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Press Release

December 13, 2013

[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

### MTA Prepares for Weekend Storm

MTA New York City Transit, MTA Metro-North Railroad, MTA Long Island Rail Road, and MTA Bridges and Tunnels are preparing for the arrival of a winter storm this weekend that has the potential to blanket the metropolitan area with anywhere from two to ten inches of snow. Customers are urged to use caution while walking on outdoor platforms and stairs.

The MTA follows well-established plans to keep the region's transit services up and running during harsh winter weather conditions. From forecast to clean-up, North America's largest mass transit provider keeps a close eye on winter weather patterns and responds accordingly with an army of dedicated workers and a fleet of machinery, much of it specially built for snow-fighting duty.

#### Subways

The Incident Command Center will be activated Saturday morning. Personnel will be stationed to communicate with outlying local storm fighting centers, coordinating the overall snow-fighting effort.

All scheduled weekend work has been canceled with the following exceptions:

**5**

Trains will bypass Pelham Parkway station in both directions due to asbestos abatement work. Free shuttle buses operate between Pelham Parkway and Morris Park stations.

**6**

Trains skip Middletown Road and Castle Hill Avenue in both directions due to station renewal work.

**D**

From 12:01 a.m. Saturday, December 14 to 5 a.m. Monday, December 16, trains operate in two sections between Stillwell Avenue and Bedford Park Boulevard, and between Bedford Park Blvd and 205th Street due to track maintenance north of Bedford Park Boulevard.

**G**

From 11:45 p.m. Friday, December 13 to 5 a.m. Monday, December 16, trains are suspended between Court Square and Nassau Avenue due to Sandy Recovery Work in the Greenpoint Tube. Free shuttle buses operate in two sections between Nassau Avenue and Court Square on the **G** Line, and between Lorimer Street **L** and Court Square **G** stations.

**N R** (Montague Tubes Closed)

No trains running between Court Street in Brooklyn and Whitehall Street in Manhattan. Late night **N** and weekend **R** service are rerouted over the Manhattan Bridge.

- No **N** or **R** trains in either direction at Jay Street-MetroTech, Court Street, Whitehall Street, Rector Street, Cortlandt Street and City Hall.
- Late night **R** shuttle in Brooklyn is unaffected.

The Department of Subways has a yellow-hued fleet of snow and ice-busting equipment designed to keep outdoor tracks, switches and third rails clear of snow and ice. Super-powered snow throwers, jet-powered snow-blowers, and de-icing cars – retired subway cars modified with tanks and other specialized equipment to spray de-icing fluid on the third rail – are ready for immediate deployment this weekend. Based on the current forecast, workers will be held after their shifts and additional personnel will be brought in prior to the beginning of a storm.

While the underground portions of the system remain unaffected during snowstorms, there are nearly 220 miles of outdoor track throughout the boroughs. The Rockaway, Sea Beach, Brighton and Dyre Av Lines are particularly vulnerable to snow and freezing precipitation. During a heavy snowstorm, tracks on outdoor subway lines must be cleared often, the third rails kept free of ice and outdoor steps at all 468 subway stations shoveled and salted. Elevated lines do not have the problem of snow build up as the flakes fall between the ties, but platforms and staircases still must be kept

clear of snow and salted to melt ice. To prevent subway trains from being blocked in yards, they will be moved and stored underground in anticipation of heavy snow or ice. This will impact service on lines with express service.

## Buses

The situation room will be activated tomorrow and standard buses will replace 230 articulated buses. The rest of the articulated fleet will be equipped with tire chains, as will 530 standard buses.

To make traveling easier for bus customers, the Department of Buses has its own fleet of snow fighting equipment, particularly the salt-spreading trucks equipped with plows assigned to each depot. They work in cooperation with the Department of Sanitation to keep bus routes clear and passable. In cases of severe weather and impassable roads, bus service will be suspended rather than risk having buses get stuck on the roads.

## Metro-North Railroad & Long Island Rail Road

Both MTA railroads intend to operate on normal weekend schedules, but customers are advised to monitor [mta.info](http://mta.info), sign up for email and text alerts at [mymtaalerts.com](http://mymtaalerts.com), and check media reports before traveling in case there are any service disruptions.

