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Press Release

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[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA Announces Immediate Improvements to Address Critical Metro-North Locations

New Signal Protection for Spuyten Duyvil Curve and New Communication Protocol at Curves and Bridges

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced that MTA Metro-North Railroad is making immediate improvements to reinforce safety at critical curves and movable bridges along the railroad's right-of-way. These improvements were directed Friday by Governor Andrew Cuomo in a letter to the MTA and by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in its Emergency Order.

"Metro-North is taking important steps to improve safety for its customers and employees, and I expect the railroad will continue searching for ways to improve its operations and fully restore its commuters' confidence," said MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast.

These improvements were made as part of an agreement reached between Metro-North and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT).

Signal crews have installed new protections at the Spuyten Duyvil curve, the site of last week's fatal derailment, which will warn train engineers of the approaching speed reduction and will automatically apply the train's emergency brakes if speed is not lowered to the 30 mph maximum in the curve. (Photos of this work are available at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mtaphotos/sets/72157638485865565>). The signal improvement at Spuyten Duyvil was done simultaneously and in coordination with work to restore track, power and signal systems there after the derailment. Those protections will be operating on all trains by Monday morning.

By Tuesday morning, all Metro-North trains will enhance communication between train engineers and conductors to ensure trains are operated at safe speeds at four other critical curves as well as at five movable bridges. Conductors will stand with engineers at each train's control cab through the critical curves to verbally confirm that speed limits are adhered to. Where the train layout prohibits the conductor from reaching the engineer in a locomotive, they will communicate by radio. They will also communicate by radio at the five movable bridges.

Metro-North engineers are developing new signal protections to automatically enforce speed restrictions at the other four critical curves by March, and at the five movable bridges by September. The four critical curves are at Yonkers on the Hudson Line, White Plains on the Harlem Line, and Port Chester and Bridgeport on the New Haven Line. All five movable bridges are on the New Haven Line.

Metro-North has also surveyed its tracks and will reduce the maximum authorized speed at 26 locations in order to eliminate all locations where the speed limit drops by more than 20 mph. Signs will be posted along the right-of-way to alert engineers of reductions in maximum authorized speed at the four curves by December 16.

In addition, Metro-North has committed to enhance its monitoring of compliance with speed restrictions. This monitoring is accomplished by reviewing the event data recorders from randomly selected trains, by sending supervisors to ride trains and observe speeds, and by operating radar gun enforcement at locations throughout the Metro-North network.

"These actions, combined with investments in the infrastructure and a heightened focus on safety with all employees, are critical to ensure the confidence and trust of all of the stakeholders in the Metro-North rail system. It is our expectation that Metro-North will continue to make safety and reliability their primary focus and demonstrate this through regular and transparent actions and communications," said ConnDOT Commissioner James Redeker.

Two-thirds of Metro-North's operating fleet is equipped with alerter devices in the engineer's position to ensure engineers remain attentive, and the remaining one-third is equipped with dead man's controls. Within the next year, all equipment without alerters will be either retrofitted to include them or replaced with new equipment that includes alerters.

At the FRA's direction, Metro-North has also committed to implementing a confidential close call reporting system, a measure which will allow employees to anonymously report safety concerns without fear of reprisal in order to identify potential problems before they can cause an accident or injury.

Additionally, Metro-North has conducted safety stand-downs for 4,500 employees in over 200 sessions at more than 80 locations. These sessions emphasized to all employees that safety is the most important factor in railroad operations and that all employees must operate and communicate effectively with safety as the ultimate goal. These safety stand-downs will be conducted every quarter in the future.