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Press Release

May 4, 2020

[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA Details Unprecedented 24/7 Cleaning Operation and New MTA Essential Plan Night Service During Subway Closure 1-5 a.m.

NYCT, LIRR and Metro-North Begin Most Aggressive Cleaning and Disinfecting Regimen in MTA History, Leveraging Innovative Antimicrobial and UV Technology

MTA Launches Essential Plan Night Service Significantly Increasing the Number of Bus Trips by 76% and Number of Buses Deployed by Nearly 150% During the Overnight

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The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today detailed its unprecedented 24/7 cleaning operation and new MTA Essential Plan Night Service during the upcoming subway closure from 1 – 5 a.m., which begins Wednesday, May 6. The new cleaning and disinfecting regimen marks the most aggressive in the MTA's history, and will include around-the-clock efforts at all facilities, including those of New York City Transit, the LIRR, Metro-North, MTA Bridges and Tunnels, and MTA Construction & Development. The MTA is also leveraging and evaluating innovative new cleaning solutions such as antimicrobial biostats and ultraviolet light to eradicate the COVID-19 virus. If proven successful, the MTA will deploy these solutions systemwide.

During the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the MTA has served as the heroes moving heroes of the pandemic – getting healthcare workers, first responders and other essential personnel on the frontlines to their jobs so they can save lives. The MTA is now launching a new MTA Essential Plan Night Service to continue moving essential workers during the 1 – 5 a.m. period. This plan marks a robust increase in overnight bus service – substantially increasing the number of bus trips by 1,168 or more than 76%, and adding 344 new buses on top of the 235 already deployed increasing the operational fleet by nearly 150% during 1 – 5 a.m. period.

Subway ridership has fallen approximately 92% below normal levels as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Bus ridership has fallen more than 80%. On average, approximately 11,000 customers currently use the subway during this time, and this represents 2.5% of New York City Transit's overall current essential customer base.

"During this pandemic it is critical that we keep our transit workers and the public safe," said **Governor Andrew M. Cuomo**. "The MTA's plan to disinfect every train in the New York City subway system every 24 hours without disrupting service is a monumental undertaking and something that has never been done before, and we will continue to do everything we can to protect our essential workers who have kept this entire society functioning during these difficult times."

"In the face of this unprecedented public health crisis, we're committed to working with the State and the MTA to ensure every essential worker has clean and safe transit options and to look after our most vulnerable neighbors," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "We're glad to partner with the State to accomplish that goal and we're committed to continuing to deploy our outreach teams to help bring people off the street and into shelter."

"The safety of our customers and employees is always our highest priority," said **MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye**. "Overnight closure of the subway will allow us to take our cleaning operation to a never-before-seen level. We will more aggressively and efficiently disinfect our full fleet of rolling stock every single day. Touch points at stations will be cleaned twice daily. We've never undertaken so challenging a task, and as Governor Cuomo has said, it's going to take a herculean effort."

"Our customers will probably see more cleaners underground than they ever have before," said **Sarah Feinberg, Interim President of MTA New York City Transit**. "We know this program dramatically changes things for the essential workers who still need to travel overnight. But we will get all essential employees where they need to go."

Details on the upcoming overnight closure and MTA Essential Plan Night Service are available below:

Overnight Subway Closure

Effective on the early morning of Wednesday, May 6, New York City Transit personnel will close all 472 subway stations at 1 a.m. Customers should reference the MTA Essential Plan Night Service schedule for the last trip they can board at their station prior to 1 a.m. After 1 a.m., all stations will be exit only. Customers are encouraged to plan their trip in advance using [MTA.info](https://mta.info) or the MYmta app.

Any person remaining inside stations will be asked to depart; enforcement will be performed by the NYPD in collaboration with the MTA Police Department. Officers be deployed to all 472 subway stations from 1 to 5 a.m. to make sure their critical work goes on uninterrupted. The MTA will continue to work in partnership with the NYPD to connect more homeless New Yorkers with access to the medical care and social services they need

and deserve. The NYPD has intensified patrols and presence at all stations. Shuttle buses will be strategically placed at select stations to help transport unsheltered New Yorkers.

