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Press Release

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LIRR

IMMEDIATE

### LIRR Care: New Program to Better Serve Customers Who Need an Extra Helping Hand

#### ***718-LIRR-CARE Assistance Hotline Now Available 24/7 Throughout the LIRR System; Ambassador Program Expanded at Major LIRR Terminals For Real-Time Help***

MTA Long Island Rail Road President Phillip Eng announced the launch of a new service -- LIRR Care -- that will serve as a customer assistance program for people with mobility issues who need assistance accessing or navigating the railroad system.

This on-call service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays, to help customers with mobility limitations who require assistance to board and/or exit from a LIRR train. This service is available to, but not limited to, seniors, and people with disabilities, including those who use wheeled devices.

LIRR Care is an expansion of our previous Call Ahead program, where customers were asked to call three hours in advance of their rides between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.

Now, the extended, round-the-clock hours are available by using our new, easy-to-remember phone number -- 718-LIRR-CARE (718-547-7227) -- for access to trains throughout the LIRR system. Calls to this number will be answered by the railroad's Customer Service Center, where employees will help coordinate assistance with appropriate personnel aboard trains, or at stations. We ask that customers using 718-LIRR-CARE (718-547-7227) call at least two hours in advance of their trip.

Adding to this service, from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. each day, LIRR Customer Service Ambassadors will be stationed at LIRR's main terminals -- at our Customer Service Desk at Penn Station in Manhattan, and our Ticket Offices at Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn, and Jamaica Station in Queens -- where customers can request assistance in person, just *15 minutes prior* to a train departure.

These Ambassadors -- who are identifiable by the orange vests they wear -- will assist with station-to-station coordination with our train crews. They will escort the passenger to an elevator, if necessary, and to the track level, where they will be met by a conductor on the train who will assist with a bridge plate, to help them onto the train. At the passenger's destination, the train's conductor will again assist with a bridge plate to ensure they disembark safely.

As part of LIRR Forward, President Eng's working philosophy to improve the commuting experience by hardening LIRR infrastructure and revamping customer communication, this enhanced program was developed by a team of railroad employees across several departments, which consulted LIRR customers in the disability community.

"My focus each and every day is to find ways to improve our customer service. We take customer feedback seriously, and I'm proud to deliver this service to help customers have a more seamless trip," LIRR President Phillip Eng said. "I'd like to thank the hardworking staff of the Long Island Rail Road who coordinated together to deliver this quickly and efficiently. We look forward to hearing from all our passengers on ways we can continue to improve their experience with us."

#### **To use LIRR Care:**

- Dial **718-LIRR-CARE** (718-547-7227); press **option 2** for immediate assistance.
- If leaving from a non-terminal station, please make sure to call in advance, at least 2 hours prior to the scheduled departure time of your train.
- If traveling from Penn Station, Jamaica, or Atlantic Terminal, real-time assistance is available at all three locations daily from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Please contact an Ambassador at least 15 minutes prior to your train's departure.
  - **At Penn Station:** Visit the Customer Service Office located near the main gate area next to the Penn Station Ticket Office. A Customer Service Ambassador will be there to assist you.
  - **At Jamaica Station:** Please request assistance at the Ticket Office or from an LIRR Customer Service Ambassador, typically found on street level or on the mezzanine level of the station.
  - **At Atlantic Terminal:** Please request assistance at the Ticket Office or from an LIRR Customer Service Ambassador, typically found inside the station near the Big Board by track entrances.

#### **Know Before You Go:**

- The LIRR has 108 accessible stations throughout our system. In order to confirm if the station you are traveling to/from is accessible, please visit the

LIRR station accessibility page here: <http://web.mta.info/accessibility/stations.htm#lirr>.

- For LIRR escalator/elevator status, please visit: <http://lirr42.mta.info/elevatorStatus.php>.
- Reduced senior/disabled fares are available and can be purchased at LIRR station ticket windows, ticket machines or by using the MTA eTix app. Reduced-Fare tickets are valid at all times except during certain morning peak periods (LIRR trains scheduled to arrive at New York City terminals between 6:00 AM and 10:00 AM). To look up fares, visit: <http://lirr42.mta.info/>.
- Waiting for a train: Customers using a wheelchair should remain at least five feet from the platform's edge when waiting for a train, and position their wheelchair with the brakes locked and wheels parallel to the track. It is best to wait in the middle of the platform because cars at either end of the train may be closed during certain times or may not line up with platforms at certain stations. Many LIRR station platforms have a two-foot-wide yellow tactile edge-warning strips. Stay behind these strips until it is time to board the train.
- LIRR Care is available to those who do not use a wheeled mobility device but may need assistance to board and exit the train via bridge plate.
- Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) are eligible to ride commuter railroads free when accompanying a passenger with a disability. Where required, the PCA must carry identification that shows that he or she is employed by an agency that provides services to people with disabilities.
- Customers with disabilities are permitted to bring a service animal into all MTA transit facilities. The animal must be securely leashed for the safety of all customers.
- If traveling on Metro-North Railroad, customers can call 511 from New York, or 877-690-5114 from Connecticut, to request assistance from their boarding station. Customers can also ask for assistance from the conductor on board the train for Grand Central Terminal.