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Press Release

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[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

Metro-North Cross-Honoring Danbury Branch Tickets on the Harlem Line

Move Aims to Help Customers During Danbury Branch Signal Work

MTA Metro-North Railroad today announced that effective immediately, customers who ride the Danbury Branch will be able to present their tickets for travel on Harlem Line trains while the railroad works to correct problems with the Danbury Branch's signal system that are causing railroad crossing gates to operate incorrectly and delayed trains.

"We recognize that recurring delays on the Danbury Branch are causing difficulties for our commuters' daily schedules," said Metro-North Railroad President Joseph J. Giulietti. "We are working with the manufacturers of the newly installed signal system, Alstom and Siemens, to resolve the underlying issues affecting the signal system. In the interim, we are going to make this change, and any other change possible, to help our customers until we can restore reliability to train schedules on the branch."

In November, the Connecticut Department of Transportation and Metro-North completed initial installation of a new signal system for the Danbury Branch, which includes a computerized train detection system in the tracks leading to railroad/roadway crossings. Train service on the branch was expanded as the result of the signal upgrade along with the related construction of several portions of parallel track, or sidings, allowing for the ability to operate more than one train along the corridor at a time.

Recently, Metro-North has identified a problem the newly installed computerized train detection system that controls the flashing lights and movable wooden arms at railroad crossings along the branch. The system is designed to be "fail-safe," meaning that when it fails, it fails in a "safe" mode, with the grade crossing arms down and lights flashing, to prevent collisions between trains and vehicles or pedestrians. As a result, Metro-North has not experienced any failures of the crossing system to activate when required.

However, the mechanism that controls the opening and closing of the crossings to motor vehicle traffic sometimes activates with no trains approaching. This is happening despite the fact that this system was comprehensively tested at each crossing prior to being activated along the right-of-way.

Until Metro-North, Alstom, Siemens, and the Connecticut Department of Transportation find a solution, Metro-North trains are operating with a "Stop-and-Warn" requirement to ensure continued safe train movements. This procedure requires all trains to come to a complete stop before entering the affected crossing and to determine if the crossing protection is activated.

When the crossing is deemed to be activated and providing protection, the train proceeds through the crossing at a restricted speed not exceeding 15 miles per hour. This procedure is the safest way for us to operate a train, safeguarding customers and vehicular traffic. But it can cause train delays.

In the event a crossing lights and arms were not to activate, the conductor would climb down from the train and activate the railroad crossing manually so the train can proceed very slowly through the crossing. The conductor then would climb back aboard and the train would proceed.

The manufacturers have been on the scene and are working in their laboratories to quickly and safely resolve the issue. Metro-North has also dispatched its own team to coordinate the effort with the designer of the signal system, Alstom, and the manufacturer of the computerized train detection device, Siemens, and to help expedite this fix.

Metro-North will keep customers and the media updated about our progress in resolving this issue as quickly and effectively as possible. The railroad recognizes the inconvenience that customers are experiencing and apologizes for the difficulties.