Members of the public may notice some out-of-service trains continuing to operate between the hours of 1 and 5 a.m. These trains will be transporting transit employees performing functions such as signal maintenance, moving station cleaners from station to station, performing other safety functions and preconditioning for return to service. These trains will not be in passenger service.

Cleaning

To more effectively combat the spread of coronavirus, the MTA is undertaking a new cleaning program unprecedented in its history, covering both public and employee facilities. Crews will further enhance cleaning of all MTA rolling stock through around the clock disinfecting, including poles, seating, floor, ceiling, doors and walls. Every car in passenger service will be disinfected at least every 24 hours through three primary activities:

- **Daytime Terminal Car Cleaning:** After each train reaches its final destination, crews will remove trash, clean spills and bio hazards, and spot clean seats, floors, and other surfaces. Trains will also be disinfected at terminals during particular hours over the course of the day.
- **Overnight Yard Cleaning:** Trains in service during daytime hours but out of service at night will receive a more comprehensive cleaning every night in yards. Crews will remove garbage and graffiti, clean spills and bio hazards, mop floors, clean seats cleaning, and disinfect surfaces.
- **Overnight Terminal Car Cleaning:** Trains that remain in service at night will receive cleaning that is identical to the yard cleaning above, except at terminal stations.

The MTA is also investigating innovative methods to eradicate traces of COVID-19. Currently, three antimicrobial biostats are being applied to the interior of MTA rolling stock (buses and subway cars) and in control rooms and crew quarters. The antimicrobial biostats are applied after the surfaces are cleaned and disinfected with an EPA-registered disinfectant. These products lay down a protective colorless, odorless barrier on surfaces that does not allow germs to grow.

There are a number of methods of how these products are applied: traditional squirt bottles and clothes, mechanical sprayers, foggers and electrostatic sprayers. These antimicrobial biostats are being used in electrostatic sprayers in a pilot across New York City Transit for improved 360-degree coverage.

Additionally, ultraviolet (UV) light is an efficient, proven, and effective technology for eliminating viruses, including SARS-CoV-2, from surfaces including hospital operating rooms. This pilot will focus on the use of UVs to eradicate SARS-CoV-2 from our rolling stock (subway cars, buses, rail cars, transit vehicles) and fixed locations (break rooms, technology centers, operation centers, offices, etc.). In March, MTA worked with Columbia University and an innovative UV startup to successfully demonstrate the efficacy of UV technology in our subway system. MTA will to pilot this technology in our transit and railway vehicles in the second week of May, but will focus on subway and buses.

Free Enhanced Bus Service; LIRR and Metro-North to Cross-Honor

The MTA is significantly enhancing bus service under the new MTA Essential Plan Night Service. Beginning Wednesday at 1 a.m., New York City Transit and MTA Bus have added 1,168 trips – a 76% increase – and 344 buses on top of the 235 that currently run during these hours – an approximately 150% increase in the operational fleet.

The MTA has enhanced service on 61 bus lines, including 11 interborough express routes with additional stops (five routes in the Bronx, three each in Brooklyn and Queens), and 13 new routes that normally don't offer overnight service (17 in Brooklyn, 13 in Queens, 10 each in the Bronx and Manhattan). Thirty-seven routes will have added overnight service.

Examples of bus routes that are being enhanced include:

- The M15 serving the east side Manhattan hospitals where frequency will be improved from 30 to 15 mins
- The Bx15 serving St. Barnabas Hospital where frequency will go from 60 to 15 mins and
- The B44 serving Kings County Hospital where frequency will be improved from 60 to 15 mins
- The Q46 serving Long Island Jewish Medical Center where frequency will be improved from 60 to 25 mins.

Local buses will typically operate with the same frequency as overnight subway service - every 20 minutes or better. Express buses will operate every 30 minutes.

