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'BUS'TING TERROR

COACH LINES INSTALL ANTI-HIJACKER TECH

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Authorities can now put the brakes on terrorists who hijack New York buses.

Like something out of the movie "Speed," a new GPS device enables authorities to remotely control a bus - slowing it down to 5 mph and preventing it from restarting once it has stopped. The device has been installed on thousands of local commuter and tourist buses.

The technology is designed to prevent a terrorist from ramming a bus filled with people and explosives into buildings or tunnels.

Private bus companies have received millions of dollars from the Department of Homeland Security for the security systems. It costs \$1,500 to equip each bus, with \$50-per-bus monthly maintenance costs.

Gray Line double-decker tourist buses and Coach USA have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in federal funds to install 3,000 devices. After receiving a \$124,000 federal grant, DeCamp Bus Lines is installing the device on its 80 commuter buses, which travel routes from northern New Jersey to the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Midtown.

New Jersey Transit is currently in the process of equipping all of its roughly 3,000 buses with the technology. NJ Transit Chief of Police Joseph Bober said: "This enhanced technology helps us protect our bus drivers and customers. It's another proactive tool to protect our property, employees and customers."

But New York City Transit is not using the technology. "This system requires GPS, and right now, our GPS program is in the pilot stage, with 155 buses being tested out of a fleet of 4,500," spokesman Charles Seaton said.



Several metro-area bus lines have gotten millions of dollars from the Department of Homeland Security for a new security system that can remotely stop hijacked city tourist and commuter buses in their tracks.

A Pennsylvania manufacturer, Saucon TDS, makes the device. In an emergency, a bus driver can hit a panic button installed next to the steering wheel. That distress call is sent by satellite to the bus company and the command center at Saucon TDS.

A GPS device attached to the bus computer system allows a dispatcher to pinpoint the location of the bus and identify its speed and direction. Protocol calls for the dispatcher to contact law enforcement and act under its supervision before taking action.

Through the computer hookup, the dispatcher can slow the bus and block it from being restarted, allowing cops to catch up and intervene.

"If we just stop the bus suddenly, maybe he sets off a bomb and kills 50 people," said Gary Pard, DeCamp's vice president of operations. "It's our objective to give a terrorist time to rethink their position."

"Hopefully, we'll never have to use it."