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Press Release

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[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

Metro-North Rebuilds Cos Cob Switching Complex Four Months Ahead of Schedule

Full Track Control Restored Between Port Chester and Stamford for First Time Since May 10, When a Fire Destroyed the Prior Control House

Metro-North Railroad employees have successfully rebuilt a switching control house in Cos Cob, Connecticut. The restoration, completed four months ahead of an initial, already expedited schedule, means that a nine-mile section of the New Haven Line's tracks between Port Chester, N.Y., and Stamford, Conn., is fully operational for the first time since May 10, when a fire destroyed the previous control house.

The restored control house allows train dispatchers to switch trains from one track to another by moving small segments of rail in a complex of switches. Metro-North was able to dramatically speed up the control house restoration by taking equipment that had already been built and was ready for installation at another complex that had a switch layout that was virtually identical. The equipment that was repurposed uses the most modern technology, reducing the amount of complicated wiring that had been damaged in the May 10 fire.

Rebuilding a new control house would normally take 18 months of design, fabrication, installation and testing. Initially, Metro-North had expected to expedite that by using a retired switching complex. The railroad ultimately expedited it further by repurposing the modern complex.

The final component of the restoration – shifting control from a temporary emergency wayside control house back to Metro-North's Operations Control Center in New York City – took place this past weekend, Sept. 6 & 7.

"I commend all of the employees who have been involved in the effort to work around the loss of our control house and rebuilt it using an innovative approach," said Metro-North Railroad President Joseph Giulietti. "From the employees stationed by the wayside operating switches manually, to those who worked tirelessly throughout the weekend to restore OCC control of the switches, to those who conceived of and implemented this thoughtful and expedited approach, restoring full control took a safe, coordinated team effort with the involvement of many divisions of the railroad."

Connecticut DOT Commissioner James P. Redeker said: "This is great news for New Haven Line commuters. Metro-North is to be commended on a very creative solution to a complex problem. In addition, getting the job done ahead of time gives us more operating flexibility and improves reliability on the busiest train line in the country."

As a result of the May 10 fire and the resulting loss of the ability to switch trains from one track to the next, Metro-North forces initially had to lock switches into place through a procedure known as blocking and spiking. Two tracks were locked into hosting westbound trains only and two were locked into eastbound service.

Because trains normally use three of the New Haven Line's four tracks to travel in the peak direction during rush hours, a two-track bottleneck had created the potential for congestion-related rush hour delays.

In late May, Metro-North workers installed an emergency manual panel at Cos Cob that allowed limited switching capability by a signal maintainer who had to be stationed at the site at all times and in continuous communication with the Operations Control Center. This enabled Metro-North to make three of the four tracks available in each rush hour's peak direction, easing congestion.

However, the ability to switch trains from one track to another remained limited. In the event of any operational problems that could have arisen in the area, train workers would have had manually switch trains from one track to another, a cumbersome process taking up to 20 minutes to perform.