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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Announces New Initiatives To Ensure Passenger and Worker Safety

All MTA Agencies Emphasize Importance of Safety Culture

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced a series of initiatives to improve safety throughout its operations by strengthening reporting responsibilities, emphasizing management oversight and installing automatic speed protections.

Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast announced he is creating the position of Chief Safety Officer, a new senior management post reporting directly to the Chairman and CEO, to ensure safety is a top priority throughout all MTA operations. The MTA will also create a new Safety Committee on its board to provide focused oversight of safety issues.

In addition, each MTA agency will ensure its top safety official reports directly to the agency's president, to reinforce that safety is a prime concern for every agency's management. At Metro-North Railroad, where safety and security now report to the same position, the responsibilities will be separated and a new position of Chief Safety Officer will be created.

"The safety of our customers and employees is unquestionably the top priority for the MTA, and these steps will make sure this emphasis on safety is built into the operations of every MTA agency," Prendergast said. "The events of the last year have made clear to everyone in the MTA how important it is to create a culture where all employees act to eliminate risks, and changing our executive structure will ensure safety remains a dedicated agency value."

Agency presidents discussed their safety programs at today's meetings of MTA Board committees, detailing how they monitor the condition of crews and equipment, search for potential problems and fix those that they discover. Key among the presidents' efforts is emphasizing and improving the safety culture within their agencies, so all operations have safety as their primary objective.

All MTA agencies have re-examined their safety-related operations over the last year. Prendergast, who has spent 10 years of his career in safety positions, convened a Blue Ribbon Panel of outside experts to study MTA safety practices in September.

In addition, Metro-North Railroad and the Long Island Rail Road announced they have installed automatic speed controls at 10 critical curves and one moveable bridge since the Dec. 1, 2013 Metro-North derailment at a curve in Spuyten Duyvil. These controls work with existing signal systems installed in every train cab to enforce speed limits at those locations.

"The MTA has a long tradition of safe and reliable operations, which is why our customers and our employees are rightly upset with the failures we've seen in the last year," Prendergast said. "We are making these and many other improvements so our customers and employees can be confident on the MTA network. Safety is a mindset, not a checklist, and these improvements are important actions to ensure the MTA earns the trust of our customers and employees again."