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Press Release

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[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

### Governor Cuomo Directs Safety-First Transportation Policy as Hurricane Irene Accelerates Toward New York

#### MTA to Run Normal Service Today to Get New Yorkers to Safety; New Yorkers Urged Not to Wait Until Last Minute, Expect System-Wide MTA Suspension Beginning at 12 Noon Tomorrow Monitor MTA.info and Call 511 for Latest Transportation Info; More Detailed Schedule Information Will Be Made Available Later Today

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo this morning directed MTA officials to begin immediately implementing a hurricane plan designed to protect the safety of New Yorkers before, during and after the expected impacts of Hurricane Irene, with latest forecasts showing dangerous conditions reaching the area as early as Saturday evening. Governor Cuomo directed the MTA to use whatever resources necessary to ensure safety, consistent with the State of Emergency declared yesterday.

"The key word for this weekend is safety," said Governor Cuomo. "Give yourself plenty of time to get where you need to be. Don't take unnecessary chances and don't wait until the last minute to make sure that your family is safe and secure. Please call 511 for statewide transportation information before traveling through the weekend."

Chairman Jay H. Walder said: "We're working very closely with the Governor's Office, Mayor's Office and regional OEMs to ensure our hurricane plan is implemented in a way that protects our customers, employees and equipment."

The MTA's Hurricane Plan is designed to help people get to safety prior to the storm and then to protect employees and equipment before dangerous sustained winds of more than 39 mph reach the area. This is a lengthy process that must begin hours in advance, with all MTA subway, bus and rail service beginning final runs approximately 8 hours before – and bus service 6 hours before – dangerous conditions materialize.

Details of the MTA's service plan for Hurricane Irene are as follows:

#### Preparation/Evacuation

New York City has issued a mandatory evacuation for those living in the Rockaways and Flood Zone A. Those who wish to evacuate using MTA services should seek out existing routes. We will carry pets. Dogs must be leashed and, if possible should be muzzled. Cats should be in carriers.

The MTA is running normal service on Friday, with sufficient capacity to allow people to leave vulnerable areas or reach safe destinations before service is suspended.

Scheduled weekend construction projects have been cancelled to allow for potential evacuation and suspension of service.

#### Safe and Orderly Shutdown

The MTA will begin an incremental suspension of its subway, bus, Long Island Rail Road, and Metro-North Railroad service beginning approximately eight hours prior to sustained 39 mph winds reaching the area.

Subways, buses and both railroads will begin shutting down service after 12 noon tomorrow.

People needing to travel are encouraged to do so as soon as possible and not wait until the last minute.

The MTA's bridges and tunnels will be closed on a case-by-case basis as winds become dangerous, beginning with restrictions when sustained winds reach 39 mph. Closures and restrictions are not expected to begin until late Saturday night.

Customers may call today (Friday) to schedule trips for Saturday morning. There will be no scheduled pickups after 12 noon on Saturday but Access-A-Ride will be working with OEM providing vehicles for the evacuation for disabled residents. There will be no Access-A-Ride service on Sunday, August 28 or Monday morning, August 29.

All MTA construction sites are being secured, with cranes lowered.

The MTA is working with law enforcement across the region to protect infrastructure during a system-wide shutdown.

MTA stations and rail terminals are not designated shelters and will be closed in the event of a service shutdown. Those in need of assistance will be directed to designated nearby shelters.

#### Safe and Orderly Restoration

As soon as conditions allow following the storm, MTA personnel will evaluate damage and begin implementing its plan to restore service as quickly as possible while protecting the safety of all involved.

Even with minimal damage this is expected to be a lengthy process that will impact service on Monday. MTA riders are urged to call 511 and stay tuned

to mta.info and local news broadcasts before traveling.

State helicopters will be deployed to assist the MTA in assessing storm damage