



## MTA Press Releases

[Select Language](#) | ▼

Press Release

December 3, 2007

[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

### Painting the Town's MTA Bridges

Painting is more than meets the eye when it comes to the seven bridges owned and operated by MTA Bridges and Tunnels; it's serious business.

Regular attention to painting the steel on bridges is critical to keeping them in a state of good repair and to provide a protective coating against corrosion. An average of \$40 million is being spent annually on bridge painting in order to protect and maintain the structural steel on these facilities, which range in age from youngest to oldest as follows: Cross Bay Veterans Memorial (37); Verrazano-Narrows (43); Throgs Neck (46); Bronx-Whitestone (68); Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges Memorial (70); Henry Hudson (71); and Triborough (71).

"Our bridge painting program helps preserve these facilities for the safe travel of our customers," said MTA Bridges and Tunnels Acting President David Moretti.

Here are some basic facts about the Bridges and Tunnels painting program:

- Trademark color, used on all bridges: "Battleship gray"-it's economical, weathers well and is traditional (original color of bridges).
- The painted surface area of all seven bridges combined equals approximately 26 million square feet.
- "Maintenance" painting generally means sanding and refreshing when a painted surface on a facility does not require a complete rehabilitation. "New" painting involves completely stripping away the old paint by "abrasive blasting" for a fresh start, followed by prep work and three coats of paint. Damaged or exposed lead paint is always removed safely in a full environmental containment. (See attached photo.)
- Bridges and Tunnels' painting program employs a three-coat paint system, beginning with: epoxy zinc rich primer; epoxy intermediate; and finally urethane finish, which is battleship gray. The prime and intermediate coats are different colors to assist painters with ease of application and to indicate stage in process.
- Outdoor painting is done throughout the year; however, work days are limited during the winter months due to lower temperatures. To expedite schedules, in some cases industrial heaters are used to maintain proper conditions in the work area through the winter.

Painting on older bridges can be challenging, and the Triborough Bridge, which opened in July 1936, is especially so because it is really three-bridges-in-one uniting Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx: the Harlem River lift span; the Bronx crossing; and the large junction structure includes the main suspension span. There is also a viaduct and more than 14 miles of approach roads. One of the big jobs currently in progress is painting of portions of the steel on the viaduct stretching on to the Randall's Island anchorage.

The second oldest of MTA's bridges, Henry Hudson, is undergoing a lower level deck replacement and will require nearly \$7 million in maintenance painting. The next major paint project beginning in the spring of 2008 involves the two towers plus all cables and ropes of the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge, which opened to traffic in April 1939. Recently completed projects include the towers, main cables and suspender ropes, and the Brooklyn ramps of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.



Throgs Neck Bridge shrouded or "encapsulated" in preparation for old paint removal and new painting. All paint removal and application is

routinely performed under total containment to prevent any dust, debris or paint from escaping the worksite.