



## MTA Press Releases

[Select Language](#) | ▼

Press Release

October 26, 2012

[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

### MTA Prepares for Hurricane Sandy

***Service Shutdowns Possible as Forecasts Develop; Subways, Buses, Railroads, Bridges and Tunnels Preparing for High Winds and Heavy Rain; Monitor [mta.info](#), Media Outlets and Call 511 for Latest Transportation Information***

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is monitoring the progress of Hurricane Sandy and taking necessary precautions to protect its transportation network. The storm is tracking toward New York and holds the potential for high winds and heavy rain that could make it unsafe to operate subway, bus and railroad lines, as well as to allow vehicles on the MTA's seven bridges and two tunnels.

The MTA is working closely with the Governor's office, the Mayor's office and state and local Offices of Emergency Management to prepare for the storm and respond in a coordinated manner.

"Our first priority is always safety, and the MTA is taking no chances with the safety of our customers, our employees and our equipment," said MTA Chairman and CEO Joseph J. Lhota. "We are hoping for the best but preparing for the worst. Whatever happens, we'll be ready."

The MTA Hurricane Plan calls for an orderly shutdown of service before the arrival of sustained winds of 39 mph or higher. No decision has been made whether to suspend some or all service in advance of the storm, but ample notice will be provided of any suspension. Customers and the media should monitor the [mta.info](#) website, which is updated continuously with service information as it becomes available. Customers can also call 511 for service information.

The MTA last suspended service during Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011, when it successfully helped people get to safety before the storm, then shut down its transportation network in an orderly manner to protect employees and equipment.

The Hurricane Plan also contains detailed protocols for New York City Transit, Metro-North Railroad, the Long Island Rail Road, Bridges and Tunnels and Capital Construction to prepare for the onset of a storm by moving equipment such as rail cars and buses from low-lying storage areas or vulnerable outdoor tracks; by staging recovery equipment such as generators and chainsaws near areas where they would be needed; by clearing catch basins and sewer lines; and by installing protective barriers to keep floodwaters out of buildings, tunnels and storage yards.

Details of each agency's storm planning are provided below.

#### **New York City Transit**

Most scheduled weekend subway service changes for construction projects have been cancelled, with the exception of changes planned for the 7 and J lines, which are now scheduled through Saturday only. Crews are inspecting and clearing main drains and pump rooms throughout the subway system. Personnel are checking and cleaning all known flood-prone locations and these areas will continue to be monitored.

Extra workers and managers are prepared to staff New York City Transit's Incident Command Center, situation room, satellite desks, depot operations and facility operations as necessary. The Incident Command Center will be activated starting at 8 a.m. Sunday. Among those present in the ICC throughout the duration of the storm will be Customer Advocates, who will ensure that all decisions made during the event will reflect a focus on customers. They fill a position created after reviews of the agency's performance during Tropical Storm Irene.

Trains will be removed from outdoor yards prone to flooding and moved to more secure locations. Subway ventilation grates vulnerable to flooding will be sandbagged and tarped over. Many station entrances and ventilation grates in low-lying areas have been successfully modified in recent years to raise them above street level, making it more difficult for floodwaters to enter the system.

All portable pumps and emergency response vehicles will be checked, fueled and made ready for service. Outside contractors have been asked to prepare their work sites for heavy weather.

Bus operators are ready to move buses that normally park in low-lying depots to areas of higher ground.

#### **Metro-North Railroad**

##### **Metro-North Railroad**

Metro-North personnel are stockpiling material in preparation for possible washouts or bank erosion, and are securing road crossing gates when necessary.

Much of Metro-North's territory runs along rivers and the Long Island Sound. With nearly 800 miles of tracks to take care of, Maintenance of Way workers have already begun preparing for Sandy at known trouble spots.

Culverts are being cleared of fallen limbs and other debris. Ditches and swales are being cleaned out. Pumps are being tuned up and put in place at known low spots such as New Haven Yard and Mott Haven Yard, while generators at all rail yards are being fueled and tested.

Cranes and excavators and back hoes are being positioned along the tracks, and a tree service contractor is on call to respond rapidly if needed.

### **Long Island Rail Road**

Long Island Rail Road is preparing facilities and infrastructure by clearing drains, securing work sites against possible high winds, fueling equipment, stocking supplies and making plans to move equipment and supplies away from low-lying areas. Chain saws, generators and pumps are ready for use as well.

The LIRR's scheduled track work between Jamaica and Queens Village, and the resulting bus service for westbound Queens Village and Hollis customers, has been suspended for this entire weekend due to preparations for Hurricane Sandy. Westbound customers at Queens Village and Hollis should anticipate normal westbound train service Friday night and throughout Saturday, 10/27.

Extra personnel will be assigned to report for duty before the storm is forecasted to make landfall on Long Island.

Crews will be prepared to remove crossing gates from LIRR crossings in advance of the storm if necessary, to protect them from high winds and assist in a quicker recovery. Service must be suspended if crossing gates are removed.

### **Bridges and Tunnels**

All roadway and drainage systems at Bridges and Tunnels facilities are being checked and cleared of debris. Construction areas will be secured, backup generators are in place, and wrecker trucks and other response vehicles are readied to help motorists who may become stranded. In addition, staffing levels were checked and emergency personnel have been put on standby.

Motorists are advised to reduce speeds when winds are between 40 and 49 mph in dry conditions, and 30 to 49 mph in windy and wet conditions.

When the winds are 50 mph or more in dry or wet conditions, certain vehicles will be barred from using MTA crossings. These include motorcycles, tractor trailers, step vans, mini buses, trucks with open backs, cars pulling trailers, motor homes and vehicles carrying plate glass.

If there are sustained winds of 60 mph or above, the MTA may close one or more bridges to all traffic.

### **Capital Construction**

All contractors at Capital Construction projects – East Side Access, the Second Avenue Subway, the 7 Line Extension and Fulton Center – will secure all materials and equipment, including cranes, to prepare for high winds and flooding.