anti-terror tagline, "If You See Something, Say Something," is going prime time today.

The MTA is spending \$3 million of security funds to air the slogan in more than 4,000 television spots and run 84 ads in 11 regional newspapers over the next four and a half months. The 10-second spots will be broadcast during news programs on local [New York City](#) television stations, the agency announced yesterday.

With the threat of a terrorist attack on the city's mass transit system lurking in the background of daily life, customers can act as first-responders by identifying potential threats when police and transit officials are not on the ground, transit officials said. The slogan, which plays a key role in the MTA's security program, advertises constant vigilance and reminds customers to report suspicious-looking packages or activities they observe by calling a police department hotline, 1-888-NYC-SAFE. The campaign led to almost 2,000 tips last year, according to the MTA. An agency spokeswoman said yesterday she did not know how many of the hotline calls helped avert potential terrorist attacks, and how many reported false alarms.

The television advertisements, which will air in English and Spanish, are the fifth generation of the "If You See Something, Say Something" safety campaign.

In the 10-second spot that begins airing today, a hoarse, male voice narrates: "Last year, 1,944 New Yorkers saw something, and said something." The words are displayed in royal blue over a white background as he reads. "Thank you, for keeping your eyes and ears open," the voice says.

In 2002, the anti-terror advertisements were simple, plain-text messages posted on subway cars, bus kiosks, and train platforms. After the Madrid subway bombings in 2003, the MTA rolled out more eye-catching photographs of suspicious packages on subway cars. The television and newspaper advertisements mark the largest expansion to date of the anti-terror advertising campaign.

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The MTA announced the 'Say Something' TV campaign at Grand Central Terminal.

The catchy slogan, which among transit-riding New Yorkers rivals "Just Do It" and "Priceless" as a well-known, oft-quoted motto, was created after the attacks of September 11, 2001, by the chairman and CEO of the advertising firm [Korey Kay & Partners, Allen Kay](#). It was adopted as the MTA's official safety slogan in 2002. "It took time for everyone to buy into it," Mr. Kay, whose firm also came up with the Port Authority's slogan, "Look What We're Doing," said in an interview. "The MTA had some concerns that it might scare people that a disaster could happen, but research found that it was quite the opposite, that the police and the MTA can't be everywhere, so it was smart to enlist the aid of everybody."

The trademarked phrase has been licensed for use in dozens of transit systems across the globe to purvey an anti-terror message. The largest banner displaying the slogan hangs in a train station in Perth, Australia, Mr. Kay said.

The number of suspicious packages reported in New York City overall has reportedly jumped to 37,614 last year from 814 in 2002. A police department spokesman, [Deputy Commissioner Paul Browne](#), told The New York Sun earlier this year that the random bag searches and increased number of police officers patrolling the subways have helped decrease the likelihood of a terrorist attack underground. The police department's methods were "disruptive of the kind of reconnaissance we know Al Qaeda engages in," Mr. Browne said.