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Press Release

February 3, 2011

[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

New Haven Line Reduced Winter Schedule Takes Effect on Monday

Starting on Monday, February 7, Metro-North will introduce a Reduced Winter Schedule affecting New Haven Line rush-hour, peak-direction trains. This schedule reduces service by approximately 10% during peak hours. In nearly all cases, customers will be able to board a train within five minutes of their normal departure time, although in some cases trains will make more stops than normal. During this time, weekday off-peak service will not be affected.

On weekends, a Sunday schedule will be in effect for both days. Beginning this Saturday, February 5, busing will be in effect on the Waterbury Branch until further notice with bus service following the train schedule.

These schedule changes, expected to last through March 4, are required because the railroad has had a severe and ongoing shortage of cars available for use on the New Haven Line. The problems with the fleet result from the age of the cars - almost 70 percent of the electric fleet is over 40 years old - and the impact of the unprecedented winter weather on them.

The printed version of the timetables are available at Grand Central Terminal. The new schedules are available online at Metro-North's schedule page at mta.info, either in PDF format showing the entire line or through the point-to-point interactive schedules. Metro-North Train Time will reflect the new schedules.

Significant car shortages due to record-breaking amounts of snow and extreme cold have forced Metro-North to operate trains with fewer cars than normal, and to cancel trains, causing severe crowding and train delays. The new schedule will increase the dependability of the trains that are running.

"The service we have been providing has been far less than what our customers have come to expect from us and we strive to provide for them," said Metro-North President Howard Permut. "It is time for us to take these additional steps to improve our service reliability and minimize further inconvenience."

On a daily basis, there are close to 150 electric cars out of service on the New Haven Line, or 40% of the fleet. Metro-North employees are working around-the-clock to get damaged equipment back into service. However, with each new weather event, more weather-damaged cars arrive in the shops in need of repair. The cars, which pre-date the creation of Metro-North by about a decade, were designed in a manner that made key components extremely vulnerable to snow. These components include:

Traction motors, which must be repaired or replaced - a job that routinely takes six or more hours to complete.

Brakes, which freeze and get stuck from the extreme cold.

Doors, which won't close properly because the snow and ice that gets inside the door pockets prevents them from opening or closing on command.

Further complicating repair efforts is the fact that shop space is limited. Metro-North employees do not let this limitation stop them, working outside the shops, crawling under cars in the snow and extreme cold to repair components. The work is demanding, and progress is slow and hard won. Every day, repaired equipment goes back into service, and every day, more weather damaged cars arrive in need of repair.

The arrival of the new M8 rail cars will improve this situation in the future. Metro-North is testing the new M8 pilot cars; however this is a highly complex car with much computer technology. As we identify problems in testing - mostly related to complex software - we effect a fix and need to retest, and the testing has been delayed by the snowstorms. Metro-North is disappointed with the progress in getting these cars into revenue service, but the process cannot be rushed. We will put the cars into revenue service when we are confident that they operate both safely and reliably, and Metro-North remains hopeful that this will occur in the first quarter of 2011.