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A new city police unit formed to patrol Chicago Transit Authority buses has made more than 200 arrests in its first month, a transit authority official reported Wednesday.

The 100-officer force, which began patrols March 15 after months of delay, "appears to be working well," said Melvyn May, the CTA's manager of police liaison and industrial safety.

Through April 9, members of the force made 243 arrests for offenses including robbery, unlawful

weapons use, criminal damage to property, deceptive practices and disorderly conduct, May said. They also issued warnings in 424 cases for less serious offenses such as smoking on buses.

The unit, made up of moonlighting Chicago police officers, patrols 21 primary and 24 secondary routes where crime is highest. The force operates in uniformed two-officer teams, of which one member rides the bus and the other follows in a squad car.

A consultant's report commissioned in 1985 by the Regional Transportation Authority, the CTA's parent agency, recommended creation of the special unit to curb crime as well as to allay the passengers' sometimes exaggerated fears of crime.

Though the Regional Transportation Authority agreed to cover the expenses of the force, it was stalled for more than a year by the inability of the CTA and the city to agree on a contract governing the unit's operation.