

Contrite Metro diners write apology letter



Photo from Metro police's Weibo account shows four foreigners who dined on a Metro train yesterday attend an "education" meeting with police and the Metro operator. [Shanghai Daily]

Four foreigners who set up a table and dined on a Metro Line 11 train last Friday in Shanghai wrote an apology letter yesterday.

The incident sparked an online uproar, with the foreigners accused of displaying bad manners.

The Metro operator and police officers have summoned and talked to the foreigners, whose nationalities and names were not released, about their behavior and they apologized in the office of Shanghai Shentong Metro Group.

Metro police said a total of six foreigners were involved, all of them working for the same company. As two of them were on a business trip, the remaining four attended the meeting, which was held yesterday.

Eating and drinking on the Metro is not illegal but is discouraged in Shanghai. However, setting up a table in the middle of a train carriage could be dangerous as it might block movement of commuters or injure others, which could mean a 50 yuan (US\$7.25) fine, according to the Metro operator.

Police said they did not punish the foreigners because after checking surveillance footage, "the table was small, not as big as it looked in the photo (initially published on the Internet), and there were not many people in the carriage."

Whether to ban eating or drinking on the Metro has long been a controversial subject in many Chinese cities, including Shanghai and Beijing.

In Hong Kong, it is illegal. People there can be fined HK\$2,000 (US\$257) if found eating or drinking on Metro trains or platforms.

Eating and drinking are also banned on Singapore's subway. But there is no such rule in New York.