Station platforms will be pre-salted to prevent ice and snow buildup, which will help the crews working during the storm to keep platforms clear of snow and ice.

Both railroads will take steps to ensure that switches – the interlocking tracks that allow rail traffic controllers to route trains from one track to another – are working throughout the storm. The railroads are activating switch heaters, lubricating the switches and treating them with anti-freeze agents. Rail Traffic Controllers will activate the switches to keep them from freezing shut. In addition, track workers will be positioned in critical locations to be able to respond if any difficulties do crop up at switches.

During the storm, fleet managers will maximize the use of newer, more snow-resistant train cars. And both railroads are positioning diesel work engines at key locations in advance of the storm, so they will be ready to assist any train that may become disabled.

## Paratransit

For our Access-A-Ride paratransit service, a dashboard storm monitoring system is in place to track immobilized vehicles and customers. NYCT has also coordinated a procedure with New York City first responders and the Office of Emergency Management for rescuing customers on immobilized vehicles or those who develop medical needs during storms. Also in place is a new paratransit-specific Storm Action Plan that includes processes for curtailing all non-medically essential service; this plan was tested earlier this year during storms in January and February.

## Bridges and Tunnels

Extra managerial staff has been activated and the Command Center will be operating two additional weather desks throughout the snow event.

- Operations Section Post: Desk will be staffed by a uniformed supervisor to handle weather related operational issues throughout the Authority and to keep a detailed record of all storm activities;
- Logistics Section Post: Desk will be staffed by a member of the Maintenance Division to track snow removal equipment, assist with storm tracking and to analyze and redeploy resources as conditions necessitate

Bridges and Tunnels has 7,070 tons of roadway deicer on hand and 89 pieces of snow fighting equipment in service and available for storm fighting operations. Staffing will be kept at a maximum level to assist with mitigation of snow & ice build-up as well as to sustain the normal operation of all of our bridges and both tunnels.

Bridges also are equipped with embedded roadway sensors for temperature and above-ground atmospheric sensors that deliver real-time information on wind velocity, wind direction, humidity and precipitation via wireless communication. These sensors record data used to determine if speed restrictions are necessary.

Lastly, to enhance our communications with customers, MTA has taken steps to insure its communications systems function well during any type of emergency. The current website design allows for the quick posting of service information and includes a special weather page that becomes the [mta.info](http://mta.info) homepage during weather-related events affecting operations. Customers are urged to monitor the [www.mta.info](http://www.mta.info) regularly as well as television and radio for service updates.

## Addendum: Subway Snow Fighting Equipment

**Snow Throwers** (10) - Precise directional snow throwing equipment. Includes a two stage impeller and side mounted rotating brushes to throw snow up to 200 feet; can remove 3,000 tons of snow an hour. This is similar to a household snow blower, just a lot bigger.

**Jet Blowers** (4) - This equipment uses a jet engine to remove accumulated snow from the roadbed and deposit it a distance from the tracks so that it cannot slide back. This piece of equipment is used primarily to keep the yards clear.

**De-Icer Cars** (7) - Equipped with scraper shoes that scrape off ice and also uses pumping equipment to dispense a stream of nontoxic, biodegradable de-icing fluid to prevent ice buildup on the third rail. If ice is permitted to build up, subway car power pickup equipment will not be able to draw electric current from the third rail and the train will stop.

**Rider Cars** (40) - Heated/Insulated work cars that can be used to carry crews and equipment to snow removal work sites. These cars are equipped with ice-scraping equipment to help keep the third rail clear. These cars are also designated Storm Emergency Train (SET) Riders, which can be used to

rescue passengers if stranded.

**Diesel Locomotives** (96) - All Diesel Locomotives are equipped with a small snow plow at both ends to assist in scraping snow and ice off the road bed and transporting the other snow removal work cars. We currently have 53 diesel locomotives also equipped with shoe beams that allow us to mount scraper shoes for third rail deicing.

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