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Press Release

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[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA Railroads Launch New Safety Campaigns During Rail Safety Week

Metro-North Releases New Metro-Man Safety Videos

Long Island Rail Road Reintroduces Dashing Dan and Dottie

MTA Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad will launch new safety campaigns to coincide with National Rail Safety Week, taking place Monday, Sept. 21 through Sunday, Sept. 27. Long Island Rail Road has brought back nostalgic characters, Dashing Dan and Dottie, now donning masks. LIRR safety ambassadors will conduct community outreach at various stations around the system to educate customers about rail safety. Metro-North will release a new round of safety videos featuring their robotic superhero, Metro-Man. The agency has also put out the call for entries for their annual student safety poster contest.

“In 2020, rail safety has always been a top priority and now it has taken on new meaning that goes beyond track and grade crossing awareness,” said **Long Island Rail Road President Phil Eng**. “National Rail Safety Week is a good opportunity for our staff to further educate riders about safe practices during a pandemic as well as other invaluable measures that we can all take when traveling.”

“Safety continues to be top priority for our customers and employees,” said **Metro-North President Cathy Rinaldi**. “I am proud of our Safety Department and their partnership with MTAPD and national transportation agencies to eliminate incidents and keep riders safe during these challenging times.”

The goal of National Rail Safety Week is to raise awareness of the need for rail safety education and empower the general public to keep themselves safe near highway-rail grade crossings and railroad rights-of-way. Participation in the national week-long education campaign is part of MTA Railroads’ TRACKS program (Together Railroads And Communities Keeping Safe), a joint venture between the safety departments of the Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad to reach out to schools, camps, day care and community groups.

The MTA Police Department assigns two full-time police officers to the LIRR TRACKS program. The officers are responsible for performing safety presentations at schools, professional driving courses, and drivers education classes for teens and adults. The MTAPD support LIRR and Metro-North at community events and encourage positive relationships between police officers and the community.

This year, due to Covid, many Rail Safety Week activities, in states across the U.S., will have an emphasis on social media and virtual safety messaging. LIRR and Metro-North will also use the opportunity to focus on ways to stay safe during the pandemic such as wearing face coverings and following proper social distancing.

Metro-North’s Metro-Man reminds customers how to travel safely on the railroad via a series of new videos that will be released via Metro-North’s social media channels during Rail Safety Week. The popular mascot will be handing out masks at Grand Central Terminal on Wednesday, Sept. 23 from 12 – 1 p.m. In recent weeks, he has distributed PPE at stations in New York and Connecticut.

Metro-North employees, along with Metro-Man, will be participating in #REDOUT For Rail Safety on Friday, Sept. 25 by encouraging employees to wear a red shirt to support rail safety. Metro-Man, in his #REDOUT shirt will be making an appearance at a grade crossing along Metro-North territory.

LIRR has reintroduced their 1960’s-era Dashing Dan and Dottie logos with a new twist, face coverings. The iconic cartoon characters are being promoted via social media and will be featured on special pins. Dashing Dan, also known as the “Dashing Commuter,” became the official logo of the Long Island Rail Road in 1959. His decaded

image appeared on all passenger cars and locomotives, as well as souvenirs. His companion, Dottie, was introduced in 1963.

LIRR safety ambassadors will engage customers and provide educational materials throughout the week at the following locations:

- Sept. 21 from 6:30 – 9:30 a.m. at Babylon Station
- Sept. 22 from 6:30 – 9:30 a.m. at Hicksville Station
- Sept. 23 from 6:30 – 9:30 a.m. at Ronkonkoma Station
- Sept. 24 from 3 – 5 p.m. at Penn Station
- Sept. 25 from 12 – 4:30 p.m. at Stony Brook Station

For the past few years, both railroads have held annual Safety Poster Contests that invite students from grades pre-K through 12 to create posters illustrating what they believe is most important about rail safety. Metro-North will launch the contest with a call for entries via its social media channels and local school outreach. LIRR's 2020 winning designs were selected in July and are listed on the [LIRR TRACKS website](#). Metro-North's 2019 winners can be found on the [Metro-North TRACKS website](#).

Railroad Grade Crossing Safety Accomplishments

The LIRR has experienced just three accidental vehicle turning onto tracks since June 2018 after launching a nation-leading program to install flexible delineators at all 294 crossings, and provide GPS alerts through Waze, warning drivers not to turn onto the tracks. The railroad was recognized as an outstanding community partner and industry leader at the international "Waze On" virtual event held on Sept. 15. As part of the LIRR Expansion Project, three of eight grade crossings have already been eliminated along the Main Line, with the rest scheduled for completion by the end of 2022.

100% of Metro-North's 103 grade crossings are represented in the Waze app. Metro-North continues its effort to install delineators at all crossings throughout New York and Connecticut and will have full installation by Summer 2021. Metro-North's TRACKS program was awarded the APTA Gold Safety Award in 2018.

For more information about Rail Safety Week and the Long Island Rail Road's TRACKS program, [click here](#).

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