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Press Release

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[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

Governor Cuomo Announces MTA Preparations for Possible Winter Storms





Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced that with four to eight inches of snow predicted to coat the New York region, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority is closely monitoring weather forecasts and readying its forces to keep the region's network of subways, buses, railroads, bridges, tunnels and paratransit operating in the event of significant snowfall.

New York City Transit

MTA New York City Transit has been hard at work preparing an impressive fleet of snow and ice-fighting equipment to be deployed in order to keep hundreds of miles of outdoor track and third rail clear of snow and ice and prevent bus passengers from being stranded. The 2014-2015 weather plan has been updated to include new snow-fighting equipment for the Department of Buses; new improved cold-weather and communications equipment; increased planning and collaboration with the Department of Sanitation; and more alerts and checks on service for quicker and more proactive operations planning.

New York City Subway

In the event of a snowstorm with accumulating snow, personnel stationed in the Storm Control Center—part of Subways' Rail Control Center—communicate with outlying local storm fighting centers, coordinating the overall snow-fighting effort in the field. This includes:

- Eight new R156 locomotives and 79 revenue trains with scraper shoes, which help reduce icing on the third rail; •Increased personnel and enhanced communications equipment at the Incident Command Center;
- Snow-fighting equipment that includes 10 snow-throwers; 8 deicers; 4 jet blowers; 61 locomotives; and 22 rider cars, which are heated/insulated work cars that can be used to carry crews and equipment to snow-removal work sites. The cars are equipped with ice-scraping equipment to help keep the third rail clear and can be used as rescue trains, and;
- Winterization of signal equipment, to protect nearly 220 miles of tracks that run outdoors. They include the Rockaway , Sea Beach , Brighton  and Dyre Av  lines.

New York City 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 the area of equipment, the Department of Buses now has a consistent policy for tire chaining, based upon the specific conditions or forecasts, and as part of a new initiative, articulated buses will be retrofitted with all-season tires. Overnight buses will have either all-season tires or snow chains. Other measures include:

- Snow-equipment training and increased plowing coordination with the Department of Sanitation; • 28 pieces of snow-fighting equipment to prepare and deice facilities, terminals, layovers and other commonly used points for buses;
- The Department of Buses is using tracking technology to alert managers if service falls below minimum expected levels on any route;
- Development of special "winter weather schedules" that can substitute for service curtailments on a route-by-route basis that take into account anticipated ridership and school closings and;
- Coordination with the Department of Sanitation to ensure adequate supplies of deicing products such as salt and rock salt, including building up strategic reserves that can be adjusted as needed.

Long Island Rail Road

The LIRR will operate nine extra afternoon eastbound trains from Penn Station between 1:46 p.m. and 4:06 p.m. to handle the expected holiday rush. Station waiting rooms will remain open throughout the night on Wednesday, resuming normal waiting room hours on Thursday.

To combat forecasted weather conditions, the LIRR is activating switch heaters at 5 a.m. on Wednesday to ensure that switches remain operable in case of ice accumulations. The railroad will have crews at the ready to remove snow and ice from platforms from Wednesday night into Thursday.

The LIRR's snow fighting equipment is winterized, tested and positioned strategically throughout the system to start operation as soon as snow accumulations begin. The fleet consists of nine jet snow blowers, three cold-air snow blowers and two double-ended snow broom/thrower machines.

Diesel locomotives will be positioned to stand by at key locations in the event that any train becomes disabled and needs to be towed. The railroad is ready to deploy third rail scraper shoes that have been readied and pre-positioned on designated electric trains, and the railroad has two third-rail deicer trains that will be on standby and be ready to be deployed.

Metro-North Railroad

Metro-North is operating 22 extra trains departing from Grand Central Terminal between 1 and 4 p.m. The trains are noted in current timetables and will be included in the Metro-North Train Time app.

The railroad is preparing an all-hands-on-deck event with more than 100 track workers who will be on hand starting Wednesday at 5 p.m. to perform platform clearing and shoveling out interlockings and switches from Wednesday into Thursday, and chain saw gangs who will clear any trees that could fall across the tracks. Concern about falling trees is greatest on the Harlem Line. If snow becomes heavy overnight, Metro-North will operate patrol trains to keep the tracks clear.

The railroad has dozens of snow blowers, plows, and on-rail equipment including jet-engine blowers. We also use lo-tech items like hair dryers and brooms. All switch heaters were tested last Friday and were verified to be working, and to combat snow buildup at switches, the railroad has cold-air blowers available.

Metro-North has reminded its parking contractor to keep parking lots clear.

MTA Bridges and Tunnels

MTA Bridges and Tunnels has 98 pieces of snow-fighting equipment and 9,180 tons of roadway deicer on hand. All drains on agency property and those that are just off-property and prone to flooding have been checked and cleared of debris.

Bridges and Tunnels will also monitor electronic weather sensors that deliver real-time information on roadway surface temperatures, wind velocity, wind direction, humidity and precipitation via wireless communication. This equipment helps to determine which of the roadways and ramps at the agency's seven bridges and two tunnels need deicing and whether speed restrictions are necessary

Paratransit

For our Access-A-Ride paratransit service, we have developed a dashboard storm monitoring system to track immobilized vehicles and customers. NYCT has also coordinated a procedure with OEM and City first-responders for rescuing customers on immobilized vehicles or those who develop medical needs during storms. Also in place is a paratransit-specific Storm Action Plan that includes processes for curtailing all non-medically essential service.

For More Information

The MTA partners with New York State DOT to provide current service information for all MTA agencies by telephone using 511. The 511 system provides customers with one easy-to-remember phone number to access all MTA transportation information. In addition, the MTA now has protocols in place for providing 311 with service status updates and alternative transportation options; enabling 311 and 911 to direct MTA service inquiries to the appropriate MTA communication channels; and enabling the MTA to track MTA-related 311 and 911 complaints during storms and other significant operating events.

The most up-to-date information on MTA service status is always available at www.mta.info. For immediate notice of service changes, sign up for email or text alerts at www.mymtaalerts.com. For weekend subway service changes, visit www.mta.info/weekender.