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Press Release

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[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

Metro-North Railroad Identifies Cause of Service Disruption

Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast said today that the cause of last night's two-hour service disruption on Metro-North Railroad has been traced to human error during an electrical repair project.

"Last night's failure was unacceptable, pure and simple," Prendergast said. "The project should have been analyzed for risks and redundancy before it began, and it should not have been performed when thousands of customers were trying to get home in cold weather."

The computers that run the railroad's signal system lost reliable power at 7:45 p.m. when one of two main power supply units was taken out of service for replacement. Technicians performing the work did not realize that a wire was disconnected on the other main power supply unit. This destabilized the power supply system for more than an hour until a backup supply could be connected.

"Metro-North customers deserve better, and I extend my sincere apology to all of them," Prendergast said. "I have directed Metro-North to bring in an independent consultant to examine how and why these mistakes were made, and to recommend any necessary changes to operating procedures to ensure nothing like this ever happens again."

More than 50 trains were forced to halt for safety reasons when the signal system went dark. Rail traffic controllers instructed engineers to slowly bring their trains to the closest station. Trains were not allowed to proceed through switches until signal maintainers could respond and manually ensure the switches were lined up correctly, which delayed some trains further.

All trains had light, heat and power during the disruption, and no customers were ever in danger. Customers were able to get off trains when they reached a station. Trains began moving by 9:30 p.m. and full control over the signal system was re-established by 10:30 p.m. Significant delays continued throughout the evening hours, and service returned to normal this morning.