



MTA Press Releases

Press Release

January 4, 2017

LIRR

IMMEDIATE

LIRR Incident and Service Status Update

Earlier today, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and MTA Chairman Thomas F. Prendergast provided media with an update on this morning's LIRR derailment at Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn.

At approximately 8:15 a.m., LIRR Train No. 2817, scheduled to depart from Far Rockaway at 7:18 a.m. and due into Atlantic Terminal, Brooklyn, at 8:11 a.m., made contact with the bumping block at Track 6 at Atlantic Terminal. The train was six cars long and carrying approximately 430 passengers. As a result of the impact, the lead wheel assembly derailed as did one additional axle. There were a number of customers injured; none of the injuries were life-threatening.

The cause of the incident is under investigation. The MTA has been in contact with the Federal Railroad Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board is en route.

Atlantic Terminal has six tracks and three platforms. There have been no delays this morning as result of the incident, and no delays are expected during p.m. rush hour service.

Below is a rush transcript of a press conference held this morning at the site by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and MTA Chairman Thomas F. Prendergast.

Audio is available [here](#).

A rush transcript is available below:

Chairman Prendergast: A rundown of the facts as we know them. We had a far Rockaway train entering the Brooklyn terminal, Atlantic terminal this morning. As the train approached the bumping block, went up and over the bumping block, the lead truck was derailed, and one other axel was derailed. We had a number of people injured on the train. They're all being transported to hospitals or released. The facts of the matter as we have them right now. The incident is it is still under investigation, as we always say. We need to make sure we determine what happened, and why it happened, so the matter is still under investigation.

Governor Cuomo: As you heard from the chairman, from the appearance of the accident. The train came in and hit the so called bumping block, the block at the far end, and went by it for a few feet. First concern is the people who were on the train. There were a number of minor injuries. We believe the worst injury at this time that we've heard of is a possible broken leg. So that one we are monitoring at this time in terms of injuries. A broken leg is not good, but we been through situations where we've had worse. We'll keep an eye on that. What happened with the operator? We don't know and obviously there will be an investigation to find out exactly what happened and why the operator didn't stop the train before it hit the bumping block. But that's where we are at this time. The response to the accident was fantastic and I want to thank all the first responders. The MTA, the NYPD, the Fire Department -- they really did a great job of getting on site. Most of the injuries were people who just walked and left the train. That's why the number of people who are injured is hard to pinpoint because most of the people just walked off the train they were minor injuries. Basically what happened is they were standing getting ready to get off the train, the train has a sudden stop, they're not prepared for a sudden stop. They get knocked around, banged around, they hurt an arm they hurt a leg et cetera and that's what we're referring to as a minor injury and that's why that number is hard to pinpoint. The most significant injury is a possible broken leg -- that's a woman who is being transported to the hospital and we'll see how that goes during the course of the day.

Reporter: Any indication of the speed of the train?

Chairman Prendergast: It's too early to tell. Obviously the train is supposed to stop short of the bumping block. It did not do that. So that's one of the things we'll look at. It's one of the factors that we will look at in the investigation.

Reporter: Is there any damage done to the station?

Chairman Prendergast: There's some damage done to some partition panels. The bumping block, obviously. Things of that nature. We should be OK for the afternoon rush hour. We expect to have normal service out of here, because we have five tracks. And we do not anticipate any delays for this afternoon's rush hour.

Reporter: Tom, as a general matter... the Hoboken incident a few weeks ago, is there anything infrastructure wise that's contributing to the increase in derailments? Or is this something that just happens occasionally?

Chairman Prendergast: It's too early to tell. And we really need to let the investigation lead us to where we need to be. But obviously the train's supposed to stop short of the bumping block.

Reporter: Has anyone been able to interview the train operator?

Chairman Prendergast: They're being held and they will be interviewed as part of the --- the locomotive engineer, the conductor and the brakeman will all be interviewed.

Governor Cuomo: In terms of the infrastructure, as the Chairman said, it's fairly simple. The track ends in the terminal. There's a bumping block at the end of the terminal. The train has to stop before it hits the bumping block. And the bumping block is just there as a precaution. Hoboken was a much worse situation. I was in Hoboken. And obviously it was worse, not just in terms injuries, we had a loss of life in Hoboken. But there was extensive damage in Hoboken and that train was coming in much faster, did much more damage, hurt many more people. This is minor compared to what happened in Hoboken. But the same question-why did the operator not stop the train before it hit the block?

Reporter: Are there any safeguards on the train to keep it from hitting the bumping block, or do you rely on the operator to hit the brakes before you get there?

Chairman Prendergast: Once you're at that point and you're at that speed it's primarily the locomotive engineer's responsibility to control the train. There's a signal system that controls it coming in at limited speeds. But when you're getting to the end it's the locomotive engineer's responsibility. And the train's brakes have to work. All those things have to be looked at in the investigation.

Reporter: Is the NTSB investigating this? Is the NTSB going to be investigating this accident?

Chairman Prendergast: We haven't heard from them yet, but the FRA administration was notified.

Reporter: What speed was the train supposed to be going before it hits that block?

Tom Prendergast: I don't know the exact speed. But there's a book of rules speed. Probably less than 15 or 10 miles an hour. ... These are standard rules that railroads live by.

Reporter: Cameras? Inward facing cameras?

Tom Prendergast: We're installing them, but I don't know if the entire fleet has them. I don't know if this car had them.

Reporter: When did the train leave?

Tom Prendergast: I don't know the interval because the Far Rockaway train comes in from Far Rockaway and into Atlantic Yards.

Reporter: How many cars derailed?

Tom Prendergast: One truck and one axle. That is all that derailed.

Governor Cuomo: Derailment is actually somewhat of a misnomer here. It's not that it derailed. The train hit the bumping block and when it hit the bumping block, the bumping block basically knocked it off the tracks, so it wasn't a derailment. It was a train that didn't stop when it was supposed to, hit the bumping block at a fairly low rate of speed. The Chairman is obviously correct - we don't know what the rate of speed is, but it was a fairly low rate of speed. It hit the block, and it was actually the bottom assembly, the truck assembly came off when it hit the block, so it wasn't really a derailment. There are accidents that happen, right? This is a very large system, you are operating literally hundreds and hundreds of trains every morning with thousands and thousands of people. Accidents happen. We have been through a number of them over the past few years. Many of them frankly, we were not this lucky. This is a relatively minor accident, luckily. And we'll check on the woman who we think may have had a broken leg on her, we wish her the best and we will check on her later. But as all things considered, this is a relatively minor accident and as the Chairman said, service will be up and running this afternoon, which is a good thing. And again, I can't tell you how extraordinary the first responders are. And the MTA police, the MTA responders, the New York Police Department, the FDNY, they really did a magnificent job. And all New Yorkers owe them a debt of gratitude. Thank you very much.