The MTA will monitor ridership patterns and will add buses where demand dictates. The MTA Essential Plan Night Service has been developed based on data, ridership and in consultation with leaders in healthcare, government, food service, construction and more.

All buses, including express buses will be fare free during this time and the MTA will also cross-honor fares on LIRR and Metro-North within New York City.

Essential Connector

For essential employees who cannot complete their trips using buses, the MTA will operate a limited 'Essential Connector' program offering for-hire car service. Qualified individuals will be provided with one trip per night via licensed for-hire vehicles at no cost to the rider. The MTA is partnering with CTG, Limosys and Curb on this effort. These companies currently operate Access-A-Ride service in partnership with the MTA.

For more information and to sign up for the essential connector please visit: mta.info/overnight

"We applaud the MTA for their intensive focus on the safety of our city's transportation system during the COVID-19 pandemic. The rigorous cleaning of subway cars and stations will bolster confidence among riders and maintain a healthful environment for the transport of essential workers," said **Linda Baran, President & CEO, Staten Island Chamber of Commerce, Thomas J. Grech, President & Chief Executive Officer Queens Chamber of**

Commerce, Randy Peers, President & CEO, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, Lisa Sorin, President, Bronx Chamber of Commerce and Jessica Walker, President and CEO, Manhattan Chamber of Commerce.

Kathryn S. Wylde, President & CEO of the Partnership for New York City, said: “Businesses across the region depend on essential workers, and a safe, clean and well-functioning subway system. We applaud the MTA for increasing efforts to disinfect the transit system while providing alternative overnight service.”

George Gresham, President of 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, said: “1199ers are essential, and like millions of New Yorkers, rely on the Subways to get to and from work. Ridership is down as a result of COVID-19, but our frontline healthcare workers cannot stay at home, and many still use the trains each day. The decision to suspend train service between the hours of 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. is smart, as cleaner trains will help make subway travel safer. I commend the MTA for putting measures in place to ensure that 1199ers and other first responders have the transportation they need to continue to care for their patients and provide for their families.”

Kenneth E. Raske, President & Chief Executive Officer of the Greater New York Hospital Association, said: “The hard-working healthcare workers on the frontlines of the COVID-19 crisis want to be able to get to their jobs without worry, and they want this pandemic to be over. The MTA's decision to close the subway overnight will help reduce the infection rate, and the MTA's commitment to providing alternatives for our members overnight will allow us to continue to fight on the front lines of the pandemic. The New York City hospital community thanks the MTA for their leadership during this unprecedented emergency.”

Stuart Appelbaum, President of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, said: “This crisis has put a spotlight on the thousands of RWDSU members that work hard behind the scenes to keep New York healthy and fed every single day. Our grocery store and drug store workers as well as other members rely upon public transportation to get to work and we're grateful to the MTA for helping to make sure that's as safe as possible.”

Kyle Bragg, President of 32BJ Service Employees International Union, said: “Like transit workers, our building service professionals – office cleaners, door attendants, security officers and others – work 24 hours a day and are playing a critical role in supporting other essential workers and keeping New York safe and running throughout this unprecedented crisis. We are in productive discussions with the real estate industry to make accommodations to workers' schedules to make this difficult situation work. Thank you to the MTA for being responsive to our needs and building a plan that keeps New Yorkers safe while getting essential workers where they need to go.”

Pat Kane, RN, Executive Director of the New York State Nurses Association, said: “The efforts underway to sanitize the subways and stations are absolutely essential to stopping the spread of COVID-19. The closure of subways for four hours each night protects the public's health. We thank the MTA workers for the very hard work they are undertaking. Working together in all ways- all New Yorkers- is the road to recovery.”

UFCW Local 1500 President Robert W. Newell Jr. said: “Our members in the grocery industry have to continue to go to work every day to provide food and essential items for their New York communities. So we're pleased that the MTA has made the decision to disinfect trains and buses overnight during this health crisis. This decision will keep all essential workers safe, whether getting them to work or back home to their families. We thank the MTA for the open line of communication as we work together to identify any potential problem areas that this cleaning regimen could create for our members.”