



MTA Press Releases

Press Release

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LIRR

IMMEDIATE

NEW "GAP RAP" VIDEO TARGETS GAP SAFETY; RAPPIN' LIRR DOC & SCHOOL KIDS TAKE IT TO THE STREETS (and trains)

SAFETY MESSAGE AIMS AT WIDE AUDIENCE

Don't be surprised if you see bobbing heads and rhythmically moving feet when the MTA Long Island Rail Road's medical director talks about his latest safety message to the railroad's customers. Dr. John Clarke co-stars in a public service video he wrote called "The Gap Rap."

Dr. Clarke exhorts customers to be aware of their surroundings as they travel on the railroad in his three-minute-plus lyric video poem. The fast moving, LIRR-produced rap video features Dr. Clarke, wearing his physician's white coat, leading a group of fifth graders from Lindell School in Long Beach as they travel on the LIRR, in Manhattan, and on Long Island, all the while harmonizing to the beat as they remind us to "Look down, step over and watch the gap."

LIRR President Helena Williams said, "Dr. Clarke's innovative approach will help the LIRR continue to spread the word about gap safety. I'm hopeful this unique video will keep our gap message fresh and reach a wide audience, especially our younger travelers."

Dr. Clarke, who captured wide media attention for his H1N1 Flu Rap, was enthusiastic about his new video, "I recognize that gap accidents are quite preventable. I knew that Health-Hop would be a perfect way to spread the message and make an impact."

Long Beach School District Lindell School Principal Karen Sauter, whose students participated in the video, said, "We're proud that Mr. Gill's class along with teaching assistant Ms. Geraghty and their students were able to participate in this video. We hope that it raises peoples' consciousness about the gap."

So far in 2010 the LIRR has experienced a reduction in year-to-date (January 1-July 1) reported gap incidents of 15% (2010-33 gap incidents vs. 2009-39 gap incidents).

Dr. Clarke's video is the latest effort by the LIRR to raise awareness of the gap and to help assure that the traveling public safely steps over this necessary space between trains and station platforms. Railroad initiatives have included special Be Train Smart brochures, posters, signs, and celebrity gap announcements at stations and by train crews.

The railroad has also made a concerted effort to reduce the gap through engineering and operating solutions. Since 2007, more than 121,000 linear feet of one-inch platform edging board has been installed at LIRR stations to help reduce the horizontal gap. In addition, where necessary, measures to reduce vertical platform gaps an average of three inches have been taken at 42 stations. Some 836 train cars have also been retro-fitted with two-inch threshold plates marked "Watch The Gap," further reducing the gap space.

Dr. John Clarke is the LIRR's Medical Director and Medical Review Officer. Wearing both his medical and song-writing "hats," Dr. Clarke has combined his desire to effectively reach young people with medical information and his talent as a hip-hop song-writer and producer to create his own musical genre called "Health-Hop." He was the winner last year of the U.S. Health Department's nation-wide contest for the best H1N1 Flu public service announcement.

The "Gap Rap" Video can be viewed on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/lirr2010>