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Press Release

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[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA Working to Restore Transit Service Throughout the Region in Wake of Historic Storm

Governor Cuomo Announces Bridges and Buses Coming Back

Thousands of MTA workers have begun to fan out through the system to inspect and begin repairs of the damage caused by Hurricane Sandy, a massively destructive storm of historic proportions. In the period of a few hours, seven East River subway tubes, two Long Island Rail Road tubes linking Manhattan with Queens, and two vehicular tunnels were inundated by a wall of water, along with one subway bridge, three subway yards and six bus depots. However, there are some early signs of recovery.

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo announced that five of the MTA's seven bridges, the Robert F. Kennedy, Verrazano-Narrows, Bronx-Whitestone, Throgs Neck and Henry Hudson bridges, were fully inspected and reopened at noon. The two Rockaway bridges, Cross Bay Veterans Memorial and Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges bridges, and the Hugh L. Carey and Queens Midtown Tunnel remain closed.

The Governor also announced partial restoration of bus service at 5 p.m. Buses will operate on a fare-free basis and on a Sunday schedule. A full schedule is expected for Wednesday. Rides will continue to be fare-free for the time being.

"Our transportation system has never faced a disaster as devastating as Hurricane Sandy, which has caused an unparalleled level of damage," said MTA Chairman & CEO Joseph J. Lhota after inspecting many of the hardest-hit areas. "The challenge that we face now is one of assessment, inspection, repair and restoration. This will not be a short process, but it will be one that puts safety as its major focus."

The powerful storm affected service throughout the MTA service region. Metro-North Railroad lost electric power from 59th Street to Croton-Harmon on the Hudson Line and east to New Haven on the New Haven Line. The Long Island Rail Road sustained damage in its West Side Yards and suffered flooding in two East River tunnels.

Bridges and Tunnels also suffered major damage with flooding of the Hugh L. Carey Tunnel from end to end and the Queens Midtown Tunnel also taking on water. Six bus depots situated in low-lying areas were also disabled by high water. The MTA and its operating agencies have begun the lengthy process of assessment and repair. Damage has been extremely heavy in downtown Manhattan where several subway lines converge. The South Ferry station is filled track to ceiling with water as are several of the subway tunnels.

It is too early to say how long it will take to restore the system to full service. There is a separate process that must be followed for each division. Bridges and Tunnels' two Rockaway bridges did not suffer any major damage but remain closed due to flooding in the surrounding adjacent roadways and neighborhoods. Water remains in both the Queens Midtown and Hugh L. Carey tunnels. Once water levels subside, the water must be pumped out and the tunnels thoroughly inspected by engineers. 6,200 subway trains and 5,600 buses must be inspected along with 600 miles of tracks and 468 subway stations. Metro-North Railroad and the Long Island Rail Road must take a close look at hundreds of miles of tracks, switches, railroad crossing, railcars and locomotives.

At first light today, Metro-North dispatched diesel-power patrol trains on all three lines, Hudson, Harlem and New Haven, to inspect tracks and remove fallen trees along the way. In Ossining, they encountered a 40-foot boat blocking the tracks. Carrying track workers with chain saws, signal maintainers and power department personnel, the trains made slow progress as they encountered numerous trees snapped and lying across the tracks and hung up in the overhead catenary wires that power the New Haven Line.

In some cases, the wires were torn down. Elsewhere, heavy trees have crushed the third rails that power Hudson and Harlem line trains. However, on a positive note, shops and yards in New Haven and Stamford appear to have been unscathed by the storm.

This is will be an exhaustive, time-consuming process with one goal: to restore safe and efficient service to 8.5 million daily MTA customers. It must be noted, however, that this process could have taken much longer had we not taken the pre-emptive measure of suspending all service to safeguard our equipment and prepare facilities to the best of our ability.

Chairman Lhota added, "Our employees have shown remarkable dedication over the past few days, and I thank them on behalf of every New Yorker. Our employees have never faced a challenge like the one that confronts us now. All of us at the MTA are committed to restoring the system as quickly as we can to help bring New York back to normal."