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Press Release

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[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA Bridges and Tunnels to Install Safety Fencing on Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge

Prototype Now Being Installed for Evaluation on Upper and Lower Levels of Longest Suspension Bridge in North America;

B&T Expects to Award Design-Build Contract Next Year to Install 28,000 Linear Feet of Fence to Improve Safety

MTA Bridges and Tunnels announced today that it is moving forward with the installation of a prototype safety fence on the upper and lower levels of the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge – the longest suspension bridge in North America. Completion of the installation of the stainless-steel prototype fencing, including two 50-foot sections on the westbound side of the bridge adjacent to the Staten Island anchorage, is expected by Dec. 31. After testing and evaluation, the agency anticipates extending the fencing from the Staten Island Anchorage to the Brooklyn Anchorage on both levels in both the east and westbound directions. The installation of this fencing which will span 28,000 linear feet, will improve overall safety on and around the structure.

The fencing is a result of a comprehensive, expedited safety study conducted under the direction of Acting President of MTA Bridges and Tunnels Daniel DeCrescenzo. The safety study included suggestions by public health experts on suicide phone locations and new updated language for posted signs on MTA's Bridges. The update signage displays the NYC Well program's crisis hotline phone numbers and follows the most current recommendations regarding mental health and suicide prevention language and measures.

MTA Bridges and Tunnels (MTA B&T) is also providing training to its workforce to help them respond appropriately should they encounter someone who gives behavioral cues that they may be emotionally disturbed and potentially suicidal.

"Safety is an essential priority at MTA Bridges and Tunnels and the installation of a safety fence on the Verrazzano will augment the current plan we have in place. This comprehensive safety plan includes monitoring roadways via CCTV and patrol and equipping our facilities with hotline phones that connect to the NYC Well 24/7 crisis intervention center," said Daniel DeCrescenzo, Acting President of MTA Bridges and Tunnels. "We have been taking a fresh look at this issue from multiple standpoints. We are examining what can be done from engineering, education, and enforcement perspectives. The fence is the engineering part of that approach. We are also partnering with experts in the field and the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene for a reassessment of the phone technology, messaging, and signage on all of our bridges."

There are unique and complex challenges involved in retrofitting a major suspension bridge that wasn't originally designed with fencing. As part of MTA B&T's analysis to determine the feasibility and constructability of installing a complete safety fence along the entire span of the bridge, a contractor has already begun installing the prototype on certain sections. Once evaluation and testing of the prototype is complete, MTA B&T expects to issue a request for proposals for full design and construction of more than 28,000 linear feet of a high strength stainless steel mesh capable of withstanding the exposure to high winds, the marine environment, and the elements. MTA B&T is anticipating awarding a design/build contract by the end of 2020 in a competitive process, with the implementation schedule as part of the selection criteria.

MTA B&T will also closely coordinate the roll-out of the project with its regional emergency response partner agencies (NY State Police, NYPD, FDNY, and others) for the evaluation of the prototype.

When it opened in 1964, the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge was the longest suspension span in the world, linking historic Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn and Fort Wadsworth in Staten Island. Today, it remains the longest suspension span in the United States and handles close to 70 million vehicles annually.



Installation of fencing on the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge



Prototype fencing installed on the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge.