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Press Release

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[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

### MTA Prepares for Winter Storm

#### *With Heavy Snowfall Expected Overnight, Customers Should Monitor MTA Website Before Traveling Tomorrow*

The MTA is preparing for a winter storm expected to dump as much as 14 inches of snow throughout the region, putting into action lessons learned from a preliminary review of last month's blizzard. Each of the MTA's agencies is on its highest level of winter weather alert, which means extra personnel are on hand to clear snow and maintain and protect equipment. The MTA will be monitoring the storm and its impact on the MTA's network overnight, and customers are urged to visit the MTA's website, [www.MTA.info](http://www.MTA.info), before traveling during the storm. All MTA agencies anticipate changes to operations as a result of the storm, so customers should allow for extra travel time if they must travel.

For this evening, we will be providing normal rush hour service on all services. Some changes are already anticipated for tomorrow:

New York City Subway trains will be stored underground overnight for protection from the weather, so as a result, many express trains will run on local tracks in the morning. Buses will likely operate on a reduced schedule, and determinations will be made on a route-by-route basis about how much service can be provided based on street conditions.

Metro-North Railroad anticipates operating on a reduced schedule tomorrow. While the Long Island Rail Road will work to keep train service operating on all 11 branches, it may be necessary to temporarily suspend train service if snow accumulations reach between 10 and 13 inches. After tonight's evening rush hour, there will be no LIRR service east of Speonk or Ronkonkoma.

Access-A-Ride and Able-Ride services are cancelled for Wednesday, January 12, except for trips of medical necessity (e.g., trips to dialysis, radiation treatment or chemotherapy).

"Our goal in this and all storms is to continue providing service so long as it is safe for our customers, employees and equipment," said MTA Chairman Jay H. Walder. "We recognize the importance of public transportation especially when road conditions are difficult. Doing this safely means service may be temporarily suspended or curtailed to avoid stuck trains and buses."

#### **Storm Preparation**

An in-depth analysis of the MTA's response to the last blizzard is ongoing, but the preliminary agency review has resulted in a series of measures that will be implemented in addressing this storm. The MTA has improved weather monitoring and notification, with inter-agency coordination beginning in the days leading up to a forecasted storm. This is especially important because the MTA covers such a vast region, with conditions varying in different places. All MTA agencies have been closely following this storm since last week.

The MTA has also strengthened its incident command center operations to provide the most coordinated possible response once the storm is underway. This will allow the MTA to assess impacts as they occur and be more nimble in its response. All incident centers are being activated this evening. These command centers will help facilitate improved interagency communication, especially with emergency management offices in New York City and around the region.

Preparations are already underway at each of the MTA's agencies.

#### **New York City Subways and Buses**

New York City Transit has entered into a Level IV alert. After the evening rush hour today, trains will be moved into underground tunnels to protect them from the weather. NYC Transit forces will be working 12-hour shifts. Crews are preparing to deploy a fleet of snow and ice-busting equipment to keep outdoor tracks and the third rail clear of snow. The fleet includes super-powered snow throwers, jet-powered snow-blowers, and specially-built de-icing cars, all designed to keep service moving.

Personnel have been putting chains on bus tires to improve traction in snow conditions. Bus managers are preparing to travel bus routes, and will coordinate closely with the City of New York, to monitor the conditions of roadways and to make continual route-by-route assessments about service levels. NYC Transit is preparing to mobilize its own fleet of snow fighting equipment, particularly the salt-spreading trucks equipped with plows assigned to each depot.

#### **Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad**

The MTA's railroads will operate electric trains equipped with special scraper shoes to help reduce icing on the third rail and ensure that electric trains can draw their power properly. The railroads will treat switches with anti-freeze agents, lubricate them, and activate heaters. The LIRR is bringing extra

personnel on hand at Jamaica to ensure that switches there remain operational. The LIRR is running anti-freeze trains throughout its electrified system to help reduce icing on the third rail.

Metro-North is removing snow that had accumulated below the third rail during previous storms, particularly on the Harlem Line, and is removing piles of snow that have accumulated in parking lots controlled by the railroad. Employees are spraying door panels with anti-freeze, purging air brake lines of moisture to prevent them from freezing and treating third rail shoes with deicers.

Employees at each railroad are positioning jet engine snow blowers and plow trains to start operation as soon as snow accumulations begin. Snow fighting material is dispatched to stations and crews will be positioned to be ready to clear platforms and stairways.

LIRR station waiting rooms will be kept open around-the-clock Tuesday through normal hours on Thursday to provide shelter for customers waiting for trains.

#### **Bridges and Tunnels**

MTA Bridges and Tunnels has prepared and put into position its fleet of 102 snow-fighting trucks and other pieces of heavy equipment. In addition, MTA Bridges and Tunnels uses a system of technologically-advanced weather sensors to help keep motorists safe. All seven MTA bridges use small, rocket-like atmospheric weather sensors that deliver highly-accurate weather information, including wind velocity, wind direction, humidity and precipitation, via wireless communication. Other sensors are embedded in the roadway and on the snow-fighting trucks to monitor icing conditions on the roadways.