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Press Release

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[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA Prepares for Weekend Winter Storm

With a wintry blast that may dump as much as 7 inches of snow in parts of the metropolitan region, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority is hard at work to ensure safe, reliable service this weekend. MTA New York City Transit, Metro-North Railroad, Long Island Rail Road, and MTA Bridges and Tunnels are once again preparing. Personnel will be ready to drop salt and clear platforms and stairs of snow but customers are urged to use extreme caution while navigating the system.

MTA personnel will continue to monitor the U.S. National Weather Service and have direct access to a customized weather prediction service that provides regularly updated weather forecasts. Accurate forewarning of a snow event translates into adequate preparation times, allowing officials to decide whether to hold workers after their shifts and bring others in prior to the beginning of a storm.

NYC Subways and Buses

Some weekend work has been canceled but weekend work on the [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [ACEF](#) lines will take place as scheduled. Super-powered snow throwers, jet-powered snow-blowers, and de-icing cars - retired subway cars modified with tanks and other specialized equipment to spray de-icing fluid on the third rail, will be deployed starting tonight. Select trains will also be equipped with scrapper shoes to keep ice off the third rails. This year's 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.

"We never know what each winter will bring, so New York City Transit has to be prepared for anything," said NYCT President Carmen Bianco. "This year we have invested in more equipment such as new all-season tires to make our bus fleet safer and better prepared to handle snow and icy roads, and improved technology that tracks our buses and lets us tailor service route by route rather than make blanket service changes."

"We have expanded the testing and evaluation of all-season tires on our buses," said Darryl Irick, Senior Vice President of Buses for New York City Transit and President of the MTA Bus Company. "We are looking for the ability to maintain traction in slick and snowy conditions without installing and removing chains, which took a lot of time with the huge number of significant storms last season. We also closely monitor our bus service and adjust it according to the conditions around the city."

The Department of Buses also is working closely with the Department of Sanitation on the maintenance and operation of snow removal equipment. Predetermined routes have been mapped for 28 pieces of snow-fighting equipment to quickly reach highly trafficked locations for buses such as terminals, lay-over spots and facilities. Tire chains will still be installed on buses as needed.

Bus managers now have new technology that tracks service when it falls below minimum expected levels on any route, allowing them to make decisions more quickly. Department of Buses also prepares special "winter weather schedules" that can substitute for service curtailments on a route-by-route basis.

Metro-North Railroad & Long Island Rail Road Platforms and stairways will continue to be cleared and salted. LIRR station waiting rooms will remain open around-the-clock now through Monday afternoon, January 26, to provide shelter for customers waiting for trains during cold and inclement weather.

Extra engineers and signal maintainers are being called in. Both railroads will take steps to ensure that switches – the interlocking tracks that allow rail traffic controllers to route trains from one track to another – are working throughout the storm. The railroads are activating switch heaters, lubricating the switches and treating them with anti-freeze agents. Rail Traffic Controllers will activate the switches to keep them from freezing shut. In addition, track workers will be positioned in critical locations to be able to respond if any difficulties do crop up at switches.

Snow-fighting equipment will be positioned strategically throughout the systems to start when snow accumulation begins. Use [Metro-North Train Time App](#) and [LIRR Train Time App](#) for real-time train information on your Smartphone.

In the region served by Metro-North, where the storm is predicted to be more severe than elsewhere in the MTA region, a primary concern is the safety of station platforms. All stations will be pretreated with salt. Metro-North will continue to clear snow and ice throughout the weekend.

Trains will be protected by pretreating with deicer all door tracks and third rail contact shoes. To prevent ice build-up on the pantographs on top of New Haven Line trains, they will be raised and lowered throughout the storm. All couplers between cars will be covered with snow bags to prevent icing. At Pelham, where New Haven Line trains change from overhead power to third rail power, mechanics will be stationed beginning at 5 a.m. to assist any train that experiences changeover issues.

Extra train crews and protect engines will be stationed at major junctions to assist in case any train breaks down. And extra signal maintainers, power and track department personnel will be station at critical interlockings.

Paratransit

Due to the prediction of potential snowfall starting Saturday, Paratransit customers may experience additional travel and wait times. Depending on conditions, customers may want to reconsider travel, unless medically necessary. For our Access-A-Ride paratransit service, a dashboard storm monitoring system is in place to track immobilized vehicles and customers. NYCT has also coordinated a procedure with New York City first responders and the Office of Emergency Management for rescuing customers on immobilized vehicles or those who develop medical needs during storms. Also in place is a new paratransit-specific Storm Action Plan that includes processes for curtailing all non-medically essential service.

Bridges and Tunnels

MTA Bridges and Tunnels is ready to battle winter weather with 97 conveyors, pay loaders, front loaders and pick-up trucks with plows to battle the snow, along with nearly 9,000 tons of anti-corrosive deicer.

The equipment includes 44 vehicles equipped with ground temperature sensors that lets the operator and bridge managers know if the roadway is in danger of freezing. All MTA bridges also are equipped with imbedded roadway sensors and above-ground atmospheric sensors that deliver real-time information on temperature, wind velocity, wind direction, humidity and precipitation via wireless communication, and are used to determine if speed restrictions are necessary. During light snowfall of less than 3 inches, motorists will be asked to operate at reduced speeds. Under heavier snow conditions where accumulations of snow or a combination of mixed snow and ice are above 3 inches, some roadway lanes or ramp closures may occur while snow removal and deicing operations are performed. Motorists will be asked to operate at reduced speeds. We strongly urge customers to check www.mta.info for updates, including modified emergency schedules and to sign up for email and text message alerts. For weekend subway service changes, visit www.mta.info/weekender.