MTA Press Releases

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Metro-North IMMEDIATE

Metro-North Announces Results of Track Work Initiative

In Two and a Half Years, Nearly 100,000 Ties Replaced

MTA Metro-North Railroad today announced the latest results of an extraordinary systemwide track reconstruction effort that has rebuilt miles of the railroad in the last two and a half years, delivering smoother, safer and more reliable service to customers.

Since May 2013, Metro-North workers have replaced 97,961 ties, laid 16.5 miles of continuous welded rails, rebuilt 88 switches, renewed and/or upgraded 32 railroad crossings, and performed 2,905 welds on joints that connect stretches of track with one another.

“The reconstruction work has significantly enhanced the state of our infrastructure,” said Joseph Giulietti, President of Metro-North Railroad. “Our rails are safer today as a result of this concerted increase in track renewal work. This is a team effort that requires the coordination of dispatch operations and the dedication of our employees to be able to accomplish.”

In addition to visual track inspections, which are conducted twice a week by inspectors who are positioned within the track being inspected, Metro-North’s track reconstruction and renewal efforts have been guided by an industry-leading spectrum of detailed track inspections. Information about the range of high-tech inspections follows.

Track Geometry

To measure a variety of geometric parameters of its track, including the position, curvature, alignment, smoothness, and the cross level of the two running rails, Metro-North employs track geometry cars operated by the Federal Railroad Administration and Mermec. The cars use a variety of sensors, measuring systems, and data management systems to create a profile of the track being inspected.

Internal Metal Defects and Fatigue

To detect flaws, defects and metal fatigue inside the steel running rails that trains roll over, Metro-North employs the Sperry Rail Service, which operates a specialized car over rails and measures them with ultrasonic and induction test equipment.

Mismatched Joint Bars

To identify any instances where the end of a rail does not match up precisely with the beginning of the following rail, Metro-North has employed the Georgetown Rail Equipment Company’s Aurora System, which makes rail measurements of joint bars that are accurate to within two hundredths of an inch.

Track Loading

Metro-North uses a track loading vehicle to give rails a stress test, applying forces close to the strength limits of the rails, track ties, rail fasteners, and stone ballast.

Subsurface Flaws

Metro-North uses ground-penetrating radar to accurately show potential problem areas in the structural layers below the track’s surface.

If and when any of these inspections and tests identify defects along the rails, crews assess the magnitude of defect and make immediate repairs or, for minor defects, institute speed restrictions over selected segments of track until the repairs are made.