Letter to the Editor

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Fire safety measures in subway: lessons from past disaster

Sir.

On February 18, 2003, major catastrophe happened in Daegu, South Korea. 192 people were dead and 151 were injured from subway fire that one man carried out arson inside train. Inadequate emergency equipment and wrong disaster plan lead to many victims.

Several equipment's were formed to be prepared for an emergency situation like fire disaster since then.

- First, passengers can communicate with command center directly using interphone inside train car.
 Short message service and cellular phone is also available anytime to inform.
- Second, every car and platform was provided with fire extinguisher. It can be ineffective to big fire, however, sufficient to the beginning of fire.
- Third, the door opens and closes manually without electricity supply after handle control. Passenger can evacuate from train with electric power failure.
- Fourth, inside wall and seat was changed to fire resistant material.
- Sixth, fire alarm was set to inform all passengers boarding other cars.
- Seventh, sprinkler was equipped below the ceiling.
- Eighth, gas mask and towel were prepared against inhalation burn injury in the platform (Figure 1). Wet towel can protect airway from poisonous gas and heat. The patient with inhalation injury had a higher mortality rate than solely thermal injury.²
- Ninth, evacuation lighting was attached on the bottom of platform. This can operate in case of power out.
- Tenth, portable flashlight is usable inside and outside train.

We hope that many citizens could use public transportation like metro safely without any tragedy.



Figure 1: Gas mask, towel and water for emergency situation in the platform.

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