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Press Release

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NYC Transit

IMMEDIATE

### MTA Announces Comprehensive New Measures to Prevent Falling Debris, Completion of Systemwide Inspection Blitz of Containment Baskets

***New Track Chief With Two Plus Decades of Experience In Track Safety Tapped to Lead Ongoing Efforts; NYCT Officials Deploy New Technology, Further Improve Inspection Protocols***

Editors: [Photos of event are available here.](#)

MTA New York City Transit announced today a series of new measures that the organization is undertaking to prevent and address challenges associated with falling debris in the subway system. The announcement comes in the same week that inspectors completed a systemwide inspection of approximately 325,000 containment baskets throughout the system. New York City Transit officials also announced that Terri Rumph, a highly regarded NYCT executive, has been tasked with leading the organization's Division of Track. In this role, she will be responsible for maintenance and construction activity across all 800 miles of NYC Transit tracks, including ongoing efforts to improve the track inspection process.

"We began the week immersed in a massive, systemwide inspections blitz, carefully examining hundreds of thousands of containment baskets on track all throughout the system," said **New York City Transit President Andy Byford**. "We end the week having launched tangible new protocols that will continue to ensure we are doing everything we can to keep our millions of customers safe. Make no mistake: we will not rest until we've exhausted every possible innovative solution we can to address this challenge. Safety is always our foremost concern and we will never relent when it comes to that mission."

"Today marks the end of a comprehensive series of inspections, but our work to reduce falling debris continues in earnest," said **Sally Librera, Senior Vice President for Subways, New York City Transit**. "We're also deploying existing technologies like video from our track geometry car in new ways so that we can identify potentially vulnerable parts of the system. And we have appointed a very talented and experienced Chief of Track. Terri Rumph is an expert leader and I have full confidence she will leverage her decades of experience in infrastructure and track to identify innovative approaches for keeping elevated tracks safe."

The news came during an event held at the Tiffany Street Iron Shop in the Bronx where Transit officials demonstrated some of the new techniques and hardware components that Transit has begun to deploy as part of ongoing efforts to combat the problem of falling debris, including a new prototype retainer basket. Work to address this challenge began last winter and the deployment of protective netting was already underway prior to the unprecedented inspection blitz of the last week. NYCT leadership continues to examine new and innovative ways to keep elevated tracks safe.

Moving forward, New York City Transit will apply an even greater level of rigor to its inspection process by requiring that any condition on the elevated structure that could lead to falling material be given highest priority for resolution. This change has been codified in the official maintenance standards that inspectors and other subways employees use when inspecting and maintaining track. New York City Transit will also continue to look for engineering solutions that keep hardware in place, as well as ensure secondary protective measures are comprehensive and effective. Track supervisors are already leveraging Enterprise Asset Management tools for doing this work, logging findings directly into handheld devices and cutting down on paperwork in the process.

"I recognize the urgency of this work and of the need to improve the way we tackle these challenges moving forward. It's an incredible honor to be tapped for this role and I am eager to get started," said Terri Rumph, newly appointed Chief Track Officer. "We're changing the way we prioritize which defects get immediate repairs so that we can address issues on the elevated structure as fast as possible. We have an outstanding team of dedicated track inspectors in place who adhere by a rigorous set of standards when checking vast sections of track each day for potential defects. Even so, there is always more we can be doing and I am prepared to lead when it comes to identifying how we can improve our work further."

#### MORE ABOUT FALLING DEBRIS

The track system on elevated structures includes many components, including the rails, plates and fasteners that connect the rails to wooden ties, bridge clips that connect ties to the structure, and joint bars and bolts that connect rails to each other. Over time, these components can deteriorate and require replacement, but the pace of that deterioration can vary. Sometimes, loose components can become a fall hazard. Safety equipment like track baskets and retainers installed to catch loose components can also deteriorate over time. After carefully reviewing the design of various track bolts, NYCT officials selected a new a new style of bolt that includes a hard lock nut that will prevent unintended loosening over time from vibrations to the structure. Teams also reviewed the design of the retainer that was intended to prevent loose clips from falling to the ground and developed a new basket-style design that is larger, provides greater coverage, and is easier to install from above the structure (rather than using trucks to install from below, which is disruptive to local communities).

#### MORE ABOUT CHIEF TERRI RUMPH

Terri has over 30 years in the Operations and Construction Management fields. She earned a degree in Industrial Engineering and worked for Florida Power and Light as a construction engineer before starting her career at Transit in 1994 as a Superintendent Intern in the Division of Track. She was appointed a Superintendent in 1997 and has steadily advanced within the Subways Department. Terri has served as a General Superintendent in both Divisions of Track and Infrastructure and an Assistant Chief in the Division of Infrastructure. Her positions in these Divisions found her overseeing projects for both maintenance and new construction of the railway tracks, switches, stations, stairs, heating and air conditioning units, employee facilities, tunnel and station lighting, and many other components of the Transit system. Prior to her new role leading the track Department, Rumph served as New York City Transit's Chief Infrastructure Officer.